Social/Corporate Accountability:
A University's 'Trek' Towards Excellence

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of accountability as it relates to the University of British Columbia. It examines the discourse surrounding social accountability laid out in the university's Trek 2010 vision and then juxtaposes this with the private accountability to commercial and government interests as evidenced in other documents and recent university decisions. The paper, thus, concludes that both private and public attempts at accountability are present yet the call to account to a wider social public gets muffled by the vagueness of the goals and, in particular, the appeals to excellence.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article met de l'avant une analyse critique du discours pour explorer le concept d'imputabilité à l'University of British Columbia. Le discours relatif à l'imputabilité sociale, tel que mis de l'avant dans le document « Trek 2010 » de cette institution, est examiné puis juxtaposé à l'imputabilité envers les intérêts commerciaux et gouvernementaux identifiée dans d'autres documents et dans des décisions récentes de cette même université. L'article conclut que des efforts d'imputabilité tant publique que privée sont présents, mais que l'appel à une prise en compte de l'intérêt public est souvent mis en sourdine par le caractère vague des objectifs, les appels à l'excellence et les efforts faits pour satisfaire les intérêts privés.

The University of British Columbia, aspiring to be one of the world's best universities, will prepare students to become exceptional global citizens, promote the values of a civil and sustainable society, and conduct outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada, and the world. (Trek 2010: White Paper, 2004)

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1922, around 1,200 students at the University of British Columbia (UBC) set out on what came to be known as the 'Great Trek', making their way from an overcrowded campus on one side of Vancouver to the university's current position on the tip of the Point Grey peninsula over 10 kilometres across town. With floats, bands and a menagerie of banners, the students vehemently decried the government's announced decision to halt construction of the Point Grey campus. They climbed the partially-constructed science building, hung their banners on the steel girders and chanted slogans of protest. They then took their demands to the provincial government, holding them accountable for the creation of a university that would be able to serve the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

How would the goals of these first student protestors compare to those laid out in a document which claims to build on their spirit, put together by university administrators over 80 years later? Trek 2010—following on from its predecessor Trek 2000—lays out a vision for UBC for the year 2010. While the students of 1922 held the government accountable for the establishment of a publicly-funded, accessible higher education institution, Trek 2010 asks that the "UBC community" be held accountable for its role in making the institution, community, country and world a better place.

As is becoming increasingly apparent, universities are now not only accountable to their immediate stakeholders – i.e. students – but also have a commitment to the wider public, however that be defined. Indeed, "accountability" has quickly become the *mot du jour* in discussions around higher education with "social responsibility" on the lips of university presidents across the continent. Yet, the university is being stretched in myriad directions, accountable to both public and private interests. Perhaps drowning out the cries for social responsibility are the endless discussions on how the university is being exogenously and endogenously commercialized and privatized (see, Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; 2006), becoming increasingly dependent on the corporate sector and accountable to it. Does the "university mean business"?, as Newson and Buchbinder first suggested in 1988, as a profit-making enterprise; or, does it intend to show its softer, more agreeable public face? Not only is the university pursuing a two-pronged agenda of intellectual and corporate values, as Eric Gould (2003) submitted, but it is also being over-extended by both public and private pressures to be accountable.

In this article, I draw on Trek 2010 and other university documents to highlight the ways in which discourses of social and corporate accountability operate at UBC. I first explore the literature in higher education that highlights the tensions between social and corporate accountability and the public and private faces of the Canadian university. I then undertake a critical discourse policy analysis (Ball, 1994; 1997; Fairclough, 2003; 2006; Ozga, 2000) to examine the discourse of accountability as it is manifested in the two Trek 2010 documents (UBC, 2004a; 2004b) and the inaugural speech to launch Trek 2010 made in March 2005 by former UBC president, Martha Piper. An examination is subsequently undertaken of corporate accountability as displayed in recent policy initiatives and decisions undertaken at UBC.

This paper thus argues that it is with both a public and private face that UBC is embarking upon its trek towards 2010. Yet in its attempt to be accountable in decidedly vague terms, UBC's commitment to the social good is compromised in the overarching goal to be "excellent" and in the attempt to satisfy corporate demands.

Changes in the Post-Modern University

Much has changed from when the "Great Trek" took place in 1922 to the trek which is currently being undertaken by UBC and other Canadian universities. The students of 85 years ago lived in a country struggling with crippling levels of debt and recovering from the First World War. Dreams of a better tomorrow, as former UBC president, Martha Piper (2005), declared were what led them to march on that day in October, when less than 10% of the population could count on ever being able to finish high school, let alone attend a university.

The massification of higher education that started in the 1960s, and continues up until this day, means that the dream of attending a university has become a reality for a large number of people in Canada. However, with greater numbers of people having some involvement with the university in some way there comes greater responsibility to account to the public and private sectors for the contributions post-secondary institutions are making to the economy and society. There have undoubtedly been vast changes since the first wave of baby-boomers profited from the expansion of higher education in Canada. Globalization, the increasing demands of the knowledge economy and the turn in macro-economic policies away from a Keynesian-inspired model to those of a more neo-liberal persuasion have meant that the university is indeed more important than ever in equipping students with the skills needed to survive and excel globally. Universities are being held to account, not only to serve the student body, but also to boost the economy and help solve the world's problems.

With the growing power and influence of corporations comes also their increasing involvement with universities. As enrolment in universities has risen, funding has not kept apace. This fact, coupled with the pressure to perform, has led to the proliferation of commercial activity on university campuses. Ex-

president of Harvard, Derek Bok (2003), describes how the university is being courted by companies who may bring great financial gain to the institutions. However, as in all capitalist endeavours, businesses who have dealings with the university expect something in return (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; 2006). As Linda Eyre (2002) found in her study of a beer company's involvement in curriculum, there are always strings attached. And, as Bok explains, "commercial activities can often hurt universities" (p.115) and prevent them from realizing their academic as well as social mission.

The Public/Private Face of the University

There are numerous scholars who see commercial and academic goals – as well as commercial and social goals – as incompatible (e.g. McGuiness, 2002; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; 2006; Van Damme, 2004). Moreover, according to Canadian lawyer, McGuinness (2002), the attempt to reconcile intellectual, commercial and social agendas often results in the commercial compromising the non-commercial aspects of academe. Yet the university is not simply a combination of the liberal Humboldtian university and the "university as business," as Eric Gould (2003) claims. Instead, the globalized, technologized neo-liberal era has reconfigured academia so that its purpose, mission and process have all fundamentally changed.

One key aspect of these changes is the growing demand for universities to account for their existence. These pressures come from both the private and public sectors. Santos (2006) deftly and succinctly captures this tension:

> The ultraprivate pressure to commodify knowledge displaces the social responsibility of the university with a focus on producing economically useful and commercially viable knowledge. On the other hand, an ultrapublic social pressure shatters the restricted public sphere of the university in the name of a much broader public sphere traversed by much more heterogeneous confrontations and by much more demanding concepts of social responsibility. (p.75)

In effect, universities are being stretched in all directions, implored to be relevant, efficient, effective –and above all – "excellent" in all that they do. As was becoming apparent when Readings (1996) wrote *The University in Ruins,* the post-modern university is based on an idea of competition as well as accountability; a signal to Readings of the usurpation of the academy by business objectives.

The language of the postmodern university has indeed appropriated much from the world of business (see Batstone, 2001; Daniels et al, 2000) yet, it also employs terms that have been traditionally associated with the left and with ideas of communitarianism; for example, the social good, the public interest, the community, and civil society. Batstone's (2001) study of a strategic planning document from the University of Manitoba, for example, concludes that while

the metaphors of "university as community" and "university as business" are both present in this report, higher value and greater emphasis is give to the idea of university as business evidenced by the numerous metaphors consistent with business-speak. Furthermore, in an interesting turn, words that were tradition-ally rooted in liberal-humanist thinking have been re-captured by neo-liberalism and the Right in general (see Lakoff, 2004), and much of this language is found in the discourse around the "good university": for example freedom, choice, re-sponsibility, independence. Although there is vast divergence in what different people understand by such concepts, it appears that the post-modern university allows each of us to possess differing interpretations. Below I have created a Venn diagram that illustrates how the discourse of the public/private face of the Canadian university works. As is made apparent, there is overlap in this termi-nology while there exists departure in understanding and use of these terms.
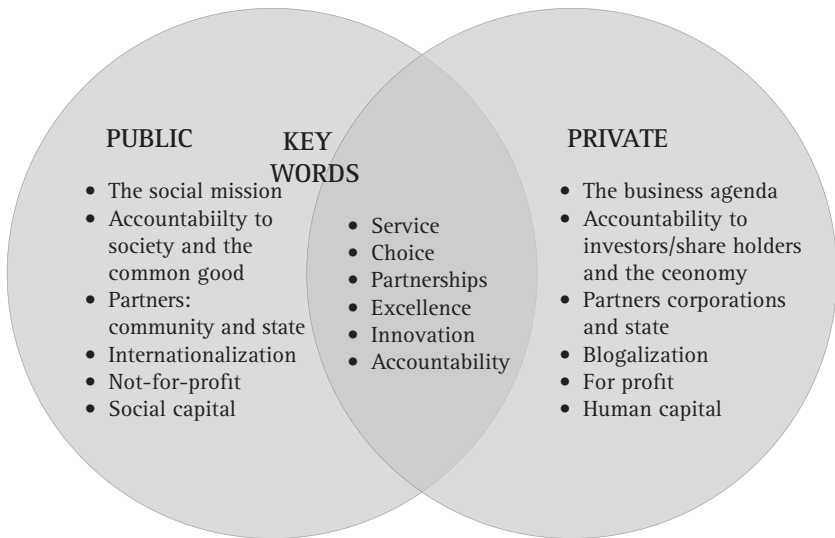
PUBLIC

KEY WORDS

- The social mission
- Accountabiilty to society and the common good
- Partners: community and state
- Internationalization
- Not-for-profit
- Social capital

- Service
- Choice
- Partnerships
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Accountability

PRIVATE

- The business agenda
- Accountability to investors/share holders and the ceonomy
- Partners corporations and state
- Blogalization
- For profit
- Human capital

Figure 1. The public/private face of the post-modern university in Canada

What does it mean to be accountable?

Shore and Wright (2004) note that a "cult of accountability" has pervaded higher education, especially in the UK and Australia. Defining accountability, however, is a challenging task. As Sinclair (1995) writes, the concept "appears to reside in a bottomless swamp, where the more definitive we attempt to ren-der [it] the more murky it becomes" (p.221). Accountability is not a unitary nor static concept but rather is "continually being constructed" (p.231). The Webster dictionary defines "accountable" as:

1. Subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something; re-sponsible; answerable.
2. Capable of being explained; explicable; explainable.

Accountability in its simplest sense, then, describes a situation in which people are obliged to account, or take responsibility, for their actions. On the one hand, the word has positive connotations of openness, transparency and responsibility. On the other, it has become increasingly integrated into a new managerial discourse centred on measurement, qualification or performance indicators (Shore & Wright, 2004). It can also be seen as part-and-parcel of the shift towards heteronomy and away from autonomy in the university (Schugurensky, 1999); seen in a more negative light, accountability conveys regulation and surveillance of the "workers" in academe (i.e. Faculty, staff and students).

What is clear in all these ideas and definitions is that accountability is something that is being imposed from outside. Therefore, when we say "universities are accountable to their stakeholders," there is the idea of an external obligation to be so. The notion of obligation, thus, becomes paramount. As mentioned, one of the main charges against the focus on accountability and the "obligation" to conform to external standards in education is the purported undermining this has on the autonomy of the institution (Schugurensky, 1999). Yet this assumption of obligation may lead us to question: who is obliging the university to report, explain or justify? As Peters and Marshall (1996) have observed of the post-modern university, this purported obligation is often assessed from within university confines. The threat sometimes "comes from within" (Santos, 2006), with universities internalising their perceived requirement to be accountable to the economy, as well as the social good. While the accountability agenda is often driven by university administrators and management, ensuring "excellence" and "quality" is conceived as everyone's responsibility within the institution (Shore & Wright, 1999)

In their theory of academic capitalism, Slaughter and Leslie (1997), and later Slaughter and Rhoades (2004, 2006), also clarify that it is not so much that universities are being "corporatized" but rather that administrators, faculties, departments and individual professors are attempting to profit from corporate liaisons. It is important to note that under post-modernity in general, and in the Western university specifically, the barriers between the public and the private, the social and corporate, have become porous. Slaughter and Rhoades (2006) write,

> At one time, the public interest was served by keeping public and private sectors separate, and it was a conflict of interest for professionals and not-for-profit institutions to have a material interest in other entities. But in the academic-capitalist regime, the public interest is served by knocking down those firewalls and enabling not-for-profit institutions and professionals to directly engage the private sector marketplace (p.111).

As Olssen and Peters (2005) have suggested, individuals participate in a process of governmentality by internalizing a perceived necessity to be "market-smart and mission-focused" (Zemsky, Wegner & Massy, 2005) and holding themselves to that ideal. Accountability, thus, acts in direct contrast to the idea of "choice."

Obligation, by definition, means that there is no choice in the matter; the academy is accountable to both the private and public spheres as they have been ostensibly subjected to be so.

METHODOLOGY: ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research was to examine the public and private face of accountability in the post-modern university as it occurs in both discourse and practice. Specifically, the research questions that I sought to answer were as follows:

    i. How does Trek 2010 envision the idea of accountability to both private and public stakeholders?
      a. Who is considered accountable, to whom and for what?
    ii. How do the goals and ideals put forth in Trek 2010 compare to recent changes at UBC and to the trends occurring in higher education in Canada in general?
      a. And, how can we understand these changes in terms of accountability?

There were two parts to this research:

1. First, the policy analysis of Trek 2010 as it is described in the Green paper, White paper and in the speech made in March 2005 to launch Trek 2010 (see Piper, 2005; UBC, 2004a; 2004b)
2. Second, an examination of recent decisions and policy initiatives made by UBC, as well as shifts in higher education in general, which are then compared to the goals laid out in Trek 2010.

I am terming the methodological approach to the analysis of the Trek documents "critical discourse policy analysis"; this can be seen as a subset of what Ball (1994; 1997), Ozga (2000) and others (e.g. Taylor et al., 1997) have named "critical policy analysis." My approach to the examination of policy can be considered "critical" in that I am seeking to pull apart policies, uncover assumptions and unpack the underlying politics and material, as well as discursive, effects. I think Sandra Taylor (1997) puts it best when she explains that critical policy analysis is interested in uncovering the linkages between text, discourse, ideology and power, focusing on what is said and not said as well as how it is done and for what purpose. This description aptly fits my own approach to policy analysis.

I also borrow from the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as it is expounded by socio-linguist Norman Fairclough (2003; 2006). Although "critical discourse policy analysis" can be subsumed under "critical policy analysis" I have added the words "discourse analysis" as I want to draw attention to the notion of discourse and to allude to the tools of CDA given by Fairclough that I take up in this paper. As is with all policy documents, discourse is an essential element of Trek 2010. Discourses seek to mobilize, persuade and encourage certain responses and actions, yet, as Foucault (1972) has clarified, discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and

in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention" (p.49). Discourses are also contradictory, "as both an instrument and an effect of power . . . also a hindrance. . . .and a point of resistance" (Foucault, 1980, pp. 100-101 quoted in Ball, 1990, p.24); they determine what becomes appropriate (Scheurich, 1994).

Although critical policy analysts in educational research like Ball (1997) or Taylor (2004) talk about discourse, they focus less on the specific techniques used in analysing discourse. Fairclough, on the other hand, has enumerated the various components of discourse that can be analysed by social scientists so to better understand a piece of writing. These include being able to locate and define in the document: value assumptions, presumptions, rhetorical and persuasive features, use of pronouns, word play, choice of vocabulary, and "synecdoche" or how policy writers put forward an agenda by using a "figure of speech where the whole is represented by its parts" (Birkland, 2005, p.128) – for example, using an anecdote to demonstrate or prove a wider phenomenon.

In examining the Trek documents I sought to therefore focus on the language as well as the ideas so as to gain a deeper understanding of how accountability is framed, the purpose it serves and how certain beliefs about the private and public are motivated and to what ends.

Trek: the Public Face of Accountability

An overview of Trek 2010

As a follow-up to Trek 2000, the first iteration of Trek 2010 was published by the President's office in March 2004 and consisted of eight pages to which members of the university community were invited to respond. While much of what was put forward in the Green Paper remained in the official White Paper, released in September of the same year, there were four additional pages and some fundamental changes to the structure and wording of the document in terms of the university vision for 2010. (Refer to Appendix I, pp. 30-34, for a detailed comparison of the Green and White Trek 2010 documents). Trek 2010 was officially launched in March 2005 with a speech made by then UBC president Dr. Martha Piper. These three documents are the focus of this study (Piper, 2005; UBC, 2004a; 2004b).

Both the Green and White papers start with a message from the president and then go on to detail the five pillars of the Trek 2010 vision: people, learning, research, community and internationalization (UBC, 2004a; 2004b). The university mission is therefore focused on these key areas. UBC outlines its mission to facilitate access; increase diversity; further recruitment and retention of First Nations students; protect the environment; advance social justice; contribute to student, staff and faculty "health and wellness"; and engage with the outside community. Invoking such concepts as global citizenship, sustainability, civil society and equity, Trek 2010 can be seen as the public face of the university where UBC demonstrates its accountability to the public interest and commitment to the social good.

Accountable to whom?

In order to better understand what it actually means for the university to hold itself accountable to the public interest and social good, it is first important to explore to whom Trek 2010 holds UBC accountable. It is apparent from the Trek 2010 documents that UBC's mission and commitment lies with two sets of people: those from within the university community and those from the outside community. Interestingly, the word "community" appears to be key, appearing 17 times in the eight-page Green Paper (UBC, 2004b) and 24 times in the 12 ½-page White Paper (UBC, 2004a).

Trek 2010 declares itself accountable to what can be termed the "inside community," comprising faculty, staff, students, alumni and the wider UBC community that includes those who live in the grounds belonging to the university ("University Town") but who are not necessarily connected to the university. Trek makes it clear that students are a priority and that UBC has an obligation to provide them "excellent teaching," contact hours with "real" professors, instead of sessional instructors, state-of-the-art equipment, and impressive libraries. Both documents also make a commitment to provide opportunities to allow students to study abroad and to better serve the international students already on campus (whilst also increasing their numbers relative to the student population as a whole). One difference between the Green and White papers is that the specific goals laid out for graduate students in the Green paper were deleted in the subsequent White Paper. One particular example is that the phrase "increase support and recognition of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows" (UBC, 2004b, p.5) is missing from the official Trek White paper.

While there is a commitment made to faculty and staff, what is curious is that the only commitment made explicit in the documents to *existing* faculty and staff is to make their surroundings "beautiful" and to make sure that university buildings are modern and libraries well-stocked (UBC, 2004a). In addition, Trek details the university's responsibility to "university town," to increase its size and to foster good relations between the university community and the "university town" community. In regard to alumni, they are invited to be part of the "community," to become part of a growing international alumni network and to partake of coop work opportunities (UBC, 2004a; 2004b).

The outside community to which UBC is holding itself accountable encompasses groups in society that are both near and far. Primarily, they are those groups who make-up the "at-risk" or "in need." Trek 2010 (UBC, 2004a; 2004b) sees the university as being accountable to the surrounding First Nations community. In numerous places, the papers commit to "serve" the Aboriginal population, to engage with First Nations communities and scholars, as well as to increase the numbers of Aboriginal students at UBC through credit programmes, financial aid and scholarships. Trek 2010 focuses explicitly on including the disenfranchised Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. In the launch of Trek 2010, Dr Piper (2005) boasts of 800 students participating in a "learning exchange" and service learning with members of Canada's poorest

neighbourhood. The fact that this represents 2% of the total student population is not mentioned. Commitments are made to increase student volunteer opportunities, strengthen connections between residents of the Downtown Eastside – or more correctly with the community groups who operate there. Furthermore, these community groups' contributions are to be acknowledged as important to the university.

It is not just the local that the university seeks to serve but also the global community. The documents state that UBC's duty is to "promote global health and well-being" (UBC, 2004a, p.12; 2004b, p.8), and encourage global responsibility. There is specific mention of Canada's place in the world and the recognition of the importance to connect with international Indigenous communities. As the opening of Trek notes, UBC has an obligation to "enlarge [its] understanding of the world, address its problems and seek to enhance the social and cultural aspects of human experience" (UBC, 2004b, p.8). Trek 2010 states that "we are accountable to the communities" (UBC, 2004b, p.6) and to society (UBC, 2004a, p.10), which can be seen as local, provincial, national and global.

Finally, UBC is considered indebted and accountable to the students who did the great Trek almost a century ago (Piper, 2005). UBC community members are told to "build on the very foundations of this university – to invoke the vision of those bold British Columbians who trekked out from Downtown to Point Grey to demand a provincial university in 1922" (p.2).

Who is accountable?

Obviously it is UBC that is being held accountable to the aforementioned communities. Yet who is UBC? Trek 2010 makes it clear that the entire UBC community is responsible for making Trek a success. As Dr Piper (2005) stated emphatically at Trek's inauguration, "we all have a role to play . . . Trek 2010 will not be accomplished by others – it will be accomplished by us" (p.13).

Students, staff and faculty are all encouraged to internalize their responsibility to the vision. The repeated use of the pronouns "us" and "we" and the possessive "our" and "ours" denotes and encourages inclusion. The entire UBC community is praised for the progress that has already occurred, being told that "working together we have made huge advances" (Piper, 2005, p.4), and reminded of "our common goals" (p.4) as we continue on our journey. There is a notion of progress, togetherness and presumed intersubjectivity. There is also the sense of being obliged and responsible; as Piper states, "day in and day out, we all must do whatever we can to advance that goal" (p.14); or, quoted in the Trek 2010 documents, "students will acknowledge their obligations as global citizens" (UBC, 2004a; 2004b, p.1). In these sentences, the use of a modal, in the first example, and the future tense, in the second, leave no room for the possibility that there could be dissent or that some members of the UBC community may choose not to fulfil their duties. Indeed persuasive as well as inclusive language permeates the speech as well as the Trek papers so to motivate all UBC members who read them.

Anecdote is also used, as synecdoche and as a tool of inclusion and motivation. In the launch of Trek 2010, Dr Piper attempts to demonstrate UBC's responsibility to including the disenfranchised through use of narrative. She recounts a story of a 10-year old boy from the Downtown Eastside who participated in the learning exchange: "Dr Piper, I want to thank UBC for coming" he says, adding "I want to come to UBC when I grown up" (Piper, 2005, p.15). In response, the former president tells her audience that she replied: "Don't thank me. I am not UBC" (p.15). The entire UBC community is thus implicated in serving the communities, as Dr Piper distances herself from the idea and plan, denying any notion of hierarchy or her role as leader of the institution. This is done to motivate the UBC community to expand an already growing empire. As Dr Piper stresses, all UBC members are implicated in making the university "excellent," "knowing that each of our actions regardless of where we work or study on campus, will affect our ability to be one of the world's best universities" (p.15).

Accountable for what?

According to Trek 2010, then, what does it mean to be accountable? On the one level, this means being responsible to a variety of stakeholders and communities. It means being a moral and ethical leader, "reflect[ing] the values of a civil society" (Piper, 2005, p.3), whatever this may mean, and "broaden[ing] global awareness" (UBC, 2004a, p.12; 2004b, p.8). It also means strengthening partnerships with communities in developing countries (UBC, 2004a; 2004b), involvement in consortia, establishing international presence as well as a global learning centre. In a commitment to students, the university also declares its intent to increase access and student aid. To do all this requires responsibility; in the words of Margaret Fryer, director the UBC Learning Exchange, who spoke at Trek's inauguration, "it may be time to strengthen the discourse on academic responsibility – the other side of the coin of academic freedom" (Piper, 2005, p.2). This entails an explicit commitment to "progress" and modernity: "Nothing will contribute more to improving the condition of life and our ability to achieve social harmony than the discovery, dissemination, and application of new knowledge" (UBC, 2004b, p.5). On another level, however, and above all else, the university holds itself accountable to fulfil its overarching mission delineated in its vision statement: to be "outstanding "excellent "exceptional and, above all else, "the best" (UBC, 2004a; 2004b, p.1).

Excellence. Trek 2010 declares that UBC is founded on "Principles of Excellence" (Piper, 2005, p.10), and is to "promot[e] excellence at every level" (p.4) so to have the "highest standards" (p.10). As Dr Piper noted at the launch of Trek 2010, "no university can flourish if it does not seek excellence at all times and in everything it does" (p.11). In fact, throughout the White Paper policy document, *best* is mentioned 12 times; *excellence* or *excellent* 6 times; *outstanding* 8 times; *highest* 5 times; and *leader* 4 times.

First, Trek makes known UBC's excellence in its people and programmes. Under the first pillar, UBC pledges to have "excellent people." Trek expressly

promises that UBC will review and recruit outstanding students and faculty (UBC, 2004a; 2004b), "increase support for and recognition of outstanding students" (UBC, 2004a, p.8; 2004b, p.5) and "identify and recruit best faculty" (2004a, p.5). In terms of its dedication to learning, UBC will "provid[e] students with an outstanding and distinctive education" and conduct "leading research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada and the World" (UBC, 2004a; 2004b, pp.2-3). By 2010, not only must UBC programmes "meet highest standards of excellence" (2004a, p.6; 2004b, p.4) but also UBC itself should be well on the way to becoming "Canada's best university" (Piper, 2005, p.3; UBC, 2004a; 2004b, p.2).

What is perhaps most striking, however, in the discourse around "excellence" is the focus on the physical campus, especially in Trek 2010: White Paper (2004a). What was the fourth overall goal under "People" in the Green paper becomes first in the White Paper: "Provide the best environment for all members of the campus community" (2004a, p.4). Additionally, there are numerous allusions to the necessity of enhancing UBC's physical environment – proposed changes to be made to students' learning environment, upgrading athletic facilities and on-campus residences, and, as Piper notes, "of course there is the library" (2005, p.11). Under "internationalization," for example, the document acknowledges past achievements in the form of "three international houses on campus" (p.8), which are residences for students coming from Japan, Korea and Mexico. In terms of faculty grants and funding there is particular reference made to the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI)[1] grants. What is interesting about CFI grants is that they are often very large sums of money which can only be used on buildings or physical resources and infrastructure, such as computers or machinery. Faculty who receive money from the federation are unable to use it to support graduate students or conference travel, for example. While the vision for 2010 may be to make UBC "the most efficient, accessible, beautiful and equitable campus possible" (Piper, 2005, p.4), it appears that "beautiful" reigns supreme.

Trek 2010 acknowledges the importance of "contribut[ing] to the well-being of society" (UBC, 2004a, p.6; 2004b, p.8); of combating poverty, human rights abuses, global warming or illiteracy; of striving for a just and tolerant society (2004a; 2004b). It holds UBC accountable for providing public lectures, increasing volunteerism and priding itself on quality education. On the other hand, there are no particular strategies that relate to these goals. Furthermore, with an overriding focus on physical buildings, serving society becomes a promotion of the *image* of UBC as "one of the world's best" (2004a, p.1): Trek 2010 partially exists to convey a certain image to the outside world.

Problems with Social Accountability

Trek 2010 sets out laudable goals for UBC to help it serve its own community as well as those outside the campus confines. However, the strategies are often general rather than specific and there is presumed intersubjective agreement on the concepts invoked and the goals of the institution.

Two notable shortcomings. First, many of the objectives stated in Trek 2010 are vague. For example, the documents propose that the university should "continue to collaborate with Aboriginal communities [and be committed to] the recruitment of Aboriginal students" (UBC, 2004a, p.5); yet there are no specific strategies on how this might be achieved or executed. Furthermore, the university declares itself dedicated to a process of reviewing promotion and tenure so to acknowledge teaching, cooperative education, new learning technologies, community-based scholarship (UBC, 2004a; 2004b), and the actual teaching criteria for tenure was amended in 2006 to reflect this[2]. However, support systems are often still inadequate in enabling Faculty to engage in community-based scholarship or in integrating new technologies into their classes. In terms of core values, Trek proclaims that UBC is "dedicated to the principles of inclusion and global citizenship" (2004a, p.11) without explication of what these terms actually mean. Likewise, the notion of having "the highest standards" or "being outstanding" are not explored or acknowledged as subjective assessments that depend on the interpretation, expectations and values of the various stakeholder-groups – not to mention the individuals within these groups.

Second, and more disturbingly, there is an apparent unwillingness to recognize the diversity of opinion. In effect, it appears that dissent and conflict have been quashed. It is made clear that it is not really possible to accept some things about the university (or the Trek vision) and reject others. In her speech, Dr Piper asserts that UBC comes as a package: "[it is] no longer a place; it is a system" (2005, p.7). Furthermore, one of the main differences between the two Trek documents is that the allusion to a certain amount of disagreement was taken out of the official White Paper. In its draft form *Trek 2010: Green Paper,* Piper admitted that "in one sense, a goal [of being the best university in Canada] is unreachable since. . . no-one can agree on what being the best means, in the complex environment of higher education" (UBC, 2004b, p.2), going on to say that "we still want to be the best – however that term is to be interpreted" (p.2). However, in the final White paper this discussion was omitted. Being accountable, thus, is no longer acknowledged as problematic; Recognizing multiple interpretations of what constitutes "the best" would admit that the goals put forward in the document were untenable.

A trek to where? An understandable result of these two shortcomings is that the goals become unmeasurable and, therefore, unattainable. How can we measure success if we do not define what success is? How will we know UBC is a "community of excellence" if this is not defined and community itself is also very broad. Although Trek claims to lay out steps to its pathway to 2010, these are not steps but rather ideals. We will, therefore, not know if or when UBC has arrived on this journey.

Nonetheless, something is being said in the vagueness; what is left out is just as important as what is included. While there are calls for student access through "financial aid" there is no specification on what this aid is, and since many students already take out vast sums of money in the form of loans to

finance their education, this could be considered as "success" in student access. Access in this form does not need to translate into cheaper education or increasing numbers of scholarships or grants. In another example, while "diversity" in the student and faculty body is acknowledged in the Green Paper, it is missing in certain areas of the White Paper where it once was. The call to increase student diversity becomes recruiting "the best undergraduate and graduate students" (UBC, 2004a). In another example, the goal of attracting and retaining First Nations students goes from third to fourth from one document to the next to make way for more calls for "excellence." Dr Piper (2005) mentions the importance of "rewarding excellence" in faculty in a well-rounded way, yet the incentives of the tenure and promotion process are not aligned with well-roundedness but rather overemphasize the numbers of publications each faculty member has in pre-determined "prestigious" journals.

What also becomes apparent through the university website (UBC, 2006) is that excellence and success is being determined not only from outside the university but from outside the country in the form of international university rankings (such as Newsweek Magazine, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Times Higher Education) that focus on such things as Field Medals and Nobel Prizes won by alumni and faculty members, and numbers of publications in *Nature* and *Science.*

Many goals of Trek 2010 are ambiguous, vague and unexplained. It becomes apparent in the documents that the university appears to care more about conveying an image of "being the best" than laying forth a vision of what "excellence" or "the best" actually mean. Furthermore, only the public face of the university is revealed; accountability to the private sector is glaringly absent.

The Private Face of Accountability

In its journey towards 2010, UBC is not just heading down the one path of social responsibility; it is also marching along the road of "fiscal responsibility" and "corporate accountability." We do not hear about this alternate route in the Trek 2010 documents. However, it is important to understand both how resources are allocated to private and public goals, as well as the particular relationships UBC has with the corporate sector – especially given the controversial nature of commercialization at the university.

Resource allocation: the reality of Trek 2010?

Although at the time of writing there are still over two years until 2010, many of the priorities laid out in Trek are currently not as supported as one would hope. To be fair, universities in the province of British of Columbia are currently undergoing cuts since the provincial government has not matched its funding to the increase in costs. According to the latest report by UBC president Stephen Toope, there is a $36 million deficit for this year alone – which

is assumed to continue over the next few years (Vancouver Senate Secretariat, 2007). Nonetheless, it is telling where cuts are being felt.

Trek 2010 makes it clear that increasing access to students, ensuring retention, and recruiting and supporting international students are primary goals for UBC. Some of the main ways the university is proposing to cut costs, however, directly affect these goals: undergraduate application fees are to be increased by 60%; $650,000 is to be taken from the "international student initiative reserve"; and $2 million dollars is to be cut from the financial award reserve with the rationale that the province now has raised loan limits. Recruiting "the best faculty" has been put on hold due to an imposed hiring freeze estimated to save the university $1.5 million (numbers taken from UBC, 2007).

While there are definite budget shortfalls there are concerns that the money from elsewhere is not being used for to serve the university community equitably. Questions have been raised about the $830 million endowment fund; the $102 million in donations from 2006; the revenue of $1.57 million in 2006 (which increased from $1.25 million in 2005); the overall assets valued at $3.1 billion (up from $2.5 billion the year before); and the $6 million gift from the Law Foundation (see Vancouver Senate Secretariat, 2007). There are serious questions raised about where this money is going.

Private interests

The changing nature of funding in universities is that money from corporate or philanthropic donors/investors as well as government agencies is earmarked for particular faculties, departments, centres, or to buy certain material goods. The university itself has set up funds and accounts for different purposes – such as a commitment to depositing profits through housing into the endowment fund. Housing is indeed one example where the university has put its efforts, charging market, and near market rates for many of the new housing projects that are taking over the Point Grey campus. With such a rapidly growing student population, there is a lack of affordable student housing yet more land is being put into profit-generating housing projects.

The move towards corporatization: spin-off companies and public/private consortia. In an effort to reap rewards, universities are turning to non-government sources of funding. As noted scholars have found, the corporate sector and the academy are becoming more intertwined and links are becoming more numerous (Currie, 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). One recent report represents an example of this and can be seen as the "university industry relations" equivalent of Trek 2010.

The document entitled "On captive seed funding at UBC" was released November 2006 to review "UBC's performance in commercialization . . . [and in particular its] process for adding commercial value to its academic research through the route of new company formation" (UILO, 2006, p.2). Written by the University Industry Liaison Office (UILO), the report notes UBC's success in the commercialization process: $360 million in external research funding, ranking

9th in North America for "patent power" (p.3); and, by 2005, having recorded 143 invention disclosures, 144 US patent filings and having issued 24 patents. One of the greatest achievements is claimed to be the creation of 35 spin-off companies between 1997-2002. Still, UILO identifies a lack of investment as a debilitating factor for university commercialization and concludes that the only way to decrease the perceived funding gap is by decreasing commercial risk for "promising technologies" (p.1).

Spin-off companies are becoming more prevalent throughout universities, and have been critiqued by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004; 2006) among others for undermining both university autonomy and the public interest. Furthermore, "decreasing commercial risk" results in the companies or investors being less accountable to the university, and the university becoming more accountable to them, and, thus, the university becoming less accountable to the public.

A case in point is the recent ruling that the public would not have freedom of information about spin-off companies of Simon Fraser University (SFU) as it was determined that "the universities act as service providers to private sector organizations" (Smith, 2006, p.1). The company in question, Lodz, belongs to Simon Fraser University Ventures (SFUV), a public/private organization that oversees spin-off companies of SFU. According to SFU lawyers, SFUV isn't strictly a public entity and, therefore, is not subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of British Columbia* which was created to "make public entities more accountable" (p.1). According to Bart Copeland who heads a spin-off company created through SFUV, opening spin-offs to public scrutiny would do immense damage to the "health and development of the technology industry of British Columbia" (p.2). For corporations, information is supposedly sensitive because if it fell into the hands of the competitors it would hurt the company whose information had been revealed. However, privatization of information in academia eliminates the possibility of transparency thus negatively impacting the public interest.

This is not to say that the university necessarily always benefits from its relationship with the corporate sector. An example of this is Universitas 21 (U21), a consortium comprised of 21 universities internationally which has as one of its main missions to enable member-universities to take advantage of the multinational business opportunities that are "too large for any one individual institution to deal with" (Cohen, 1999, p.A71). An integral part of U21 has been U21 Global, a public/private partnership between U21 and Thomson Learning (a publishing company) that provides online business programmes for a profit to students in Asia. U21 Global offers a chance to member institutions to reap royalty benefits and profits generated through student fees.

UBC signalled its desire to withdraw from this agreement in January 2007 in order to save money. It was revealed that the university had invested $771,000 with no tangible returns (Vancouver Senate Secretariat, 2007). At the Senate meeting, the UBC president noted that two other universities were also seriously considering withdrawal from the agreement. Interestingly, participation in U21

was cited as one of UBC's successes in the Trek 2010 launch (Piper, 2005, p.8), though the university's inclusion in the agreement was contested from the onset ('Say no to commercialization', 2005).

In spite of the aforementioned agenda which appears to conflict with the Trek 2010 vision, there have been steps taken towards realising Trek 2010 goals. In the area of sustainability, the university is receiving praises for its efforts – for example, being the only Canadian university recipient of Green Campus Recognition from US-based National Wildlife Federation (UBC Sustainability Office, 2007a). And, it reached Kyoto targets in 2007, five years ahead of schedule. The new president also appears committed to putting on a stronger public face and steering UBC more towards its social mission. Nonetheless, some of the reported successes are complex and debatable. University Town is praised as an ecological breakthrough given that people can live and work on campus (UBC Sustainability Office, 2006) though nowhere is it acknowledged that more than 50% of tenants have nothing to do with the university. Furthermore, "university town" also raises questions about overall equity, another goal elucidated in the Trek 2010 documents; student housing is inaccessible to large numbers of students with 450 square foot studio apartments costing $800 p/month excluding food, phone and electricity (see UBC Housing & Conference, 2007).

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In response to ivory tower accusations, universities across Canada have begun acknowledging their responsibility to the private and public sectors. They face both private and public pressures to be accountable which sometimes contradict each other. This is not to say that the private interest always wins; yet there are real ways that the private has an advantage over the public mission to accountability – primarily because the corporate community has financial power over the institution. When universities become more dependent on nongovernmental sources of funding, their hands become increasingly tied, sometimes preventing them from delivering on their public mission. UBC is being pulled towards honouring corporate interests and pushed away from its social mission.

Furthermore, public or social accountability at UBC has become more of a performance for public consumption than a realized or realizable goal. The call to accountability in the public interest or to students, as demonstrated in the Trek 2010 documents, in many ways revolves around vague calls to "excellence." However, noted in the original Trek 2010 Green Paper, it is highly contested what being the best actually means in a university, leading us to question the point of striving towards such a goal without defining what "excellence" actually is. As Sinclair (1995) writes, "an accountability relationship presupposes agreement about what constitutes an acceptable performance" (p.221). In following this line of reasoning, how can we determine that excellence has been reached at UBC? Shore and Wright (1999) have suggested that accountability within higher education has become a performance – to the public and to all

stakeholders in general. I would take this argument further to claim that it is the *appearance* of accountability which is the performance; just as UBC has become greatly concerned with its physical appearance, so too has it become concerned with the appearance of accountability to this undefined and arguably indefinable concept of excellence (see Readings, 1996). It appears, then, that accountability and excellence have become the onions of academia: we peel off each layer to find that there is no core. To a certain extent, accountability is an empty concept, since it is unclear how it could possibly be enforced when the "excellence" it is supposed to ensure is also a nebulous idea.

It is fair to conclude that while the memory of the Great Trek of 1922 is invoked in the Trek 2010 vision, the trek UBC is currently making is one where there is no clear end in sight. Becoming an "excellent," socially accountable university is perhaps proving to be more difficult than the initial construction of the university over 85 years ago. ♣

NOTES

1. See http://www.innovation.ca/index.cfm
2. See http://www.hr.ubc.ca/faculty_relations/agreements/appointmentfaculty. html

APPENDIX A. Differences between the Green and White Trek 2010 documents

Section	Green Paper	White Paper
A message from the president	[on being the best university in Canada] *"In one sense, such a goal is unreachable, since—as we discovered—no-one can agree on what being 'the best' means, in our complex environment of higher education. Nevertheless...we still want to be 'the best'—however that term is to be interpreted..."* [quoting director of UBC Learning Exchange] *"it may be time to strengthen the discourse on academic responsibility—the other side of the coin of academic freedom"* *"...daily affairs"*	[Discussion on 'being the best' missing] [Inclusion of discussion on UBC Okanagan] [allusion to Trek 1922] *"It was thanks to the 'Great Trek' of 1922, the march by UBC students from Vancouver to Point Grey, that the provincial government of the day acceded to the demands for a completion of a new campus. In September 2005, UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan will begin a new journey together, a new 'trek' to achieve the goal set out by UBC's first president Frank Wesbrook, of creating 'a provincial university without provincialism' that would make the world a better place. In Trek 2010 we have outlined the steps by which we hope to realize that vision"* *"...professional and business affairs"*
PEOPLE: Goals & Strategies	1) Ensure that UBC is accessible 2) Review rewards and incentives for both faculty and staff 3) Develop plans for the recruitment and retention of aboriginal students 4) Provide the best possible environment for all members of the campus community	1) Provide the best possible environment for all members of the campus community 2) Ensure that UBC is accessible 3) Intensify efforts to recruit, retain and develop the best people 4) Develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of aboriginal students 5) Review rewards and incentives for both faculty and staff
LEARNING: Introduction	*"...They [our students] will discover the value of pushing boundaries...Such goals will have an impact on our admission standards, curricular offerings, and graduation requirements"*	*"...They will learn to push boundaries...They will acquire strong analytical and communication skills, and continue to develop their ideas beyond graduation through lifelong learning"*

Section	Green Paper	White Paper
LEARNING: Goals & Strategies	1) Foster a sense of social awareness and global responsibility *through changes or additions to the curriculum* 2) Review the methods by which learning is delivered, including scheduling of courses and the structure of undergraduate programs 3) Ensure that all academic programs meet the highest standards of excellence	1) Foster a sense of social awareness and global responsibility • *Support faculty efforts to integrate global perspectives into curricular planning and teaching practice* • *Increase opportunities for student participation in international projects and study abroad programs* • *Encourage students to become involved in community service learning experiences* 2) Ensure that all academic programs meet the highest standards of excellence • *Create new programs for both full-time and part-time students that address the lifelong learning needs of citizens* • *Continue improvements to all aspects of the learning environment, including upgrades to laboratories and classrooms, and re-examine the configuration of instructional space in the context of changing expectations about teaching and learning* 3) Review the methods by which learning is delivered, including scheduling of courses and the structure of undergraduate programs • *Continually strive to improve the digital environment at all UBC sites* • *Enhance service and support for distance learners* 4) *Support innovations and improvements in teaching* • *Support innovative teaching and create new learning experiences through the application of leading-edge technology*
RESEARCH: *Introduction*	*"...Nothing will contribute more to improving the condition of life and our ability to achieve social harmony than the discover, dissemination and application of new knowledge...Original basic research and applied scholarship will help enhance the quality of life for all"*	*"...With these goals before it, the University seeks to improve the condition of life for all through basic research and the discover, dissemination and application of new knowledge. Through free and ethical inquiry in all disciplines and professions, UBC researchers will enlarge our understanding of the world, address its problems, and seek to enhance the social and cultural aspects of human experience. At the same time, the University recognises the value and importance of pure research in all areas: that is, research that may not have any immediate application, yet ultimately contributes to the body of human knowledge."*

Section	Green Paper	White Paper
RESEARCH: Goals & Strategies	1) Support the development of outstanding research in all fields and disciplines 2) Encourage local, regional and international research partnerships and exchanges • Collaborate with local and regional communities on problems of mutual interest in such areas as...social development • *Plan the creation of a Visiting Indigenous Scholar program, to bring outstanding aboriginal researchers to UBC from around the world* 3) Review recruitment and retention of graduate students • Improve ratio of undergraduates to graduate students *from 5:1 to 4:1* 4) Increase research funding from all sectors 5) *Ensure that the public is well informed about UBC research* • *Bring the results of research to public notice on a regular basis, and educate the public about the benefits of investing in research*	1) Support the development of outstanding research in all fields and disciplines • *Remove barriers that impede interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research* • *Ensure appropriate recognition of research achievement in the creative and performing arts* • *Provide opportunities and incentives to incorporate research into undergraduate programs* 2) Review recruitment and retention of graduate students, *post-doctoral fellows and research associates* • Increase ration of graduate to undergraduate students at UBC Vancouver • Build a strong graduate program at UBC Okanagan... • *Provide opportunities for the development of teamwork, creativity, critical thinking and strong communication skills among graduate students in all disciplines* 3) Increase research funding • Nurture relationships with the federal government to maintain and improve its participation in the research enterprise • Increase awareness of international sources of research funding 4) Encourage local, regional and international research partnerships and exchanges • Collaborate with local and regional communities on problems of mutual interest in such areas as...social and economic development • Develop and support cooperative research initiatives with Aboriginal scholars and communities in Canada and around the world • Develop partnerships involving faculty, students, staff and community organizations as a foundation for community-based research" 5) Facilitate and increase knowledge transfer for the benefit of society • *Encourage and expand technology transfer, and develop new models for knowledge translation* • Increase public awareness of research through the news media, public lectures, and open houses • Ensure that UBC research in conducted according to the highest standards of ethical inquiry and accountability • Seek more opportunities to collaborate with government, industry, and organized labour on research strategies to benefit the economy regionally and nationally

Section	Green Paper	White Paper
COMMUNITY: Introduction	[inclusion of UBC Okanagan] "...UBC will build on its downtown presence by extending the educational programming already offered at Robson Square, Great Northern Way and the Learning Exchange"	
COMMUNITY: Goals & Strategies	1) Develop more opportunities for community involvement and collaboration • Introduce a Community Engagement Awareness Week, analogous to Research Awareness Week, to recognize student, faculty, and staff achievement in this area" 2) Encourage greater connection between UBC and the external community • Make resources available for more public lectures and forums at venues like the Chan Centre and Robson Square • Develop and publish annually a register of outreach activities to communicate the nature and scope of UBC's public involvement 3) Expand UBC's link and collaborations with First Nations 4) Draw upon the interests and expertise of UBC alumni 5) Build good relations between the University, University Town, emerging on the Vancouver campus, and the external community through consultation and collaboration	1) Develop more opportunities for community involvement and collaboration • Acknowledge community and volunteer contributions by all members of the University • Create opportunities for employers, secondary school counsellors and other interested groups in the community to provide input and advice on goals and outcomes 2) Encourage greater connection between UBC and the external community • Offer more public lectures... • Ensure that the Irving K Barber Learning Centre fulfils its mandate as a provincial resource for the citizens of BC • Support and recognize faculty members' whose work makes a significant contribution to professional practice, public policy, and leadership... • Build...programs around UBC's role as the leading educational partner for the 2010 Olympics • Model UBC as a responsible, engaged, and sustainable community, dedicated to the principles of inclusivity and global citizenship" 3) Expand UBC's engagement with Aboriginal communities, especially in BC 4) Expand UBC's engagement with its Alumni [Entire section extended]

Section	Green Paper	White Paper
INTERNATION-ALIZATION: Introduction	"...develop new...links through exchange programs and educational consortia....The University should seek to broaden global awareness..."	"...develop new...links through enhanced student mobility and study abroad programs, faculty and staff exchange opportunities and educational consortia...The University will seek to broaden global awareness..."
INTERNATION-ALIZATION: Goals & Strategies	1) Develop global awareness through degree programs, public lectures and conference • Establish an annual seminar/lecture/conference series on global citizenship, to be held at the Chan Centre, Robson Square and UBC Okanagan 2) Increase learning opportunities abroad 3) Expand the international presence at UBC • ...with a goal of enrolling 15% of the undergraduate body from abroad • Develop a plan to establish a Global Learning and Citizenship Centre at UBC	1) Strengthen global awareness through degree programs... • Ensure that students have access to a range of courses and experiences that provide information and ideas about all parts of the world 2) Increase international learning opportunities 3) Enhance UBC's reputation internationally • Establish a UBC Asia-Pacific Regional Office • Enhance and increase support services for international students at UBC"

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