

Report of the External Review Committee
for the
Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies
University of British Columbia

May 2011

SUMMARY. Under the excellent leadership of Director Dianne Newell, the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies provides a variety of programs that are highly appreciated by the members of the UBC faculty who participate in them. Professor Newell has established a small but highly efficient team of staff dedicated to facilitating PWIAS programs and the work of the scholars involved in them. The Institute now has financial resources equaled by very few other institutes for advanced study in the world. However, twenty years after its foundation, its international profile remains remarkably low. Its collection of programs lack synergy and the coherence that would be provided by a strong international program of visiting scholars, a common feature of the leading institutes for advanced study.

The financial strength of PWIAS, its magnificent physical location and position within one of the world's leading universities provide PWIAS with what is needed for it to become a world-leading institute, if these advantages are exploited fully. To achieve this aim, PWIAS should restructure its programs so that they are coherent, synergistic and international, attracting outstanding scholars from around the world to interact with their peers at UBC. Currently, the accommodation of the Institute within the Koerner University Centre is underused because it provides insufficient space for a critical mass of activity; it should be expanded in order to provide the space and sense of place necessary for PWIAS to realize the full potential afforded by its superb existing resources.

The search for the new Director should aim to recruit internationally an outstanding scholar who can provide vision and intellectual leadership. Then, with its unique advantages and the committed backing of the UBC leadership, PWIAS will be able to achieve its stated objective of becoming one of the leading institutes for advanced study.

1. THE INSTITUTE AND ITS MISSION

1.1 Founding. The Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS) was established in 1991 by the gift of 6.5 million shares of Wall Financial Corporation stock (with a market value then of \$15 million) from Peter Wall to the UBC Foundation, to constitute a Peter Wall Endowment, exclusively for the purpose of funding PWIAS. The Deed of Trust for the Peter Wall Endowment charged the President of UBC, then David Strangway, with developing the concept for PWIAS, and he determined that it should be based on that of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, but, in its early years, the development of a

strong international fellowship program, a central feature of leading institutes for advanced study, was rejected. In 1994, the University added a \$10 million fund, the Hampton Endowment, to the capital resources of PWIAS.

1.2 Directors. Initially, John Grace, Dean of Graduate Studies, served as Acting Director until Kenneth MacCrimmon was appointed the first Director of the Institute in 1996. Dianne Newell became Acting Director in January 2003 and was then appointed as Director to serve for five years from January 2007. A search for a Director to succeed Dr Newell is currently being conducted.

1.3 Mission. In April 1998, the PWIAS Board of Trustees set out the Mission of the Institute as follows:

The Institute supports basic research through interdisciplinary initiatives that have the potential to make important advances in knowledge. The Institute brings together researchers from the University of British Columbia with distinguished scholars from around the world to conduct fundamental research drawing upon and contributing to a wide range of diverse disciplines. It supports basic research through interdisciplinary initiatives that contribute significantly to innovative advances of knowledge. Of overriding concern in all Institute activities is excellence in research characterized by being fundamental, interdisciplinary, and unique.

1.4 Programs. The Institute pursues its mission through a number of programs at UBC: Distinguished Professors (DP); Distinguished Visiting Professors (DVP); Distinguished Scholars in Residence; (DSR); Early Career Scholars (ECS); Major Thematic Grants (MTG); Exploratory Workshop Grants (EWG); and Theme Development Workshops (TDW). The first of these programs (DP & MTG) began in 1994. Since 2008, these have been supplemented by two programs, International Faculty Exchanges (IFE) and Peter Wall Colloquia Abroad (PWCA), established in the context of partnerships that have been formed with institutes in other countries: the Collège de France in Paris, the Technical University of Munich Institute for Advanced Study (TUM-IAS), and the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) in South Africa. Additionally, a series of annual lectures, the Wall Exchange (WE), to be given downtown in Vancouver, will begin in May 2011.

1.5 Governance. PWIAS is unique at UBC in having its own Deed of Trust and Board of Trustees. The Director of the Institute is responsible to the Board of Trustees of the Peter Wall Institute, which has five members: the President of UBC and two others appointed by the University, and two appointed by the donor. The Board meets twice a year and its meetings are also attended by a number of official observers including the Director. There is an Academic Advisory Committee, chaired by the Director, which meets before Board meetings, and at other times as required, composed of members of the UBC faculty. This Committee provides advice on program changes and new directions for the Institute, and evaluates recommendations from the Director for international partnership agreements and Distinguished Visiting Professor appointments. There are also three other committees chaired by the Director that evaluate applications for the various internal grants and visiting appointments.

Since 2004, for administrative purposes the Director has reported to the Vice-President, Research and International; previously, the Director reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. THE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND ITS PROCEDURES

2.1 Review Committee. This review of PWIAS has been commissioned by John Hepburn, Vice-President, Research and International, UBC, who established an External Review Committee comprising Peter Goddard (Director, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, USA); Judy Illes (Professor of Neurology and Canada Research Chair in Neuroethics, UBC, *Chair*); and Björn Wittrock (Principal, Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala, and University Professor at Uppsala University). The work of the Committee was supported by Dr Herbert Rosengarten of UBC, who acted as Review Coordinator.

2.2 Terms of Reference. The stated purpose of the Review is:

to review the strength and balance of the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC's scholarly and academic programs; to evaluate the Institute's leadership, governance, administration, and resources; to assess the Institute's contribution to and standing at UBC, nationally, and internationally; and to advise on the future development of the Institute.

The detailed Terms of Reference of the Review Committee are given at **Annex A**. The Committee received for its consideration a Self Study document prepared by the Director and a number of other documents, all of which are listed at **Annex B**.

2.3 Meetings of the Committee. The Committee reviewed PWIAS on April 14 and 15, 2011, having convened the previous evenings for initial discussions. The Committee began its visit by meeting with John Hepburn and Anna Kindler, Associate Vice-President, Academic Affairs, and then being taken to PWIAS to meet with Dianne Newell and see the Institute facilities. Over the following two days, in the Koerner Library Building, the Committee met successively with individuals associated with PWIAS (listed at **Annex C**): representative groups drawn from the Deans, former Early Career Scholars (two groups), the Advisory Committee, former Distinguished Scholars in Residence (two groups), partners of the Institute, and the PWIAS staff. The Committee met twice more with Dianne Newell before it presented its preliminary conclusions to John Hepburn late on April 15, after which it retired to begin drafting this Report. The members of the Review Committee are grateful to all those who took time to meet with them.

2.4 Previous Review and the Strategic Plan. There has been one previous external review of PWIAS, conducted by Professors Forrest (University of New Mexico), Grace (UBC), Root-Bernstein (Michigan State) and Nadel (UBC), which reported in February 2003. Its recommendations included: prepare a strategic plan and vision statement; make the MTG program more flexible; establish a communications strategy; eliminate or reconfigure the residential facility at PWIAS; appoint a distinguished Director after an international search; and eliminate the Institute's \$5.5 million debt – all of which objectives were met; formalize the Advisory Committee – on which some progress has been made; provide increased funding for ECS including more equitable teaching buyouts; ensure stable funding to allow proper budgeting; and explore additional funding sources – although ECS funding has been increased recently, all of these remain significant issues to be addressed, in the view of this Review Committee,

The recommendation that a strategic plan be prepared was implemented following Dr Newell's appointment as Director in 2007 and a *Strategic Plan 2009-2011* was approved by the

Board of Trustees in June 2009. It set four objectives to be realized by March 2011: enter formal partnerships with selected institutions internationally; implement a broadened portfolio of programs including WE and PWCA; develop and employ a comprehensive marketing strategy; and become a well-known leader among the international field of institutes for advanced study. By January 2011, PWIAS reported that each of these objectives had been met, although, in the view of this Review Committee, its success in becoming well known is quite limited [see §5.1].

3. THE INSTITUTE'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

3.1 The PWIAS Building. The PWIAS was originally housed in Green College, moving to St John's College in 1998. In 1999, it moved to its present facilities in the Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, where it occupies the whole of the top floor of the three-story main building and the adjacent East Wing. The middle floor of the main building [gross area about 820 m²] contains a restaurant, the Sage Bistro, open to the whole of UBC, and the lower floor [gross area about 1640 m²] contains classrooms mainly used by the Commerce Faculty. A glass atrium connects the main building and the East Wing and provides a designated direct entrance for the Institute.

The top floor of the main building [gross area about 450 m²] contains offices for the Director, Peter Wall Distinguished Professor and up to six Distinguished Scholars in Residence, a boardroom, a lounge, and two large interconnecting conference rooms capable of accommodating 36 and 49 people, respectively. The East Wing [gross area about 360 m²] originally contained living accommodation for twelve scholars, six on each of two floors. In 2009, following a recommendation of the 2003 External Review, the upper floor was converted into an administrative area, providing offices for the Institute's administrative staff, a project office for major grant programs, an office for short-term Distinguished Visiting Professors, and additional meeting areas; the Institute retains six guest rooms on the lower floor, two of which are being converted to form a two-room suite.

3.2 Staff. The Institute's administrative staff is minimal. In addition to the Director, there are the Assistant Director, a Senior Program Coordinator and a Financial and Facilities Clerk, all full-time, and a half-time Administrative Assistant. Information technology support is outsourced to UBC Information Technology.

3.3 Financial Resources. The actual expenditure in 2009-10 and the budget for 2010-11 both entail a total expenditure of about \$1.6 million. This expenditure is entirely financed from the two endowment funds: the Peter Wall Endowment (about 69% in 2009-10 and 51% projected in 2010-11) and the Hampton Endowment (about 31% in 2009-10 and 49% projected in 2010-11). At the end of March 2010, the capital of the Peter Wall Endowment stood at \$83.9 million, and that of the Hampton Endowment at \$11.2 million, over \$95 million in total. Although the bulk of the Peter Wall Endowment is held in Wall Financial Corporation stock (\$68.9 million in March 2010), the Committee was informed that there is now \$15 million in accumulated income and that there had been as much as \$18 million until \$3 million was allocated to the Peter Wall Solutions Initiative, which is not a program of PWIAS.

4. THE INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

4.1 Distinguished Scholars in Residence. This is one of the Institute's most important programs. It might perhaps even be regarded as a core program of PWIAS, although neither this program, nor any other is given such a designation by the Institute itself. It involves the appointment of six, formerly four, competitively selected UBC professors from any field of the arts and sciences. Distinguished Scholars in Residence are appointed for one year, but there is considerable variation as to the time that individual scholars choose or are able to spend in their offices at the Institute. There was clear evidence that the program was highly appreciated by holders of the positions. Even if occupancy of offices varies, it is obvious that there is a residential experience. Furthermore, the weekly meetings of the scholars and other forms of formal and informal contacts between the scholars in residence, including the initial "retreat", were highly appreciated. In fact, some scholars described their year as Distinguished Scholars in Residence as having had a transformative impact on their intellectual development.

The selection of Distinguished Scholars in Residence is made solely on the basis of individual merit. Little or no consideration seems to be given to questions of thematic coherence between the Fellows of a given cohort. This, however, is not a drawback but may be an advantage that in practice seems to have engendered interesting interdisciplinary meetings and encounters. In fortuitous circumstances such arrangements may set the stage for serendipity and for truly innovative research.

On the other hand, we noticed the absence of any planned spaces or events for meetings between the Distinguished Scholars in Residence and the Early Career Scholars of a given year, something that would have been seen as natural and desirable in most institutes for advanced study. Indeed when the first institutes for advanced study were created, it was precisely the need for these kinds of interactions between senior and junior scholars, albeit of an informal nature, that was seen to be a basic rationale for establishing them. In the contemporary academic landscape, the need for such meetings is greater than ever.

4.2 Early Career Scholars. Institutes for advanced study may play a crucial role in the formation of the next generation of leading scholars. Increasingly funders, governments and universities across the world have come to realize the enormous potential of such institutes for the development of early career scholars. UBC and PWIAS are to be congratulated for establishing an interesting program of this type.

The Early Career Scholars Program brings together up to 14 UBC faculty from across the campus each year for a one-year appointment at the Institute. Applications are made following a campus-wide announcement. The scholars do not have offices at the Institute; they meet for 10 evenings during the year, in addition to one or two weekend retreats. There have been 158 Early Career Scholars in total at the PWIAS over 15 years.

The Review Committee met with two groups of Early Career Scholars, each comprising scholars from different yearly cohorts. All felt they had gained substantially from the program, but the two groups differed in the level of their enthusiasm. For the scholars in one group, the experience had been transformative, "opening the world" beyond the boundaries of their research. One scholar commented that she "wanted [the year] to go on and on," and several had formed long-lasting relationships with other scholars in their cohort.

While the views of the scholars in the other group were also positive, they were more concerned to articulate ways in which the Institute could enhance the program, in particular

by providing opportunities for interaction for scholars recruited to the Institute internationally. Both groups suggested that opportunities for greater contact with, and mentoring by, senior scholars of the Institute would be beneficial, and that such opportunities would be enhanced by providing office space for them at the Institute.

Each Early Career Scholar is provided with \$10,000 for research expenses, up to 60% of which may be used to increase the Scholar's stipend. Some use this allowance to buy themselves out of teaching a course, but the cost of doing this varies between departments and the burden of negotiation falls on the scholar. It was clear that some department heads saw the award as more desirable and prestigious than others. The program would be more effective if there were a centrally negotiated arrangement under which each Early Career Scholar is given a reduced teaching load and a grant for further expenses that is independent of the cost of replacing the scholar.

More generally, it seems that to realize the full potential of the Program the Early Career Scholars would benefit from having substantially larger resources put at their disposal. Ideally, they should be able to interact on a daily basis with a cohort of internationally leading senior scholars, some of whom are in residence at PWIAS. One might even conceive of a program that extends significantly in time beyond the current one-year appointment.

4.3 Distinguished Visiting Professors. Over the period 2005-2010, the Distinguished Visiting Professor Program has brought six prominent senior scholars from abroad to PWIAS for brief visits, on average two weeks in length. Three of them have come from the Collège de France, with which PWIAS has formed one of its new international partnerships, and these have the potential to aid the further development of this program.

While these visits have been valuable, it is obvious that appreciably longer stays would add greatly to the potential for interaction with the Distinguished Scholars in Residence as well as with the Early Career Scholars and the UBC community more generally. There could be more substantive links between the work of PWIAS and the public Wall Exchange Lectures planned to take place in the city of Vancouver. If PWIAS is to be recognized as one of the leading institutes for advanced study internationally, the program of Distinguished Visiting Professors will need to be greatly strengthened, and this should be a major priority for the Institute.

4.4 International Partnerships. The establishment in recent years of strategic alliances with two institutes in Europe and one in South Africa represents an important achievement of PWIAS and its Director. It is an initiative designed to increase the visibility of PWIAS in the international scholarly community and also to infuse into the activities of PWIAS international representation. The two programs subsumed under the international partnerships, namely International Faculty Exchanges (IFE) and Peter Wall Colloquia Abroad (PWCA), serve the dual purpose of invigorating research initiatives at UBC with important international perspectives and of raising the institute's international profile.

The choice of institutions as strategic partners seems well considered. It involves institutes that hold an important position in their respective countries: one of them (Collège de France) is one of the oldest in its part of the world; the other two have been created in the new millennium. All three institutes also, albeit in different ways, bridge the divide, as does PWIAS itself, between the natural, technological, and medical sciences on the one hand and the social and human sciences on the other. However, despite these qualities, the international partnerships should be seen as a complement to other programs and cannot

replace the need for strengthening and extending the program of Distinguished Visiting Professors.

4.5 Distinguished Professors. Peter Wall Distinguished Professors are internationally leading scholars drawn from the faculty of UBC who are attached to the Institute permanently or on a long-term basis. Originally, the posts were permanent but now, following the legal abolition of the retirement age for faculty, the tenure of new Distinguished Professors is limited to a five-year tenure, which may be renewed once. At present, there is one Distinguished Professor, Brett Finlay, a microbiologist, and another one, Derek Gregory, a human geographer, has been appointed from 1 July 2011. The PWIAS meets the costs of their appointments.

The Distinguished Professors play the role at PWIAS that permanent or long-term fellows or faculty play at some other institutes for advanced study: providing the long-term commitment necessary for the development of the institution and taking an important part in decisions about invitations to visiting scholars. In some institutes for advanced study, such as Princeton, these positions are permanent, whereas in others, such as the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, they are limited in duration, as they now seem to be at PWIAS. However, in all cases where institutes for advanced study have permanent faculty, there are several who provide a breadth of expertise and viewpoints. It is not clear what the rationale is for having only one or two.

4.6 Associates Forum. The Associates Forum meets every two weeks for lunch or dinner and a talk, and comprises all the members of the UBC faculty who have been associated with PWIAS, whether through participation in one of its programs or through service on one of its committees. At the end of December 2010 there were 367 Associates. The membership includes a broad cross section of the UBC faculty.

The Forum clearly provides an important venue for interdisciplinary dialogue that is much appreciated by those who attend. On the other hand, we heard voices arguing that the Forum adds to the perception on the part of some members of the UBC community that it is necessary to belong to, or have connections with, this inside group in order to be successful in applying for participation in a PWIAS program.

4.7 Exploratory Workshops Grants. Exploratory Workshop Grants of \$20,000 are made to enable researchers from various disciplines at UBC to meet with external experts for several days at the Institute and explore research progress and possibilities on proposed themes. From information the Review Committee received informally at various times during its visit, it was clear that the program is highly appreciated by those who have received one of these grants. Some faculty have participated in as many as three workshops during the life of the program.

While we are not able to assess the long-term impact of the workshops, evidence for the short-term benefits is provided by the publications produced. However, the funding level needs to be doubled in order to cover adequately the costs of bringing an appropriate number of international participants for two or three days to the west coast.

4.8 Major Thematic Grants. The Institute offers Major Thematic Grants of \$500,000 competitively to provide funding over three to five years for teams to develop new research areas. One explicit objective is that UBC should become a permanent centre for research in the area. Proposals must be interdisciplinary, involving faculty from a number of different

UBC departments, and a successful PWIAS Exploratory Workshop is a pre-requisite.

While this program provides resources that are highly appreciated by those who receive them, the Review Committee did not receive evidence of the benefits they had generated in terms of the research programs that they had stimulated. Such a major grants program is not a typical core activity for an institute for advanced studies, and it is not clear how it integrates with the Institute's other programs. If genuinely there are insufficient mechanisms in Canada for funding truly first-rate research, then having such a mechanism at UBC is an advantage. However, it is not clear that this is the case.

4.9 The Wall Exchange. The Wall Exchange aims to feature high profile speakers in an annual series of lectures to be held in a downtown Vancouver venue. The first lecture, to be given by Craig Ventner, has already generated a great deal of excitement. While events of this nature will surely increase the local visibility of PWIAS and help communicate innovative research to the wider community, the lack of a real connection to the work of the Institute means that they cannot enhance its reputation in any deep sense. Name association is not enough, but if future lecturers were drawn from highly distinguished international scholars visiting the Institute, the necessary connection would be there. In any case, the administrative and logistical burdens of running such a large-scale, high profile public event, and the difficulties of outsourcing them, should not be underestimated.

5. COMMENTS

5.1 Perceptions of PWIAS. The Review Committee received from the Deans and others whom it met glowing reports about the experiences of faculty who have participated in the Institute's programs. It also encountered the perception from some that PWIAS is a rather internally focused and closed entity, not visible enough as the hub of intellectual activity at UBC that it aspires to be. While no one doubted the benefits of having PWIAS as an outstanding events facility and local funding source, a number of those we met voiced the desire for a more international, outwardly focused institute for advanced study, with a strong program of international scholars in residence, that would provide a truly vibrant intellectual centre.

The Review Committee also consulted the directors of eight leading institutes for advanced study from both sides of the Atlantic about their perceptions of PWIAS. Rather shockingly, most had not heard of it. The two who had substantial knowledge of PWIAS had favorable assessments of its achievements within the context of its internally focused programs. However, it is remarkable that an institute for advanced study with the resources available to PWIAS, at least currently, has not achieved a very much more prominent international status.

5.2 The Institute Building. The Review Committee's visit occurred at the time of the year when one cohort of Distinguished Scholars in Residence is replaced by another, and so it was not able to assess directly the ambience and level of use of the building. But, from a number of comments it received from people who visit the building, the Committee formed the view that it was probably underutilized at present. While its setting is truly magnificent, the Institute building itself does not fully convey the sense of place and embodiment of ethos that are typically found in leading institutes. In part, this is because the building is shared, and in part because the Institute programs do not provide a continuity of critical mass of academic activity.

It does not help that the two areas of space assigned to the Institute are physically somewhat separated, linked by a narrow atrium that serves as a corridor and provides the Institute with an independent entrance, albeit very much a side entrance. Part, some 160 m² of PWIAS's gross floor area of 810 m², remains residential accommodation for Institute visitors, but the relative isolation of the site after hours and the limited infrastructure for supporting the living accommodation lessens the attractiveness of this facility as a place for visitors to stay for more than one or two nights.

Institutes for advanced study typically have 30 to 50 resident scholars, which would require three to four times the space now occupied by PWIAS, with living accommodation provided elsewhere. If the whole of the University Centre building were made available for PWIAS, it would provide a quite outstanding location for an institute for advanced study, able to accommodate a really vibrant and attractive community of scholars drawn from the UBC community and internationally, whose daily presence in the building would make it an intellectual focus for the campus.

5.3 The Academic Advisory Committee. The Academic Advisory Committee consists of nine members, in addition to the Director, and the Review Committee met with four of the nine. In addition to its formal meetings, typically twice a year before Board Meetings, the Director calls upon individual members with particular expertise when advice is needed. The members who met with the Review Committee commented on the limited activity ongoing within the Institute on a daily basis, and the need to develop a plan for communication and outreach.

The members of the Academic Advisory Committee, appointed by the Board of Trustees, are all drawn from the faculty of UBC. The Deed of Trust specified the appointment of an Advisory Committee “composed of some of the world’s most distinguished scholars to give ... advice in selecting the best possible programs, projects and people”, clearly envisioning an international membership. Such advisory committees are an important and customary part of the governance structures of leading institutes for advanced study. A Committee with strong external representation would play an important role in providing wider academic perspectives for the Institute and in enhancing its international profile and reputation. It would also lessen the likelihood of conflicts of interest arising, or a member of the Advisory Committee being able to use the Committee to advance his or her own agenda.

5.4 Interdisciplinarity. Fostering interdisciplinary research is a central element in the mission of PWIAS and it has been a prime motivation for establishing institutes for advanced study from their beginnings. They cut across the departmental disciplinary structures that have been a characteristic feature of the modern university; by freeing researchers from teaching and administrative duties, they provide them with the time and opportunity to interact with scholars from other disciplines, something that is extremely difficult within the busy, entrepreneurial context of the contemporary university. However, new cross disciplinary interactions often result not from programmed activity, but rather from the creation of an environment in which they can occur serendipitously.

UBC has a remarkable collection of focused interdisciplinary research institutes and centres. Their functions are different from those of an institute for advanced study, which is characterized by fostering curiosity-driven research. The Review Committee perceived a lack of communication about interdisciplinary work at UBC and doubts as to the role of the College for Interdisciplinary Studies. The Committee heard that feelings that the humanities

were not sharing in the resources being devoted to interdisciplinary research at UBC had led to proposals for a research institute for the humanities.

Whereas focused interdisciplinary research institutes do not undermine the role of PWIAS, an institute whose remit covers the whole of the humanities might well do so. The formation of such an institute would seem to be an unstructured response to needs that the Committee believes that PWIAS should be addressing. Ultimately, the ability of PWIAS to fulfill its mission and to realize its aspiration to become one of the world's leading institutes for advanced study must rest on a commitment shared by the leadership of PWIAS itself and the leadership of the University. The current range of interdisciplinary initiatives at UBC might be fruitful, but the establishment of a new institute with missions partly analogous to those of PWIAS would be incoherent and could jeopardize the development of both institutions.

5.5 The Institute for Advanced Studies and the University. The first institutes for advanced study were established independently of any particular university, even if they enjoyed close symbiotic relations with universities nearby, and this is true of a number of the leading institutes for advanced study today. Increasingly, however, particularly in recent years, such institutes have been established by universities and these now constitute the great majority of the many more than one hundred institutes for advanced study that now exist. However, university-based institutes vary considerably in their principal characteristics: the degree of independence given them by their parent university; their financial resources; how outward looking and international they are. At their most limited, they are research hotels, providing housing for distinguished academic visitors, respite care for the home institution's rising stars, and badges of international status and aspiration for the university.

In comparison with its university-based peer institutions, PWIAS has financial resources that perhaps only one or two can match. It also has an exceptional governance structure that should be capable of providing protection from short-term pressures from within the university. However, it is also exceptionally inward facing: only to a limited extent does PWIAS act as an international focus, attracting to UBC leading scientists and scholars and research activities that might not otherwise come there. But, as a very well resourced institution, with a truly superb location, in a world-class university, it has all it needs to fulfill that important role.

5.6 Search for the Next Director. The advertisement for the Directorship of PWIAS states that "External applicants, if successful, will be required to secure a tenured position at the University in addition to the Directorship". This may be contrasted with the concurrent advertisement for the Directorship of the new Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, which specifies that it will be "an open ended Professorial appointment carrying the title and responsibilities of the Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies for an initial five year term". The UBC advertisement hardly seems to be going out of its way to encourage outstanding external candidates, whereas the Birmingham one clearly seeks to gather the strongest possible field internationally.

Indeed, the Committee was informed that only internal candidates had been shortlisted because the Search Committee thought that there was sufficient talent within this pool. Of course, it might very well be that the best candidate would be internal, but there seemed to be a sentiment that good enough is good enough. One member of Search Committee said that it would not be possible to attract a leading research scholar to such a position, in stark

contradiction to the consistent experience of the leading institutes for advanced study. Others voiced concerns, which the Review Committee shares, about the processes by which the search for a new Director is being conducted.

A leading institute for advanced study needs an outstanding scholar as its director to provide intellectual leadership; only a highly respected scientist or scholar can exercise such leadership effectively. It is essential for the future of PWIAS, and for its aspirations to international standing, that the search for the next Director be conducted effectively and completely openly, without compromise, in order to make the best possible appointment.

6. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

6.1 Director and Staff. Within the context of its current programs and the existing interpretation of its mission, Dianne Newell has done an excellent job at developing the strengths of PWIAS. The Institute has an administrative staff highly committed to the support of the work of its scholars, an essential attribute of any highly successful institute for advanced study. At present the Director reports to the Vice-President, Research and International. The Committee felt that a reporting line to the Vice-President, Academic, would be more appropriate and reflect better the role and standing PWIAS should have within the University.

6.2 Programs. The Institute's programs have provided valuable benefits to members of the UBC community. The Review Committee heard powerful personal testimony that the Institute has contributed to the development of Early Career Scholars and Distinguished Scholars in Residence. The Major Thematic Grants provide substantial resources highly appreciated by the recipients, but the Committee was not given any evidence that this program, quite unusual for an institute for advanced study, is an exceptionally effective way to use resources.

6.3 International Status. As the *Strategic Plan 2009-11* explains, PWIAS is modeled on the Princeton IAS, in particular in not focusing on short-term predetermined deliverables or immediate utility, and in providing complete freedom to its members to pursue their own research goals. The Plan seeks to use the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) in Uppsala as benchmarks for its performance. In recent decades, institutes for advanced study have been established in increasing numbers around the world, each responding to its local context. But leading institutes for advanced study, such as IAS and SCAS, have their activities centred round strong international competitive residential fellowship programs. The activities of PWIAS lack this sort of coherence; without such a core they seem loosely associated and they lack synergy. To raise its international profile, PWIAS has established partnerships with the Collège de France, the TUM-IAS and STIAS, but such bilateral relationships alone will not enhance its reputation enough to place PWIAS in the front rank of institutes for advanced study internationally.

6.4 Financial Strength. The *Strategic Plan* characterized the financial resources of PWIAS as a weakness, but currently they provide a great strength. While, in the past, the volatility of the Peter Wall Endowment made forward planning difficult, the Institute's assets, approaching \$100 million including \$15 million in accumulated income, now make it financially one of the strongest institutes in the world. They greatly exceed what is necessary to sustain an annual budget of \$1.6 million; indeed they could easily support a budget of

more than twice this size. Although the endowment lacks diversity, the accumulated income would enable such an increase in scale to be undertaken with confidence. However, the present budgetary process appears to be arcane, and the recommendation of the last External Review, that the funding arrangements for PWIAS be reviewed “to ensure stable funding to allow for proper budgeting and programming” still needs to be implemented.

6.5 A Crucial Choice. The PWIAS is at a truly crucial juncture in its development. Its current resources, together with the solid base that the present Director has established, create a quite exceptional opportunity at this time to revise the way it implements its mission, to make it more outward looking, with a view to moving it to a higher international level. The Institute can either continue to provide a loose collection of well appreciated inward facing programs, and continue to act somewhat anomalously as a local research funding body, and also as a fine events facility, or it can evolve, quite quickly given its resources, into a vibrant and distinctive international research centre, which could provide an important contribution to UBC’s growing international standing. If the latter, PWIAS would be of much more benefit to the University than in its present role.

6.6 The Next Director. It is not clear to us that the University has the appropriate confidence in, and ambition for, PWIAS to seize this opportunity. In part, these concerns have been raised by the equivocal attitudes we detected toward the search for the next Director. A well-resourced well-established institute for advanced study can certainly attract a leading international scholar to be its director. The duties of the director of such an institution are demanding as well as rewarding, but, given appropriate administrative support, they do not need to exclude the possibility of continued research activity. Indeed, as Dianne Newell agreed, without a continuing commitment to research, the director would be become ineffective before long.

6.7 The Moment of Opportunity. Such an opportunity may not last for long. At present, PWIAS may well be unique in the world among institutes for advanced study in having appreciably more resources than it needs for its present programs. Such a situation naturally attracts predators eager to deploy the resources for their own schemes, producing mission creep of the sort that is perhaps already discernible. Given that the resources of PWIAS are sufficient to establish an appropriately sized institute but obviously tiny compared with those needed for UBC as whole, if the moment is not seized, the resources may be dissipated rather than focused, and a glorious opportunity will have been lost.

7. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- (a) The Director, Dianne Newell, has done an excellent job at developing PWIAS within the context of its present programs and mission, providing a firm basis for significant future development. [6.1]
- (b) The staff is minimal in size but constitutes an essential asset for PWIAS because it is unequivocally committed to facilitating the work of its scholars. [3.2, 6.1]
- (c) The building has a truly magnificent location but it is underused and the parts of it allocated to PWIAS provide insufficient space for a leading institute with the resources of PWIAS to achieve a critical mass of activity. [3.1, 5.2]
- (d) The financial assets of the Institute, both capital and accumulated income, make it one of the best-resourced institutes for advanced study in the world, able to support a much enhanced program. [3.3, 6.4]
- (e) The programs of PWIAS are well appreciated by those who participate in them. [4.1-2, 4.6-8, 6.2]
- (f) For an institute established twenty years ago that is now exceptionally well resourced, PWIAS has a very low international profile. [5.1, 6.3]
- (g) There are insufficient opportunities for contact between the Early Career Scholars and more senior scholars. [4.2]
- (h) Unless the Distinguished Visitor Program is greatly strengthened, PWIAS will not be able to realize its aspiration to become an internationally leading institute for advanced studies. [4.3]
- (i) The International Partnerships have been well chosen but they are not in themselves enough to secure the international status to which PWIAS aspires. [4.4, 6.3]
- (j) The Distinguished Professors play the important role of permanent faculty, helping to provide the academic direction for PWIAS, but there needs to be more than one or two of them for this to be effective. [4.5]
- (k) The Associates Forum provides an important forum for interdisciplinary discussion but the special status given to the Associates adds to the view, held by some in UBC, that to participate in PWIAS programs one has to be a member of an insider group. [4.6, 5.1]
- (l) No evidence was presented to the Review Committee of the effectiveness of the Major Thematic Grants program, and it is not clear that it is either an appropriate or a coherent activity for an institute for advanced study. [4.8]
- (m) The planned Wall Exchange lectures may raise the profile of PWIAS within Vancouver, but unless the speakers are drawn from the Institute's programs, they will not enhance its

reputation in any meaningful way. [4.9]

- (n) Although UBC possesses a remarkable collection of fruitful interdisciplinary activities, communication about them seems poor in some instances, and the role of the College for Interdisciplinary Studies obscure, leading to a danger of lack of coherence. In particular, establishing a further cross-disciplinary institute at UBC whose mission overlaps that of PWIAS would jeopardize the development of both institutions. [5.4]
- (o) Amongst institutes for advanced study, PWIAS is exceptionally inward looking and its programs, while well appreciated by those who have participated in them, lack sufficient coherence, synergy and external impact. [5.5, 6.3, 6.5]
- (p) The current search for the next Director has not aimed uncompromisingly and determinedly to recruit the best candidate, should that person not be at UBC. [5.6, 6.6]
- (q) There is a danger that the very considerable assets now possessed by PWIAS may attract predators within UBC and be expended on activities not central to its mission. [6.7]
- (r) As a very well-resourced institution, with a truly superb location, in a world class university, PWIAS has all the prerequisites for realizing its aspiration to become one of the leading institutes for advanced study, provided that UBC is willing to seize the opportunity and commit itself to this vision. [5.5-6, 6.5-7]

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (A) Enhance the Early Career Scholars program by providing the scholars with office space in the PWIAS building, negotiating a reduced teaching load for each ECS in addition to an increased standard grant, thus facilitating their interaction with senior scholars (DPs, DVPs and DSRs). [4.1-2]
- (B) As a major priority, greatly strengthen the Distinguished Visitor Program to bring distinguished scholars to UBC, provide mentoring to Early Career Scholars and raise the international profile of PWIAS. [4.3]
- (C) Modify the privileged status given to PWIAS associates to address the perception within parts of UBC that PWIAS is for the benefit of an insider group. [4.6, 5.1]
- (D) If the Exploratory Workshops Grants program is to be continued, the value of the grants should be doubled to \$40,000 to facilitate international participation. [4.7]
- (E) Discontinue the Major Thematic Grants program in order that the funds can be deployed more effectively to develop the programs that will secure PWIAS's place among the leading institutes for advanced study. [4.9]
- (F) Extend the space available to PWIAS within the Koerner University Centre, preferably to encompass the whole building, in order to provide the space and sense of place necessary for it to realize its potential as an institute for advanced study. [5.2]

- (G) Eliminate the current 'hotel' space within PWIAS and assign dedicated residential space elsewhere within UBC for PWIAS visiting scholars. [5.2]
- (H) Restructure the Academic Advisory Committee to include a substantial number of distinguished international scholars from outside UBC. [5.3]
- (I) Address the apparent lack of coherence and communication relating to interdisciplinary initiatives at UBC, and ensure that any new institutions do not undermine the role of PWIAS. [5.4]
- (J) Change the administrative reporting structure so that the Director reports to the Vice-President, Academic, in future. [6.1]
- (K) Re-launch the search for the next Director, seeking to recruit internationally a leading scholar, who, with appropriate administrative support, will be able to remain active in research. [5.5, 6.6]
- (L) Exploiting fully the exceptional financial resources and advantages of location possessed by the Institute, and with the committed backing of the UBC leadership, refocus PWIAS programs so that they are coherent, synergistic and international, and so the Institute can attract outstanding scholars from around the world to interact with Early Career Scholars, Distinguished Scholars in Residence and others, thus enabling PWIAS to realize its aim to be one of the leading institutes for advanced study and also maximizing the benefit to UBC. [6.5-7]

Peter Goddard
Judy Illes
Björn Wittrock

Annex A. Terms of Reference of the Review Committee.

1. *Academic programs:* To review and evaluate the quality, format, organization, promotion, participation in and impact of the Institute's residential, thematic, and new partnership programs.
2. *Governance, organization, and administration:* To review and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of governance and organizational structures, leadership, and administration of the Institute, as well as the relevant support systems both within the Institute and available to the Institute, including the effectiveness of the shift in reporting for administrative purposes to the VP Research and International from the Dean of Graduate Studies.
3. *Interactions with and impact on UBC, the Vancouver community, and beyond:* To assess the Institute's role, contribution and achievement in advancing interdisciplinarity campus-wide; to review and evaluate the Institute's interactions with other units across the University and with its external communities including CFIS and other institutes and centres with similar missions, and the greater public community.
4. *Infrastructure and resources:* To review and evaluate the physical and financial resources of the Institute and the effectiveness of their deployment, including its location and space requirements; research, meeting, administrative, and guest facilities; equipment; and funding sources and annual operating budget.
5. *Strategic Planning Document:* To review and evaluate how well the Institute is implementing or furthering the goals articulated in its *Strategic Plan 2009-2011* and how the Institute may further grow in its impact and value to the University and the community in alignment with the UBC *Place and Promise* Strategic Plan.
6. *Other advice:* to provide other advice, as appropriate, relative to the general purpose of this review.

Annex B. Documents received by the Review Committee.

PWIAS Self Study Document, March 2011

Appendices:

List of Residential Awards 1996-2010

List of Thematic Awards 1996-2010

List of International Partnership Awards, 2009-2010

Residential Awards Charts

Thematic Awards Charts

Books Received Resulting from Awards

Selected Testimonials by Program, Submitted Winter 2010-2011

Deed of Trust

Director, Dianne Newell CV

Distinguished Professor, Brett Finlay CV

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Information Technology Agreement (Interim)

International Partnerships, Letters on Progress, February 2011

International Partnerships, Memoranda of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding, Food Services/Sage Bistro, 2009-2011

Financial Reports for 2010

Strategic Plan 2009-2011

2003 External Review Report

2003 External Review Responses

Annual Reports 2010, 2009, 2007-2008

PWIAS Brochure

UBC Strategic Plan: *Place and Promise*

Peter Wall Distinguished UBC Scholars in Residence Program Call for Proposals 2012-13

Advertisement for new Director PWIAS, January 2011

Statement of qualities sought in the new Director PWIAS

Written comments from Kai Chan (Associate Professor, Resources, Environment & Sustainability), Douglas Scott (Professor, Physics & Astronomy), Moshe Shapiro (Professor, Chemistry), D. P. Speert (Professor, Pediatrics), Abidin Kusno (Associate Professor, Institute of Asian Research), Martin Barlow (Professor, Mathematics), Mark Vessey (Principal, Green College)

Announcement of the appointment of Derek Gregory as Peter Wall Distinguished Professor

Announcement of the Wall Exchange lecture series

Notices of application deadlines 2011: Early Career Scholars; Exploratory Workshops;

Distinguished Scholars in Residence; Major Thematic Grants

Distinguished Scholars in Residence Program 2012-13 Call for Applications

Letter to Potential Applicants, Early Career Scholars program

Annex C. Individuals who met with the Review Committee.

Jehannine Austin, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine
Gage Averill, Dean of Arts
Richard Carpiano, Assistant Professor, Sociology
Ken Carty, Professor, Political Science
Emma Cunliffe, Assistant Professor, Law
Catherine Dauvergne, Senior Advisor to the President; Professor, Law
Stanislas Dehaene, Experimental Cognitive Psychology, Collège de France and 2011 Wall
Distinguished Visiting Professor
Jessica de Villiers, Associate Professor, English
Leah Edelstein-Keshet, Professor, Mathematics
Brett Finlay, Professor, Microbiology, Chemistry
Sathish Gopalakrishnan, Assistant Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Sherrill Grace, Professor, English
Sneja Gunew, Associate Principal, College for Interdisciplinary Studies
Barbara Harrmann, Assistant Director, Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies
John Hepburn, Vice-President, Research and International
Sid Katz, Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences; Executive Director, Community Affairs
Anna Kindler, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Roman Krems, Assistant Professor, Chemistry
Cyril Leung, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Applied Science
Andrew Macnab, Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Pediatrics
Emma MacEntee, Senior Program Officer, Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies
Gregg Morin, Assistant Professor, Medical Genetics
Dianne Newell, Director, Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies
Sarah Otto, Professor and Director, Biodiversity Research Centre
Dinesh Pai, Professor, Computer Science
John Richardson, Professor, Forest Sciences
Janis Sarra, Professor, Law
Margaret Schabas, Professor, Philosophy
Curtis Suttle, Associate Dean, Science
Ilan Vertinsky, Professor, Forest Economics, Sauder School of Business
Patricia Vertinsky, Professor, Human Kinetics
Mark Vessey, Principal, Green College
Lawrence Ward, Professor, Psychology
Mark Warren, Professor, Political Science