

# INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT

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# UBC CONTEXT

- Top 40 – world ranking; Top 20 – public
- 10,000 grad students – 3600 doctoral, 6400 masters
- 35% international grad students
- Almost no tuition differences domestic vs. international (research programs)
- Avg. PhD funding – \$30,000/yr (4 yrs)
- Avg. MA/MSc funding - \$17,500/yr (2 yrs)
- Recently implemented minimum PhD guarantee (\$18,000)
- Very high cost of living in Vancouver



# UBC CONTEXT

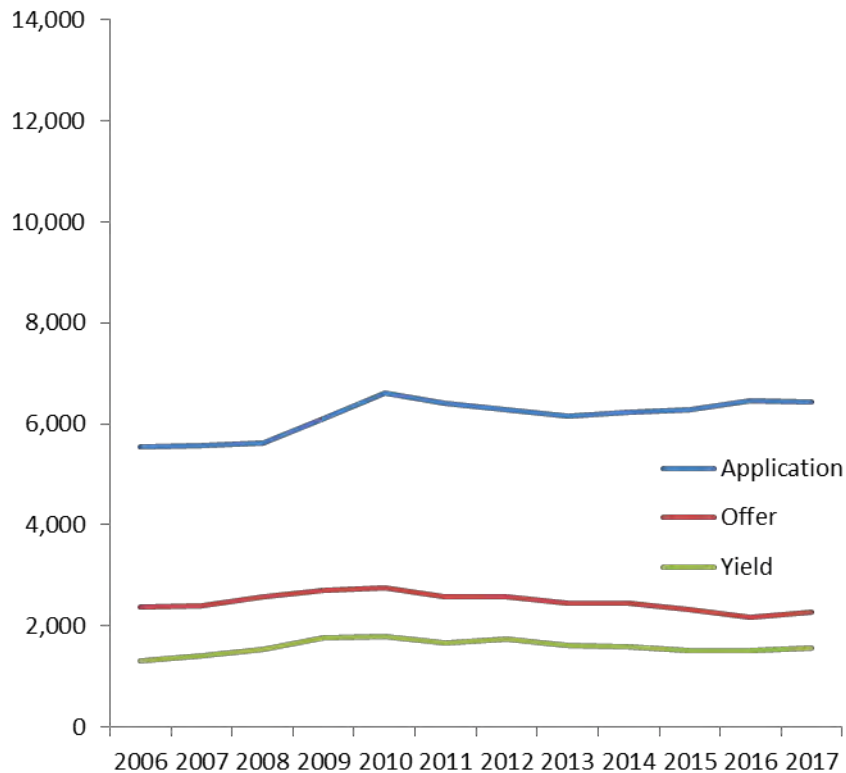


# UBC CONTEXT

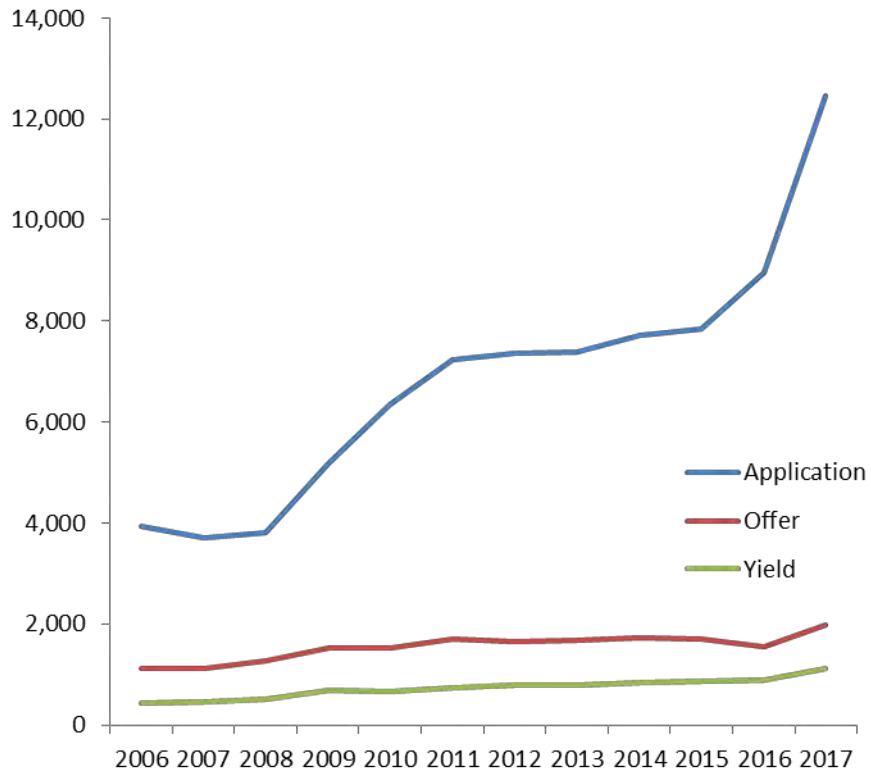
- Recruitment efforts: both centralized and decentralized
- Recruitment goals: no enrolment increase necessarily, but better students; new professional masters program recruitment



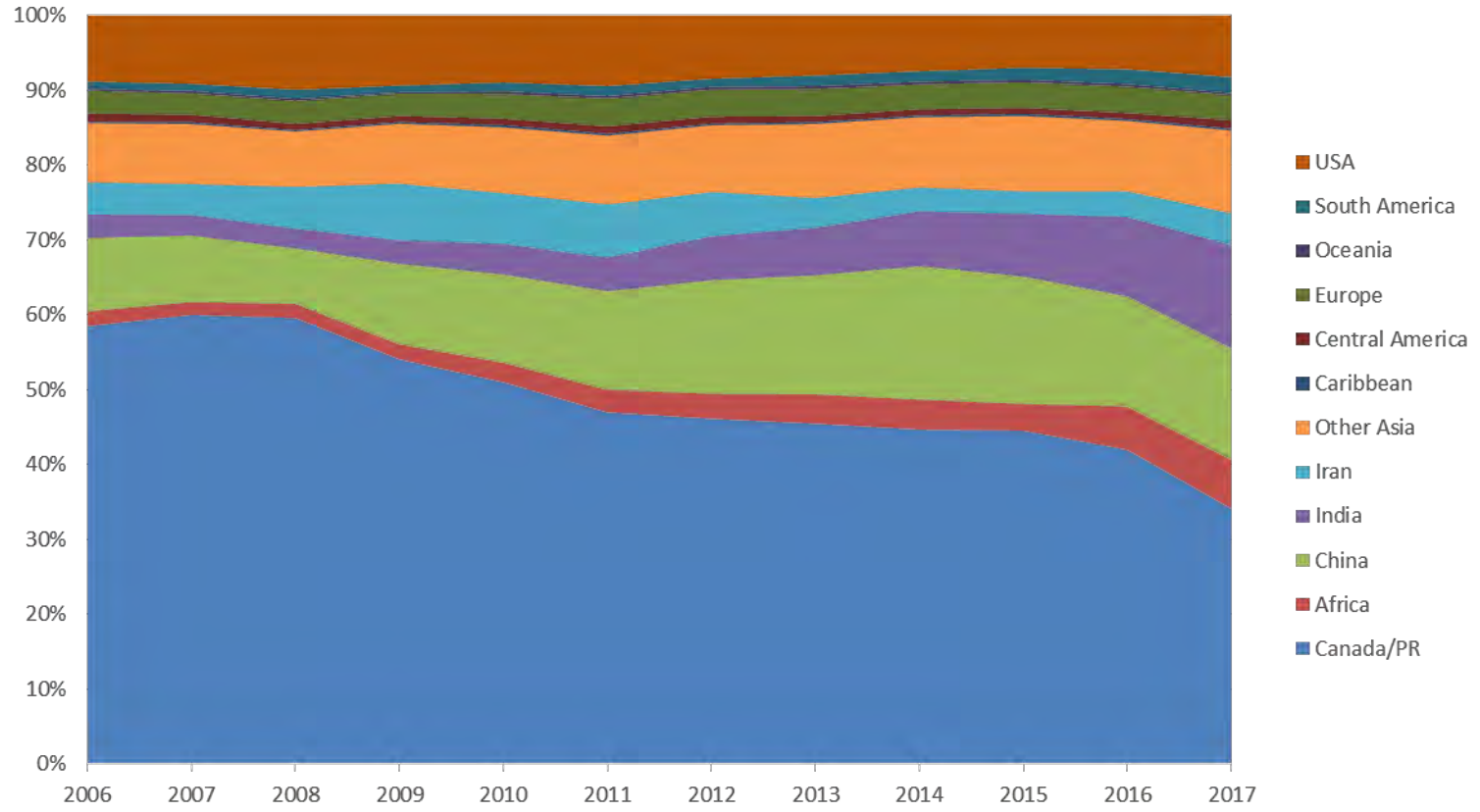
## Domestic



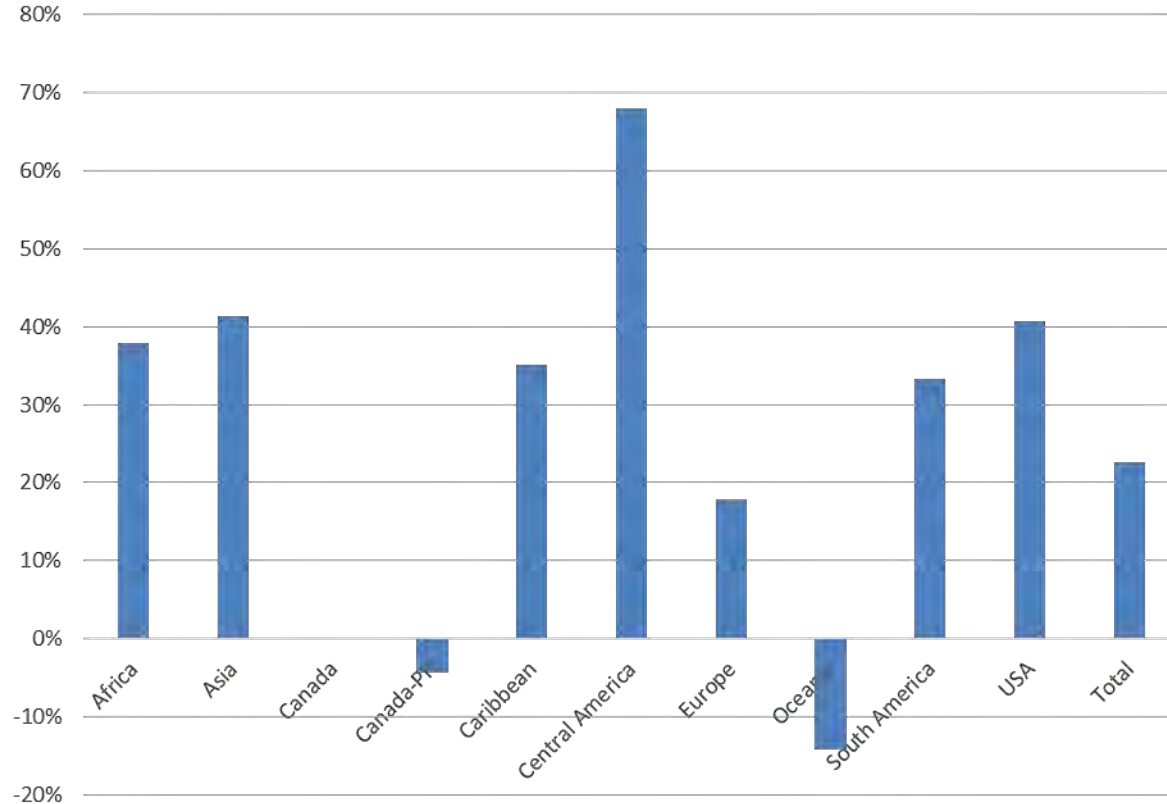
## International



### Applicant origins (%)



## % Change in Application Numbers from 2016 to 2017



# (BASELINE) APPROACHES TO RECRUITMENT

## Digital

- Website (>1.5M unique visitors/yr)
- Social media

## Systems/operations

- Inclusion in compilations/databases
- Funding processes, amounts
- International offices
- International partnerships, funding programs

## In-person

- Provision of material for faculty events (e.g. conferences)
- Grad fairs





## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Digital

- Increased advertising (social media and traditional)
- Added more, better info for prospective students
- Implemented virtual events, community forum



### Systems/operations

- Increased student funding by \$8M, new \$30K int'l doctoral award
- Increased flexibility for programs' use of funds
- Implemented minimum PhD guarantee
- Extended deadlines post-Exec Order, offered 'Open Border Award'

### Other

- Engage with trade commissioners
- Provided program recruitment seed funding
- Leading university-wide task force

## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Added more, better info for prospective students

- How much will it cost to live here?
- How is a program different from others?
- What's the quality of a program? Attrition rate? Average times?
- What are actual & possible career outcomes for different programs?
- Can I talk to someone who went through the program(s)?

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/graduate-degree-programs/phd-chemistry>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/alumni>



## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Added more, better info for prospective students

- What supervisors are available across the university?
  - What is their publication record?
  - Are they looking for students?
  - Do they have funding?
  - Who are their past students, and what did they work on?
  - Do/would they collaborate with external partners? (e.g. through PSI)
- What projects are available?

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/research-supervisors>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/research-projects>

(>250,000 visitors in first year)



## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Implemented virtual events, community forum

- Virtual Events - typically 1000 registrations each
  - “Office hours” (monthly) - virtual open-houses
  - Webinar series (helping students to write better applications)
  - Collaborative sessions with programs (theme-based)



## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Implemented virtual events, community forum

- Online community forum for students offered admission (but not necessarily accepted) & current students



#### Practical support (e.g. housing)

*I live in a 2 bedroom garden-level suite.. My current roommate is moving away, so I am looking for someone else who needs a place starting in August.*

*Hi [name]... I will be starting a Masters at UBC this Fall. Your place and your profile sound great. Is it still available? Is the bedroom furnished?*

#### Degree program community

*Hello everyone, I'm [name] from Iran, reading all about your interests excited me so much! ....My Facebook address is [-], please add me so we can be in touch. Love you all and counting seconds to start a new life with you guys.*

#### Home country community

*Hi [name], nice to know about you. I have got admission in [Masters degree]....Where are you from? i am from Ludhiana, Punjab,India*

*I am from Rajasthan...*

## RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

### Provided program recruitment seed funding

- Promotional videos
- Outreach at conferences
- Meeting days (fly in top candidates)
- Profiles
- Open Houses
- Digital Initiatives
- Webinars



# RECENT *ENHANCEMENTS*

## Reimagining the PhD initiatives

### *Public Scholars Initiative*

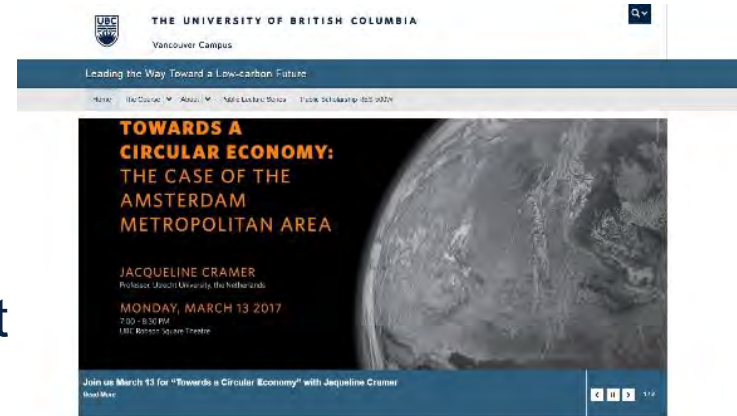
- Support for multisectoral collaborations, impactful non-traditional scholarship in dissertation

### *Killam Connection* course

- Publicly-engaged multidisciplinary course on ‘grand challenge’

### *Graduate Pathways to Success*

- Full suite of professional development offerings



## WHAT WORKS?

Difficult to show causation...BUT

Macroconversions:

- Individual faculty member contacts ‘tried and true’
- A few excellent students came through ‘Open Borders’
- Increasing interest in PSI as draw to UBC
- Many IDF recipients said they wouldn’t have come otherwise
- Significant traffic from external databases (but not desired quality)



Microconversions:

- Website and ads attract many views



## WHAT NEXT?

- Develop/coordinate tier 1 research partnerships
- Track conversion to application system
- Create more conversion points on website (e.g. through profile creation)
- Improve coordination with faculty on networks (travel, conferences, etc)
- Improve best practice sharing between units
- Other – depending on task force findings and \$





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