Representative survey respondents' comments: People and UBC Science culture

"Faculty and students who are dedicated to research."
— Faculty, Research

"Critical mass of world class research colleagues and top notch infrastructure to maximize our potential."
— Faculty, Research

"Excellent researchers (faculty, postdocs, research associates, grad students, undergrad students) producing impactful research."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"Advances in equity, diversity and inclusion. This needs to be strengthened and improved"
— Faculty, Research

"Quality and commitment of undergraduate and graduate students. Highly skilled, creative, and supportive staff."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"[Many] highly engaged faculty who not only carry out research but are also outstanding instructors and make substantial leadership/service/ outreach contributions. Because the expectation in Science is to excel at all of these, I think that our faculty members work harder and are under more stress/pressure than some of their peers who are in faculties like Medicine where their main focus in research. Nevertheless, our faculty members are still leaders and highly competitive."
— Faculty, Research

"The diversity of research and expertise; the flexibility and support provided to enthusiastic faculty members wanting to engage with faculty or members of the public on their topics of interest."
— Staff

"The people - faculty, staff, etc - that bring their passion, skills and hard work to their jobs."
— *Emeritus*

"Interdisciplinarity, ending siloing, collaboration at the operational level instead of reinventing the wheel."
— Staff

"There is so much expertise on this campus and it's hard to find space and time for people to connect and collaborate, due to high workload. I find it hard to connect and collaborate with people in my dept, due to workload, never mind people in other units. It really is a waste of our exceptional people."
— Staff

"Need to update practices around work culture in academic labs. Including contemporary diversity and inclusion practices. This will require more oversight of existing faculty to create a better experience for graduate students."
— Postdoctoral Fellow

"Figure out ways to decolonize and Indigenize [at least parts of] the undergraduate curriculum, and implement them."
—Faculty, Educational Leadership

"Be seen as a leader (and act like one!) on topics like climate change and Indigenous reconciliation. This should be seen through all facets of our work - where we put our funding, what we teach in courses, how we make decisions, what we model to others."
—Staff

Create better work environments and conditions for faculty and staff at all levels. When I first started working in Science, there was a lovely sense of camaraderie, but stress and burnout seems to have settled over many people."
— Staff

"Strengthen UBC Science departments by reducing academic/ administrative hierarchies, recognizing and supporting the role of post-doctoral researchers and research associates as one that is no longer a transient one."
— Research Associate

"New faculty rent rather than buy homes and are more prone to leave for other universities. The administrative load has increased steadily to the point where we have noticeably less time for teaching and research."
— Faculty, Research

"Organizational staffing structure needs to allow for decisions to be made from both budget perspectives as well as those that are open to innovation and can "dream big" first. Educational projects evaluated on the basis of whether they generate direct revenue is limiting."
— Staff

"Substantial money has been spent on buildings and infrastructure, but not necessarily on staff."
— Faculty, Lecturer or Sessional

"I am a female and I don't support current methods of what I consider artificially increasing the number of female faculty. No woman wants to get a job because the department needed to fill "female quota". One should get a job based on no other characteristic but merit. Intentions behind this initiative are good but the method is wrong."
— Staff

"There has been more emphasis on the equity, diversity and inclusion among the people of Science: hiring faculty and in the student population. I think this is a good thing but caution that we may be looking for filling quotas where there might not be. The focus on wellness of students has increased and I think this is important. This is UBC-wide but Science is very involved in improving student wellness."
— Staff

"Let faculty cross-teach, e.g. ask botanist to contribute to a physics class."
— Emeriti

"Our natural and social science departments should be better connected, so that new and interesting collaborative interdisciplinary work can be done."
— Staff

"Regular space and time to get to know more people across the Faculty."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"Communication between colleagues and involved departments in order to improve the efficiency of our work."
— Staff

"I would encourage more integration with the city. Because of the layout and low density of land uses on campus, UBC feels very silo'd."
— Staff

"Introduce/advance diversity and inclusion among faculty—especially regarding racial minority groups."
— Faculty, Research

"A lack of diversity (especially the indigenous community and visible minorities) at the upper teaching/research positions and at the management/leadership levels."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"More diversity and support to make this happen."
— Faculty, Research

"Encourage and genuinely recognize the value in researchers with disabilities. Currently the unspoken but highly felt feeling towards folks with disabilities is that they are welcome to visit, but not researchers - subtle things like narrow doors, tall benches, accommodations offices taking weeks to transcribe things are incredible barriers to excellent work."
— Staff

"I would explore changing the admission process so that students under-represented groups (indigenous, LGBTQ++, women) will have a chance to be admitted. The current admission system for choosing majors is too single-dimensional (just focusing on grades), so much so that the student culture becomes very competitive, non-collaborative, non-inclusive."
— Staff

"Renovate/replace Chemistry and Math buildings"
— Faculty, Research

"Increase IT resources and establish cross department IT working groups. Central UBC IT does not serve the faculty of science very well at this time..."
— Staff

"Creating a culture of openness and change, in a way that impacts people positively personally and professionally."
— Staff

"Building a strong support network for the postdocs and students in my group; they can feel a sense of isolation and disconnection with even other postdocs/students in the department. It would be very useful if there were more connection opportunities within UBC Science, particularly workshops that normalize the struggles/challenges of grad school/academia in UBC Science and help build good wellness and life balance practices."
— Faculty, Research

"Most people I work or interact with are trying to do a lot of important work (EDI, Indigenous Initiatives, grant writing/funding) off the side of their desks. Workload is quite high and as such, it's difficult to prioritize these extremely important and necessary aspects of our Faculty."
— Staff

"UBC Science is a great place to work and study - and we have room to continue to grow!"
— Faculty, Research

"The team I work with is wonderful, friendly, and incredibly supportive. They are the reason for why I have stayed in a position with limited career growth. I really appreciate being able to work with such fantastic people!"
— Staff

"FoS does an excellent job of recruiting some top caliber faculty, staff and students, and mostly gives them the freedom to do amazing things."
— Staff

"I think UBC Science is a leader on campus in many ways but there is always room for improvement and I hope this strategic plan brings out the real areas we can improve."
— Staff

"Many staff I speak with are tired and over-taxed. How do we resolve this while keeping costs within our means?"
— Faculty, Research

"Lots of emphasis on mental health support for students- issues are not spoken as much for faculty/staff."
—Faculty, Educational Leadership

"I would like to see more opportunities for graduate students to have a co-op or similar type placement as we need to recognize that industry and the job market doesn't need as many PhDs as universities create. Very few will go on to have a job in academia (of any kind) and there seems to be poor preparation for that reality."
— Faculty, Research

"All departments need to actively recognize and support the professional teaching streams and treat the teaching faculty as equal and valuable members of the department."
— Faculty, Research

"I worry about the mental health of my colleagues - we do 'too much' and have too little time to focus on lives outside academia. Several of my colleagues have severe mental health issues I have no idea what to do about."
— Staff

"The culture of UBC Science could be improved. Better relationships between Faculty and Staff should be a priority to make for a better work environment. This would improve staff retention and create a healthier workplace environment."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"I feel that I am isolated as a Phd student. I have very little contact with other researchers. I wish there was an environment for students and faculty in their programs to meet and discuss science informally."
— Graduate Student

"There is still a lot of discrimination based on race and cultural differences among students, faculty and staff. Conscious efforts should be made to address these tendencies as they effect academic work."
— Graduate Student

"There's more resources than before to help grad students maintain a good mental health while they are completing their PhD. We appreciate UBCs efforts to provide this for us. It's great to give resources to help students cope with the challenges of grad school, however, it would be even better to try to address the conditions in grad school that are causing students to have mental health issues. For example, getting a low stipend leads to worrying about being able to pay the bills, unreasonably big research projects that lead to overworking and burnout to try to complete the research on time, not having clear timelines for graduation time leads to uncertainty and anxiety about the future."
— Graduate Student

"Interdisciplinary collaborations across departments. Especially between computer science and other fields of natural sciences."
— Graduate Student

"Academic commitment to diversity and inclusion. Fund research in these areas."
— Graduate Student

"Outstanding and dedicated faculty members, broad knowledge base expected of students, good training in critical thinking, high expectation for students' academic strength, good co-op programme."
— Alumni

"UBC Science creates critical thinkers and inquisitive questioners, not rote lemmings; that is, its strength."
— Alumni

"Its people. There are so many smart, passionate people doing interesting work here. I'm not just referring to faculty members, but I work almost exclusively with graduate students, and I find them inspiring."
—Alumni