Representative survey respondents' comments: Research and innovation at UBC Science

"We appear to have a very high status, perhaps even world class, across all areas of science. To achieve that UBC has been able to recruit excellent researchers in science fields."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"Diversity of research staff, availability of shared departmental research facilities/resources."
— Faculty, Lecturer, Sessional

"*Pockets of internationally-recognized research excellence in several topics, including biodiversity, quantum science, computer science, geophysics, etc."*
— Faculty, Research

"Numerous world-class research programs."
— 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

"Lack of federal funding increases on tri-council grants - not matching inflation. Lack of funding support for graduate students (high cost of living) and no funding increases in tri-council grants."
— Faculty, Research

"Graduate student funding. Graduate students are integral to the success of UBC Science, yet their salary hasn't changed substantially in decades and research grants have also not changed in size. Anything Science or UBC can do to assist in increasing graduate student stipend is paramount."
— Faculty, Research

"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

"Bring together people across departments to conduct interdisciplinary research."
— Staff

"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

"More focus on supporting the humans who power our scientific and teaching excellence, particularly grad students and postdocs."
— Faculty, Research

"Our vision statement (funny that I look to it now) suggests we have an innovative graduate program. It won't stay innovative if we can recruit and retain the best and brightest graduate students - so a heavy investment here is important."
— Faculty, Research

"I would argue to the Provost that the academic renewal fund should be spent primarily on expanding graduate and postdoc salary support, not new faculty/cluster hires. We should increase grad salaries beyond poverty levels, increase number of positions (grads), allocate fairly among units. Have an annual competition so that labs that can't normally afford postdocs have a chance of getting one. This would be transformational - a key thing holding back many labs is lack of ability to attract and support excellent students/postdocs: they drive most of our scientific output. I believe this would turn us into the truly world-class institution we aspire to be."
— Faculty, Research

"I am very content with my accomplishments. I publish regularly in high quality journals, I'm well funded, I mentor students that go on to achieve success in their career, I'm involved in outside-faculty leadership that I think is important. UBC has been good to me."
— Faculty, Research

"To build more ties with people working on similar topics. In particular being very much a 'data science', it's too bad that I've not been able to build connections with the data science department in any way (despite repeated efforts on my part, but I guess seeing I'm not providing income for their masters of data science, they aren't interested?)"
— Faculty, Research

"I have years of research data that I just literally don't have time to write up. I have a couple papers stuck in the writing process and one stuck in review. I literally don't have the time to work on it. I have an 80% teaching load, a 20% service load, but am somehow supposed to do educational leadership, all while having an associate director load on top of all that. It adds up to like 140% work. And truthfully, I'm a little burnt out."
— Faculty, Educational Leadership

"I personally feel like UBC as a whole is abandoning 'fundamental science' as a whole and it's hard for me to see where my own research interests and directions fit within many of the science or UBC initiatives."
— Staff

"Increase graduate student pay- it is not sustainable to pay half my paycheck to rent. This adds significant stress to my life and takes time away from my studies. Either don't make us pay tuition (which is unheard of at most other North American universities) or increase our pay."
— Graduate student

"Provide better income for PhD students. Some of us do struggle and this is shameful. UBC should realize $18k/year is not sufficient to live decently in Vancouver. I was offered an accommodation on campus and I could not commit to it because I do not earn enough to afford it. Paying tuition fees as a PhD student is also incredibly shocking.
— Graduate student

"Help graduate students with funding and connections with industry, academia and the government."
— Graduate student

"It would help if the requirements of amount of research required would be more clear. It's not very clear to us PhD students what constitutes enough data/results to graduate from our program. It would also help if PhD students would be given more carefully thought-out projects. It is common for grad students to waste time (years) on projects that were never very feasible from the beginning. This could be one of the reasons why PhDs are taking so long to finish. I also think that mandatory mentorship workshops for PIs would improve the quality of our training and this would in turn improve the productivity of the department (publishing). I don't think I got a lot of training and guidance to complete my project."
— Graduate student

"My experience as a graduate student at UBC has been great so far but is also very stressful due to the financial situation. Had I known it was this difficult, I would've reconsidered which school I went to as I got an offer at McGill which offered me the same stipend but Montreal cost of living is significantly lower than that of Vancouver, which would give me more wiggle room financially."
— Graduate student

"I love research. I would love to continue to do research but my experience at UBC has been destroyed by financial stress which has led to deteriorating mental health, and getting counseling at UBC is such an arduous process that I've given up on that as well. If you want to support URMs and women in STEM, you must fix these financial hurdles and create better support structures for families and mothers."
— Graduate student

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

"Lots of opportunities to get involved with research and to figure out if that is something that you want to pursue after graduation. The faculty also has high standards of education."
— Alumni

"Research powerhouse opportunities for students to gain meaningful involvement in research even as undergraduates. Seeing science "in action."
— Alumni

"Its ability to develop insight on topics that will continue to benefit society on a regional and global basis.
— Alumni

"Have a culture that supports real, tangible industrial collaborations like Stanford, UC Berkeley, ... The Canadian and US systems are set up to graduate many more Ph.D. graduates than faculty openings (which is fine). However, most Professors in my department had little interest in helping students prepare for careers other than academic professorships."
— Alumni