

Dr. Daniel Birch, Chancellor, Quest University Canada

Members of the Quest community: faculty, staff, students (particularly students of the class of 2019), parents and guests –

My name is Dan Birch and I am Chancellor of Quest University. As you may know, in the British tradition, Chancellor is the title of the University's ceremonial head whose major statutory duty is conferring all degrees. In addition, the Chancellor is a member of the Board of Governors, the body responsible for revenues, property, business affairs and academic governance. My special duty today is the installation of Quest University's fourth President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Peter Englert.

First, let me say how very grateful we are to David Helfand for seven years of extraordinarily inspirational leadership as President and Vice-Chancellor, following his service as a founding tutor and contributor to program development. Parenthetically, I must express our gratitude to Columbia University for repeatedly extending his leave and thereby making it possible for him to continue and to take Quest from its beginnings – before the arrival of the small inaugural class in 2007 to this year when enrolment has been close to the campus's capacity. It is impossible to imagine having achieved our current momentum and reputation without David's leadership. During the past three years in particular he has not only been our President and leading ambassador but, in his own academic field he has been President of the American Astronomical Society. He has now been asked by Columbia to provide leadership for innovation in undergraduate education university-wide. His are big shoes to fill! And while we recognize David and Columbia, we must also express extreme appreciation to Jada for the loan of her husband. Thank you, Jada!

Late in 2013, the Board kicked off the search for David's successor with the creation of a Search Advisory Committee and a Call for Proposals from executive search firms continent-wide. We engaged Isaacson-Miller, the firm with the greatest experience facilitating presidential searches for liberal arts colleges. To ensure faculty, alumni and students' perspectives, we included along with Board members, an alumna, a recent Quest graduate and the faculty member who chaired the Academic Council. Broad and deep consultation led to a "Challenges and Opportunities Profile". With the help of our search consultants, we developed a robust and diverse long list of Canadian and international candidates. Through a couple of stages this was

reduced to a strong short list of candidates who were invited to interview and with whom we explored their “fit” with Quest. By mutual agreement, we arrived at the conclusion that Peter Englert provided the best fit and the courtship continued until we reached agreement that he would take office this month as President and Vice-Chancellor.

Let me tell you a little bit about Peter. If you think about a track record in administration, he certainly has that, having served as Division Head for Nuclear Sciences at the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences in New Zealand, followed by stints as Executive Dean of Science (including Architecture) at Victoria University of Wellington and then Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research; Dean of Science, Architecture and Design at VUW, NZ. In each of these roles, Peter enhanced the academic vibrancy and financial sustainability of the unit he led. From there he was recruited to be Chancellor of UH at Manoa. None of these positions involved maintaining the status quo.

I’m sure you know that Quest does not provide extensive executive support for its President and I can assure you that already, in his first month in office, Peter has reviewed reporting relationships and begun the task of establishing priorities for enhancing both the operations and the sustainability of this young University.

We say that our goal is to produce graduates who are international in outlook, skilled in communication, unafraid of quantitative reasoning, inherently transdisciplinary in their approach to problems, technologically literate, instinctively collaborative, and engaged in their local and global communities. It is not accidental that we have sought and found many of the same characteristics in our new President and Vice-Chancellor.

International in outlook:

- Growing up and formal education to the doctoral level at the University of Cologne in Germany
- Academic career and leadership roles in the United States, Germany, New Zealand, back in the U.S. and now in Canada
- Engagement with and study of higher education in Japan and China

Inherently transdisciplinary in their approach to problems:

- Trained in Chemistry and particularly nuclear chemistry
- Most recently at the University of Hawaii Manoa, Peter maintained active programs in both space and social science. In the Center for Chinese Studies he focused on higher education in China and the

Asia Pacific with an emphasis on the education of indigenous peoples and nationalities in China, New Zealand, Canada and Hawaii. Within the International Center of Climate and Society he focused on environmental and economic relevance of higher education with an emphasis on Asia. At the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and Planetology he conducted Mars research within the NASA-funded Mars Odyssey Mission.

- One can see from his c.v. that Peter has a special affinity with Architecture and Design Education but what may not be as immediately obvious is his engagement with and support for the fine and performing arts, including community concert series and theatre performances, especially Asian theatre.
- When you think about it, there must be very few nuclear chemists who have team-taught a course on comparative philosophies and cultures of war and peace. Peter's own contribution was comparing Sunzi's and Clausewitz's views on war and he will tell you that the experience made him as much a student as a teacher – great preparation for the culture of Quest!
- In Science, Engineering, Architecture and Design at Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand Peter was instrumental in the formal development of a learning environment for Maori and Pacific Nations students with a huge emphasis on students mentoring other students, graduate students sharing their experience with undergraduates and the overall fostering of a sense of community. Now 16 years later 1095 students have graduated including more than 80 with doctorates.

I could continue describing the past achievements of Dr. Peter Englert but our expectation is that we will each have many opportunities to witness and to share in the experiences that spring from his leadership at Quest. Today he will take the pledge of office as this University's fourth President and Vice-Chancellor. A little later in this morning's proceedings, each student of the class of 2019 will sign her or his name signifying commitment to the Quest honour pledge and you will note that these pledges have much in common. In fact, the students' pledges will be placed in a box that has been brought into the hall today by the outgoing President and Vice-Chancellor, David Helfand. After today's students have signed, the box will be carried from the hall by the incoming President and Vice-Chancellor. In effect, having made his own Presidential pledge of office, he becomes the keeper of the pledges for all of you.

I now invite Peter Englert to come forward to take the pledge of office.
Please repeat after me:

**I, Peter Englert, affirm that I will:
Uphold the highest principles of honesty, integrity and intellectual
rigour in all my endeavours at Quest University Canada; celebrate
and enhance Quest's unique educational culture as we live and work
together; and hold all members of the community to these same high
standards.**

Chancellor:

In the name of Quest University Canada and at the request of the Board of
Governors, I declare you, Peter Englert, duly installed as the President and
Vice-Chancellor of the University and invest you with the authority and
charge you with the responsibility pertaining to that office.

