

From: UNBC Board Chair <boardchair@unbc.ca>
Sent: June 19, 2025 3:03 PM
To: CRD Mailbox
Subject: Message from the Board Chair: President Payne to assume new leadership role outside UNBC

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Good afternoon,

I'm writing to share some important news with our University community. President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Geoff Payne has accepted a new leadership opportunity as President and CEO of [Michael Smith Health Research BC](#) and will be stepping down from his role at UNBC.

I know this announcement will come as a surprise. President Payne has played an inspiring role in shaping UNBC's recent journey, and on behalf of the Board of Governors, I want to express our deepest thanks for his dedicated service, collaborative leadership style and unwavering focus on student success.

Dr. Payne was named UNBC's sixth President in April 2022, after being appointed on an interim basis in 2020. He was reappointed last July. His commitment to inclusion, empowering others to lead and student-centred approach will leave a lasting mark on the University.

Under President Payne's leadership, UNBC navigated the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, entered a renewed period of stability and launched the bold new strategic play, Ready.

This momentum continues, fuelled by the dedication and expertise of UNBC's faculty, staff and leadership team. Together, we will continue to build on the University's successes and remain focused on delivering outstanding student experiences, fostering innovative research and deepening relationships with community partners across the region.

We're announcing this transition early to allow time for thoughtful planning. The Board is committed to a transparent and deliberate process in the search for the University's next President and Vice-Chancellor, and eventually selecting a leader who, like Dr. Payne, has a demonstrated track record of strong relationship building, excellent communication, and is committed to the university community and Northern B.C. In short, our next leader will "bleed green" like the rest of us.

We are grateful to UNBC's students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners for their longstanding support and shared dedication to UNBC's mission. Our collective strengths and passion for education in the North, for the North, continue to position UNBC to ignite, inspire and lead change.

Here is the link to the media release on our website: <https://www.unbc.ca/our-stories/story/unbc-president-dr-geoff-payne-join-michael-smith-health-research-bc-leaving-unbc>

Sincerely,

Joel McKay
Chair, UNBC Board of Governors

The University of Northern British Columbia community lives, works, studies and plays on the traditional territories of many Indigenous communities across northern B.C. I am honoured to live my life on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh.



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