

The crest of the University of British Columbia is centered in the background. It features a shield with a book at the top, a sunburst in the middle, and a ship at the bottom. The shield is set against a blue background.

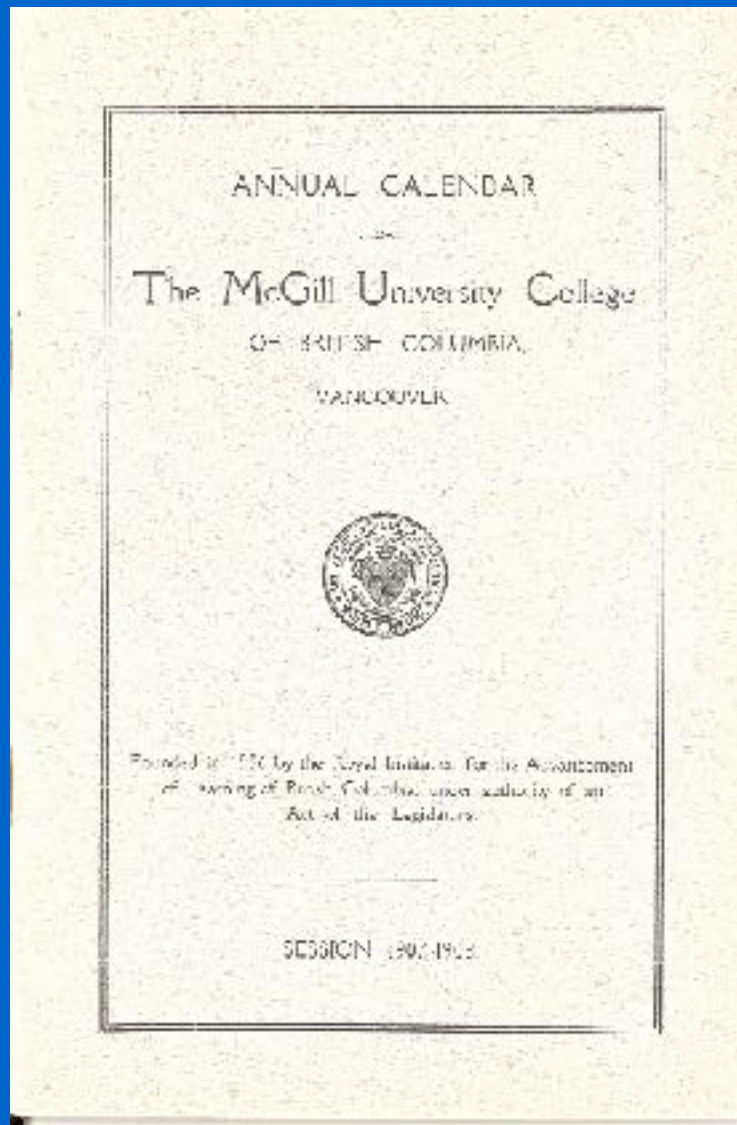
In Pursuit of a Vision:

The Early History of the University of British Columbia

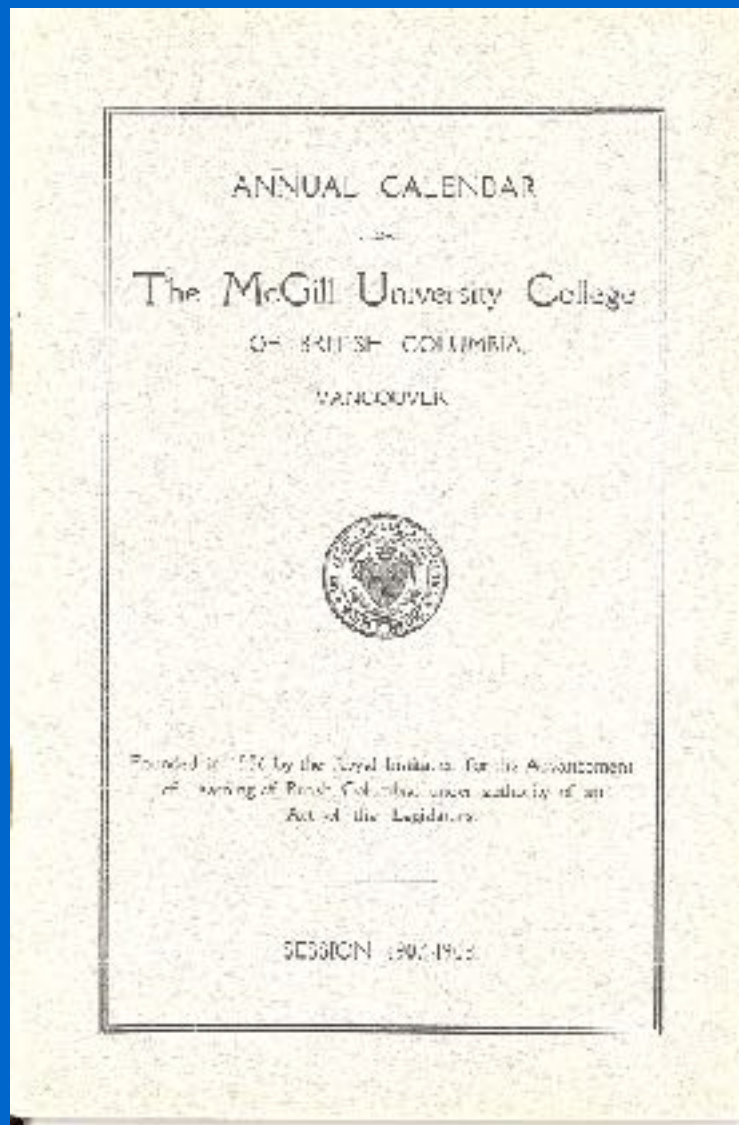
Presentation of the University of British Columbia Archives



The Library



Following unsuccessful efforts to establish a provincial university at the turn of the last century, McGill University College British Columbia provided higher education from 1906 to 1915.



McGill University College of BC
Faculty (1908)



McGill University College of BC
women's grass hockey team (1911)

The establishment of McGill University College of BC did not diminish interest in a provincial university. In 1908, the provincial government passed enabling legislation for the establishment of a University of British Columbia. Two years later a site commission selected Point Grey as the most suitable location for the new university and the task of clearing the land began.

Vancouver architects Sharp and Thompson won the design competition for the new Point Grey campus in 1912.



Sharp and Thompson's original design for Point Grey campus

In 1913, Frank F. Wesbrook, a distinguished medical doctor and administrator from the University of Minnesota became UBC's first president.



President Frank F. Wesbrook (1913-1918)

Wesbrook reviews campus plans with architects Sharp and Thompson and other members of the University planning commission (1913)



Land clearing at Point Grey continued . . .



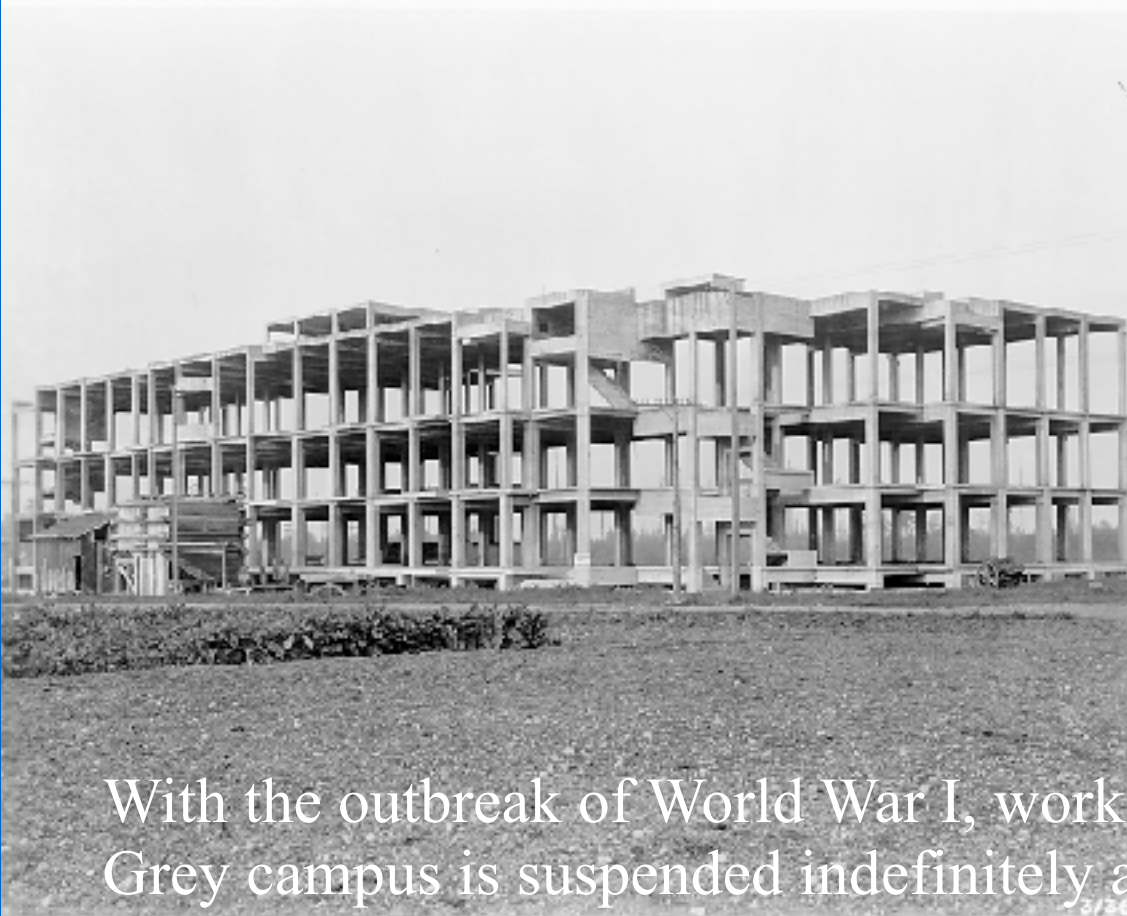
. . . and the first
campus building
began to take
shape



Science
Building
framework
(1914)

. . . and the first
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Science
Building
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With the outbreak of World War I, work on the new Point Grey campus is suspended indefinitely and the framework of the Science building stands as a reminder of the unrealized dream of a new campus for almost a decade.

Despite financial hardships the provincial government provided funds to open the University of British Columbia to 379 students in 1915. With work on the Point Grey Campus suspended, the University begins its life in buildings formerly occupied by McGill University College of BC on the Fairview site of Vancouver General Hospital.





Fairview Campus



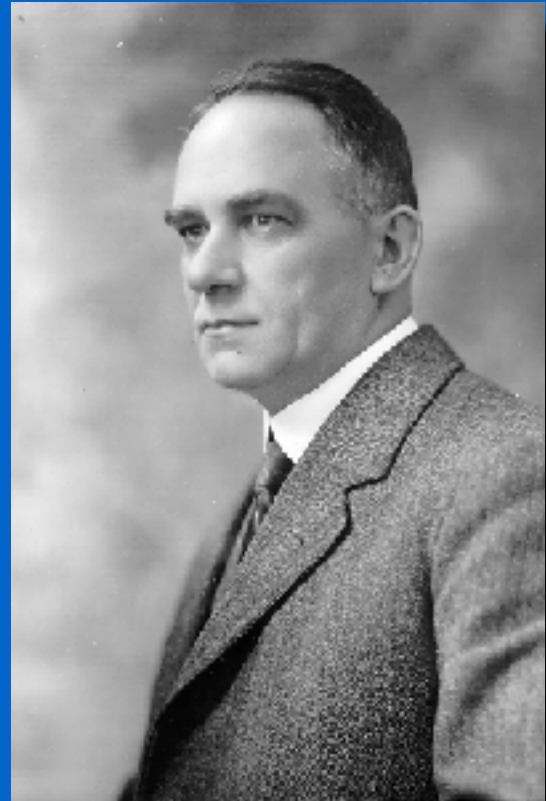




Fairview Campus



Following Frank Wesbrook's unexpected death in 1918, Leonard S. Klinck became the University's second president. To him would fall the task of pursuing the dream of new facilities for UBC.



Leonard S. Klinck
UBC President (1919-1944)

Notwithstanding efforts by the University administration to relocate the institution, it was UBC students that finally convinced the government to resume construction at Point Grey.

The Fairview “shacks” that housed some 379 students in 1915 had become inadequate and overcrowded for a student body that had swelled to almost 1,200 by 1922. Frustrated UBC students organized a province-wide campaign to rally public support for the resumption of work on the new campus. The campaign culminated on 28 October 1922 in what has subsequently become known as the “Great Trek”.

The students and their supporters with floats, banners and bands marched through downtown Vancouver . . .



. . . and out to the unfinished Point Grey campus.



Arriving at the campus the students posed in the frame of the Science Building and later formed a human “UBC” as if to lay symbolic claim to the unfinished campus.



This campaign marked the beginning of active student involvement in the University's development and is commemorated by a stone cairn erected on the Point Grey campus just prior to the Great Trek.



Following the Great Trek and presentation of a 56,000-name petition, the government authorized funds to resume construction of the University's Point Grey home.

The Ulyssey

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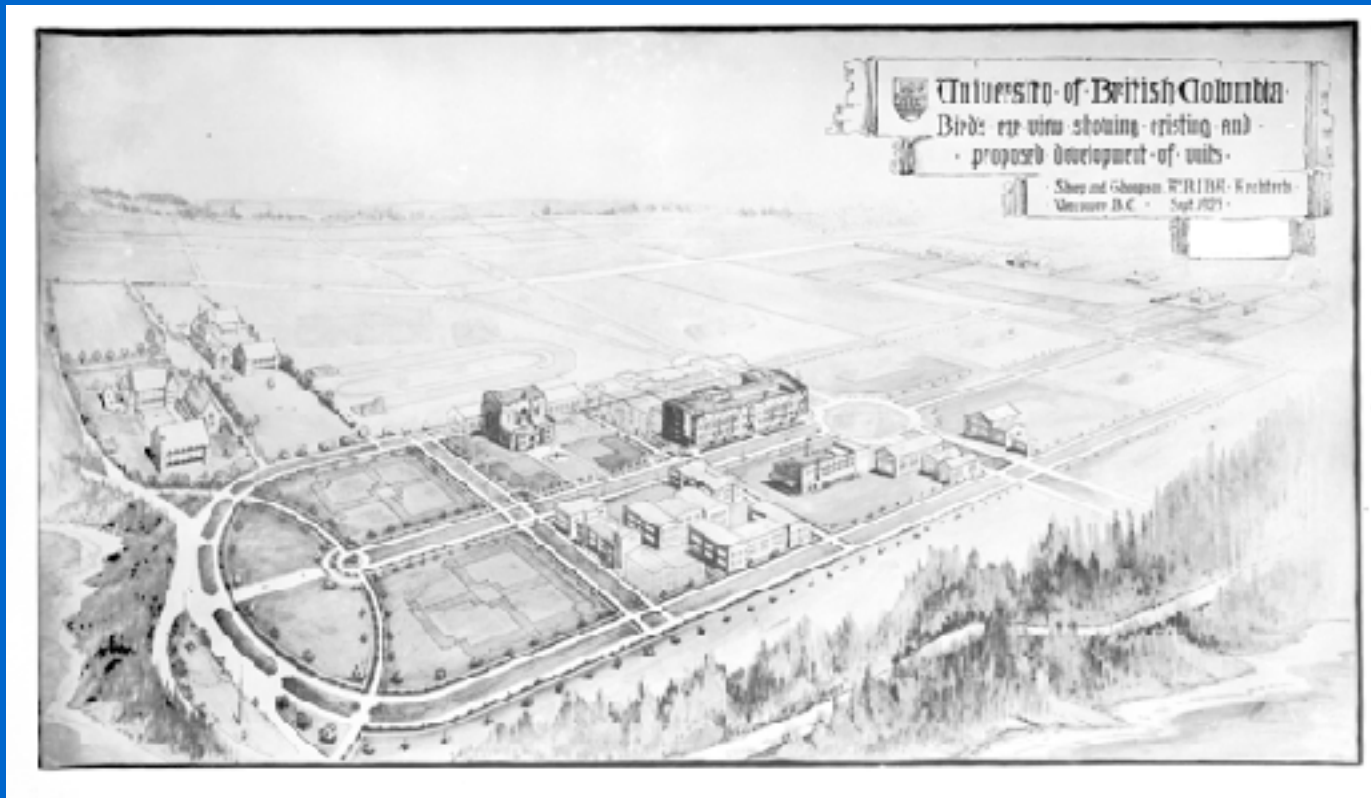
No. 6

Government Sees the Point!

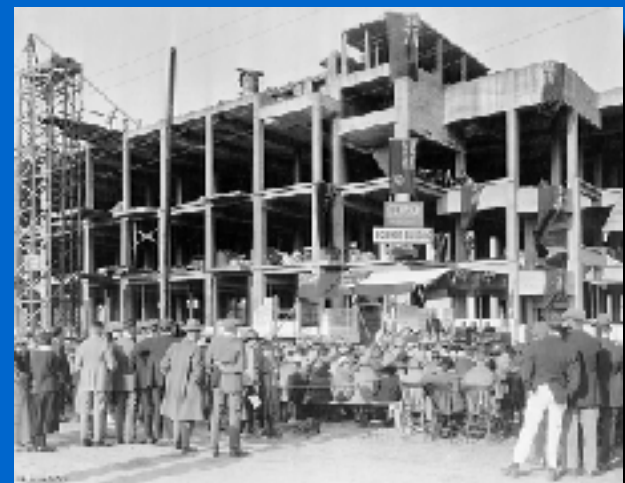
CAMPAIGN DELEGATION BACK FROM VICTORIA

Last Minute Interview with Student Representatives
Elicits Interesting Details Concerning
their Reception and Activities

The Government provided funds to complete the Science Building and construct the Library and Power House according to the original campus plan. The remaining University needs would be met through the construction of “semi-permanent” buildings.



Construction of the Point Grey campus resumed with the laying of the Science Building cornerstone (September 28, 1923).





Science Building under construction (1923)

Building materials were moved by barge to the foot of the Point Grey cliffs where they were loaded onto an aerial tramway and then transferred to a small rail system which transported them to the campus construction sites.





Main Library under construction (1924/25)



Landscaping the new campus





Construction of “Semi-Permanent”
Buildings and Power House (1925)

On 22 September 1925, the University welcomed students and faculty to the first day of classes at the new Point Grey campus.



Just as the students and faculty assembled in the new Auditorium at Point Grey celebrated the beginning of a new era in the history of the University . . .

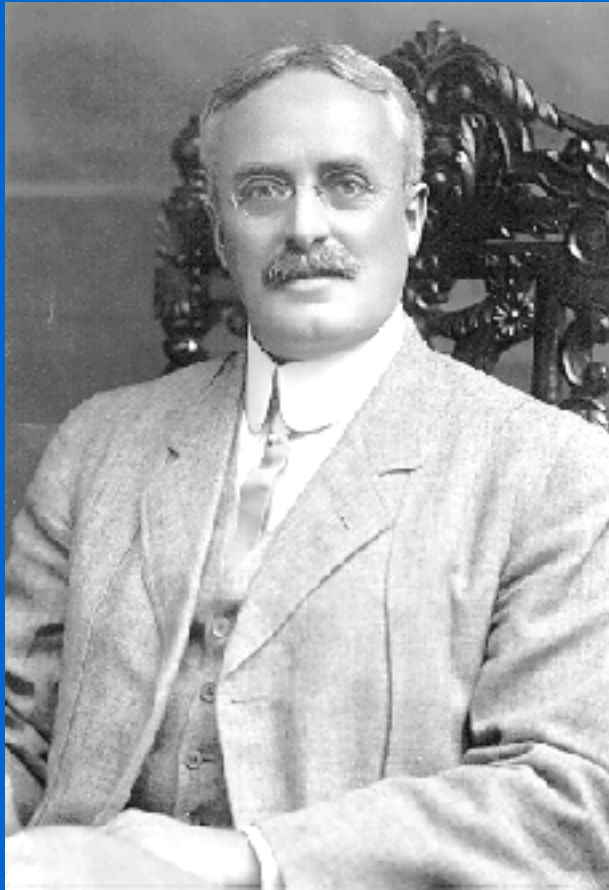


. . .so too with the opening of its new Robson Square facility has the University the opportunity to celebrate again.





What hasn't changed in the intervening seventy-six years is the institution's adherence to President Westbrook's original and timeless vision for the University.



To meet in full our obligation, may ours be a Provincial University without provincialism. May our sympathies be so broadened and our service so extended to all the people of the Province that we may indeed be the people's University, whose motto is 'tuum est'

Frank F. Wesbrook (1916)

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