



MEMORANDUM

August 26, 2024

To: All members of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems – faculty, staff, students, and postdoctoral fellows (*distributed via the Dean's office*)

From: Gage Averill, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Vancouver

Re: Appointment of Dr. David Kitts as Dean *pro tem*, Faculty of Land and Food Systems

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. David Kitts as Dean *pro tem* of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, effective October 1, 2024.

Dr. Kitts is a food scientist who has served as the Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems since 2012, and prior to that as Director for the Food, Nutrition and Health Program. His research is transdisciplinary, spanning food science, nutrition/dietetics, biochemistry and molecular biology. Over the past 40 years, he has contributed to the body of knowledge related to food chemistry, food toxicology and nutritional sciences, helping UBC grow to become a well-respected institution in food science. A major area of recent focus for Dr. Kitts is investigating how bioactive components contribute to intestinal health, including how plant/animal-derived bioactives (e.g., extra nutrients) serve as important mediators of specific cellular and molecular responses that protect against intestinal oxidation-reduction (redox) imbalances. In addition, he investigates stabilizing food formulations and characterizing antioxidant capacities of various food components that can mitigate losses in food quality and safety.

As Associate Dean of Research, Dr. Kitts has been involved with colleagues in launching the new Food and Beverage Innovation Centre. Scheduled to open later this year, this will be the first centre in BC dedicated to ensuring food and beverage processors become more competitive globally by supporting industry training, and ensuring researchers and businesses collaborate to develop innovative and sustainable products, processing techniques, and packaging.

I am grateful to Dr. Kitts for his willingness to lead the Faculty while the search for the next Dean continues.

Dr. Rickey Yada's term as Dean of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems will conclude on September 30, 2024. Dr. Yada's accomplishments during his term are many, with notable successes in research, education and community engagement. Faculty highlights include the rollout of two multi-year strategic plans; unprecedented growth in research funding; the introduction of professional and certificate programs in the food and nutrition fields; and,



supporting Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity initiatives, including the creation of two new EDI.I positions. In addition, Dr. Yada was instrumental in initiating three major capital projects that balance community and economic needs – the new Food and Beverage Innovation Centre; a new building for teaching, research and community events at UBC Farm; and major renovations and upgrades at the UBC Dairy Education and Research Centre in Agassiz, BC.

His next role involves a move to the University of Alberta where he will become Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences. I am grateful for Dr. Yada's leadership at UBC over the past 10 years and wish him much success in his new endeavours.

We will have an update in the coming months regarding next steps in the Dean search.