



## Victoria Takes Home Grown Innovation to China

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps will lead a 19-person delegation to China this October to export innovation and further strengthen economic development, tourism, and educational opportunities between Victoria and China.

“Victoria is brimming with innovation, great educational opportunities and it’s a superb tourism destination,” said Mayor Helps. “Currently Victoria’s economy is one of the fastest growing in Canada in terms of new job growth. It’s a great time to play to our strengths and export home-grown innovation to China, which is actively seeking innovation.”

Joining Mayor Helps on the mission will be representatives from Tourism Victoria, the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, Camosun College, and Alacrity Foundation, a local Victoria technology start-up incubator.

Departing on October 14, the eight-day mission will include visits to Shanghai, Nanjing, and Victoria’s Twin City Suzhou.

The goal of the mission is to export innovation to China as highlighted by Victoria’s Alacrity Foundation’s recent announcement to open a tech incubator/fund in Shanghai. The office will also act as an entry point for Victoria and Canadian-based business to set up operations in China.

“We are excited to be expanding our global footprint with a new office in Shanghai,” said Richard Egli, Managing Director for The Alacrity Foundation. “The China market presents an enormous growth opportunity for both technology export and new company creation. We look forward to building more partnerships and opening the door for Canadian tech companies to access that market.”

Mayor Helps created a Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity in 2015, culminating in a results-based action plan. The plan identifies key “engines” to drive Victoria’s businesses, generate jobs, raise household income, and increase well-being for citizens over the next four years. Entrepreneurship, start-ups, social enterprise, education, and tourism were all identified as key drivers to creating sustainable prosperity in Victoria. The high tech sector is recognized as Greater Victoria’s largest industry, with tourism being the second largest producing more than 22,000 jobs.

“China is an important source market for Tourism Victoria,” said Paul Nurse, CEO for Tourism Victoria.

“Every year Tourism Victoria leads a sales mission to China around Destination Canada’s “Showcase Canada” event. Mayors are very important in China’s business culture and we are delighted to participate in this pan-Greater Victoria initiative.”

Mayor Helps will join Tourism Victoria for part of the Showcase Canada event in Nanjing from October 17 to 19.

The visit to Victoria’s Twin City Suzhou will include the fourth signing agreement between the University of Victoria and Soochow University, signifying continuation of a robust partnership welcoming 100 students from Soochow University to the University of Victoria every year.

“UVic is a place of innovation and bold ideas at the edge of the Pacific Rim,” says UVic Vice-President External Relations Carmen Charette. “We are excited to join the City of Victoria and its partners on the Export Innovation delegation to build on our international strengths in research and student opportunities to make a vital impact in society”.

International student programs not only contribute to the local economy, but also allow for an exchange of ideas across cultures.

“Camosun is pleased to join Mayor Helps on the Victoria trade mission to China. Camosun has a significant number of active partnerships in China as well as hosting over 600 Chinese students on our Victoria campuses each year. This mission will help to establish new partnership opportunities and leverage the Victoria education brand.” Sherri Bell, President.

Mayor Helps will also join Royal Roads University as a guest speaker as they host their annual Global Alumni Summit in Nanjing from October 21 to 22.

“Royal Roads now has over 6,000 mostly MBA alumni in China,” said Royal Roads University President and Vice-chancellor Allan Cahoon. “These alumni represent highly successful entrepreneurs and business leaders who meet annually in a Royal Roads University Global Alumni networking summit. Last year it was held in Victoria as part of Royal Roads University’s 75th anniversary celebrations and this year it will be held in Nanjing. We are excited that Mayor Helps and the other participants on the China trade mission will be able to connect with our alumni leaders and colleagues to promote Victoria as a destination for post-secondary education and tourism and to explore business opportunities and potential partnerships together.”

### **Trip Itinerary:**

**Nanjing** (Provincial Capital) – 5 days

Oct. 17-19: Showcase Canada Event

Oct. 21-22: Royal Roads University Global Alumni Summit

**Shanghai** – Oct. 20

Alacrity Foundation’s Shanghai office/incubator and “Canada House” opening celebration

Trade & Invest BC – visit their Business Accelerator, which supports businesses looking for international expansion offering local expertise, strategic advice, business contacts and office space.

**Suzhou** (Twin City) – Oct. 19 or 20

Visit with Mayor of Suzhou

University of Victoria fourth signing agreement with Soochow University

### **Quick Facts**

- Greater Victoria's largest industry is high-tech, with an economic impact exceeding \$4 billion annually. Many local firms rely on global connections to grow their business and create jobs. These companies directly employ 15,000 Tectorians.
- Tourism is Greater Victoria's second largest industry with \$1.9 billion in economic impact and over 22,000 jobs.
- UVic – 22,000 students, nearly 5,000 faculty and staff, \$3.2 billion in economic impact
- Camosun – 18,000 students, 900 instructors and staff, \$1 billion in economic impact

- Combined more than 30,000 full and part time students, more than 6,000 faculty, instructors and staff and over \$4 billion in economic impact

**For More Information:**

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