



University  
of Victoria

## SPEED READ

### RESPECT & RECONCILIATION

#### Territory acknowledgement updated

In consultation with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, UVic has made two changes to its territorial acknowledgement. The revised version is: "We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and w̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day." Please update your email signature, website postings and other online text to reflect these changes.

### COVID-19 UPDATES

#### Fall semester planning

We're hard at work preparing for a safe return to in-person activities this fall. Visit [uvic.ca/covid-19](http://uvic.ca/covid-19) to keep up to date with ongoing changes to university services and health and safety protocols as guided by BC's Restart Plan and the provincial health officer. Protocols around masks, physical distancing and gatherings are likely to change over the summer, and your health and safety remains our top priority. Visit [uvic.ca/covid-19](http://uvic.ca/covid-19) for updates.

### INDIGENOUS LAWS

## Val Napoleon wins 2021 Indspire Award for Law and Justice



BY JULIE SLOAN

Val Napoleon is one of Canada's most influential Indigenous legal scholars. She's also an artist, disruptor, activist, a Cree woman from the Saulteau First Nation and an adopted member of the Gitanyow (Gitksan) Nation. In May, Napoleon received the 2021 Indspire Award for Law and Justice. The Indspire awards represent the highest honour the Indigenous community bestows upon its own people. After 28 years, the Indspire awards have honoured 364 First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement.

It is a much-deserved award. As director of the world's first Indigenous law degree program, launched in 2018, and

co-founder and director of the Indigenous Law Research Unit, Napoleon is truly changing the lives of Indigenous people across Canada and abroad with her tireless work helping First Nations communities articulate and formalize their traditional laws—and by training the next generation of lawyers to work with these laws alongside Canadian Common Law.

"Val is changing the way we teach and practice law in Canada," says UVic law professor and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law John Borrows. "Her leadership at the Indigenous Law Research Unit is key in responding to communities' invitations to help them revitalize their laws. Her work in the law school brings to light how we can better help communities accomplish their goals."

#### Disruptor-grandmother-educator

For all she has accomplished, it's hard to imagine that Napoleon didn't enter law school until she was a grandmother. In 2011, she was the first person to earn a PhD from UVic's Graduate Program in Law and Society and defended her dissertation in the Gitksan community, rather than in the halls of academe. She worked for many years as an educator, consultant and activist with First Nations communities, many of them in Northern BC, and worked with the Gitksan nation on a land rights case against the BC government known as Delgamuukw. That case resulted in a 1997 landmark ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada that Aboriginal people retained

SEE NAPOLEON P.4



AS WE BEGIN NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH, it is important that we face head-on the realities of Canada's history and present. Sadly, these atrocities happened here in our country, this happened recently, within many of our lifetimes, and this happened to the most defenseless in our society—innocent children. This defies our sense of humanity and should challenge us to truly reflect on what we stand for as Canadians.

The university flags were lowered on May 28 in memory of the 215 children whose bodies have been confirmed to be buried on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation territory.

The flags will remain lowered until further notice in honour of the thousands of children who died while held at residential schools, including the students who died on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc land, and the 202 children known to have lost their lives at the five residential schools on Vancouver Island.

—UVic President Kevin Hall, June 1, 2021  
More info at [uvic.ca/215](http://uvic.ca/215)

### SPRING 2021 GRADUATES

## Producing plays during a pandemic

BY JOHN THRELFALL

3,811

NUMBER OF  
DEGREES,  
CERTIFICATES  
AND DIPLOMAS  
AWARDED IN  
SPRING 2021

If you had to pick the worst possible time to start a theatre career, it would be tough to top the COVID era. With live indoor performances cancelled since March 2020 and no relief in sight, the arts remain one of the hardest-hit economic sectors of the pandemic. Yet Logan Swain is feeling optimistic about his career choice, thanks to UVic's co-op program and alumni company Theatre SKAM. Not only is Swain graduating this spring with a BFA in comprehensive theatre with a design specialization, but he's already been hired as a producer with SKAM.

"Doing theatre in a non-educational environment has been a great opportunity for me," he says. Thanks to two separate eight-month, BC Arts Council-funded co-op terms, Swain completed his degree by undertaking ever-increasing responsibilities at SKAM: designing a new play, organizing a tour, interacting with city officials, working with kids and so much more. "The logistics of that hands-on, real-world experience was very different than at UVic, where everything already exists."

Born and raised in the Cowichan Valley, Swain felt theatre was the logical choice for him, as it encompassed the various career paths he was considering. "Music, writing, film, engineering, event planning... what's really great about the theatre program at UVic is that you're given all the tools and skills you need to do things on your own—but when you actually put them into practice, you're fully supported. And doing



Swain. PHOTO: JOHN THRELFALL

co-op was a great next step: still having that support but also having the freedom to make your own decisions."

With design credits on seven Phoenix Theatre productions behind him, as well as the experience of mounting a pair of Fringe shows with his own company, Bucket Head Theatre, Swain started at SKAM in 2019 and was able to design two different productions, organize a tour and help mount a 13-show

festival before the pandemic hit. He then found himself at ground-zero for the decision-making process when SKAM received official approval to continue with their annual outdoor SKAMPede Festival in July 2020, providing some physically-distanced relief to the city's live-performance drought.

SEE SWAIN P.9

## around the ring

### Forbes: UVic is one of Canada's best employers

It's been a challenging year to be an employer—and an employee. UVic is proud to be ranked 12th on Canada's Best Employers list for 2021. *Forbes* partnered with market research firm Statista to compile their annual list of Canada's best employers by surveying more than 8,000 Canadians working for businesses with at least 500 employees.

### Child care expands at Queenswood

Plans to repurpose the former Queenswood Retreat Centre with a new child care centre are moving forward, thanks to funding from the provincial government. UVic currently operates three culturally inclusive child care facilities on campus for 116 children, and the new project will add 37 child care spaces, including spaces for infants and toddlers, and for children aged three years to kindergarten. More: [bit.ly/21-play](https://bit.ly/21-play)



UVic Associate University Librarian–Reconciliation Ry Moran, who also served as director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, addresses the audience during the June 1 Sacred Fire ceremony held on campus. The event offered support to students, staff, faculty and Elders, and honoured the 215 Indigenous children found by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation at a former residential school in Kamloops, BC. More info online at [uvic.ca/215](https://uvic.ca/215). UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

## SUSTAINABILITY

### UVic named as one of Canada's Greenest Employers

UVic has been included in the list of Canada's Greenest Employers for the seventh time. The national awards recognize Canadian employers that lead the nation in creating a culture of environmental awareness and action.

"It's an honour to be recognized as a green employer," says Mike Wilson, director of campus planning and sustainability. "UVic's green campus and leadership on climate action and sustainability is something we are very proud of. This year, with input from students, faculty and staff, we're developing an institutional Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, which will offer ambitious, creative and integrated sustainability solutions while respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being."

Sustainable initiatives that supported UVic's selection in the Canada's Greenest Employers list for 2021 include:

- The Campus Sustainability Fund, which provides financial support for employee, student and faculty-inspired sustainability projects
- The integration of sustainability as a key part of UVic's academic curriculum in nearly every major field, from science and engineering to social sciences and law
- A campus community garden with 90 plots, run by UVic Students' Society volunteers, offers regular

gardening workshops and a bee apiary, and an ongoing native plant landscaping and invasive species removal program

- Progress toward becoming a zero-waste campus. UVic offers hundreds of recycling kiosks, an extensive composting program, water conservation initiatives, and special pick-up and drop-off services for soft plastics, styrofoam, electronic waste and batteries

Major sustainability initiatives underway during 2021 include: the development of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan that will guide the university with an integrated approach to sustainability across research, education, community engagement and campus operations; construction of two new student housing and dining buildings, which will target Passive House and LEED Gold construction standards while adding 621 new residence spaces for students living on campus; and implementation of the Campus Cycling Plan, which will create an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling network on campus.

Learn about more sustainability initiatives through UVic's Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability.

Canada's Greenest Employers competition, now in its 14th year, is organized by the Canada's Top 100 Employers project.

# Supporting student enrolment during a pandemic

BY ERIN KING

When the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan launched in 2019, no one could have predicted that year two would involve a global pandemic. Implementing the plan's tactics that focus on the student experience has been a challenge—along with the abrupt transition to online learning and teaching. But the good thinking behind SEM has helped UVic mitigate impacts of COVID-19 and support student success during a difficult year.

The SEM Plan guides university recruitment, retention and student success initiatives. In practice, that means the university is committed to recruiting and retaining the very best undergraduate students, including those from under-represented populations, diversifying the international undergraduate student population, and increasing our enrolment of Indigenous students and proportion of graduate students.

"Our six SEM goals are long-term and reflect commitments articulated in other institutional plans, including the Strategic Framework," explains AVP Student Affairs Jim Dunsdon, who chairs the Undergraduate Student Recruitment, Admission and Registration Committee. "Many of the initiatives we had underway when COVID-19 hit helped guide us through the pandemic, and we've actually accelerated in new and unanticipated ways."

### Recruitment and enrolment

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, UVic met all its enrolment targets last year. We were particularly successful in meeting student demand for courses in Summer Session 2020, with enrolment up 10 per cent compared to the previous summer.

UVic continues its efforts to diversify the student population with new entrance scholarships for women and Indigenous students in the Faculty of Engineering, targeted recruitment programs for Indigenous students on Vancouver Island and a comprehensive program for students with lived experience in care. Work is also underway to attract more graduate students by improving UVic's international reputation as a research-intensive university.

In 2020, UVic also enhanced the entrance award program, awarding more than \$8.5 million to new students. High-achieving students were also offered incentives like new research opportunities in a pilot program in humanities and engineering. Through initiatives like these, the number of first-year students with a 90+ per cent average in 2020/21 was double that of the previous year and we continue on an upwards trajectory.

UVic's international enrolments have declined by three per cent this year with more challenges looming for all post-secondary institutions in Canada as travel restrictions and federal quarantine rules continue. UVic's new Jan. 31 application deadline, which is several weeks earlier than in prior years, is a long-term SEM tactic that might help. "The sooner we get an offer out, the more competitive we are for all students, including high-achieving and international populations," says Dunsdon. Indeed, undergraduate offers have increased by 21 per cent compared to this time last year. UVic has also established an International Enrolment Recovery Team to ensure UVic remains on track to achieve international targets.

### Dynamic learning

"Experiential learning is really at the heart of a UVic education," says Laurene Sheilds, Executive Director of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation and Chair of the Undergraduate Student Retention and Success Committee. "We've been remarkably successful in creating opportunities for hands-on learning this year in spite of the pandemic."

UVic placed 1,119 students in co-op terms (mostly virtual) this fall—well above the national average and exceeding the 1,040 placements in the previous fall. "When many other Canadian universities have seen major declines in co-op participation in the face of COVID-19, we have done exceptionally well," says Sheilds.

The number of students participating in community-engaged learning more than doubled in the 2019/20 year as well. While these numbers dipped slightly in 2020, the number of community partners increased, setting us up for a very strong upcoming year.

### Student life

SEM informed many of our decisions around student life initiatives this year. UVic opened up the bursary program for a second round, awarding almost \$700,000 in additional funding for students facing financial difficulties. "A major focus of our SEM Plan is on providing greater access to UVic for under-represented populations," says Dunsdon. "Knowing these groups were disproportionately impacted by the effects of COVID-19, we worked hard to ensure additional funds were made available to support them during a difficult year."

The launch of the new Student Wellness Centre and SupportConnect, a 24/7 mental health line, were vital supports for our students as they dealt with the mental, emotional and physical toll of the pandemic. According to Executive Director of Student Services Joel Lynn, "although these were not explicitly listed in SEM, they are integral to the well-being of students and the success of our SEM goals."

Peer-to-peer connection is an important element of student success and retention, with additional challenges in a predominantly online academic year. Staff worked quickly to develop health and safety measures and new programming to allow 800 direct-entry first-year students to live on-campus and create an in-person community this year. In addition, UVic launched the New Student Connect Program to engage first-year and upper-year students virtually. More than 3,000 students registered in the program—engaging with student leaders for mentorship, support in addressing academic and personal challenges, and building enduring friendships. Leaders are exploring continuing the program post-COVID-19.

### The year ahead

Strategic enrolment at UVic isn't slowing down. "We'll need to remain innovative and ambitious as we move into the coming months," explains Dunsdon. Committees have several projects in the works, including the creation of five new full-time Indigenous support roles in Student Services to foster positive experiences for Indigenous students. A new academic advising model, campus wellness strategy and new training to support the graduate student/supervisor relationship are also in development.

Full story: [bit.ly/sem-21](https://bit.ly/sem-21)

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# Sustainable student housing takes shape

In September 2022, 398 UVic students will be living in the largest passive house building in Victoria. The sustainable student housing and dining construction project is taking shape on the outside of Ring Road, just south of the Student Union Building where Cadboro Commons used to stand.

Featuring concrete and mass timber and, designed with the industry's most rigorous sustainability and energy efficiency requirements, students will be able to enjoy all the best on-campus living can offer while also knowing they are in a state-of-the-art green building. In the fall of 2023, the second building will be ready to welcome 385 more students into the dorms.

The past few months have seen the buildings rise in stature with current site activity focusing on the concrete structure, interior framing and exterior stud framing. The recent arrival of mass timber from a new state-of-the-art facility in the Kootenays allows for the installation of mass timber columns and slabs, including work on the mass timber podium—a feature that wraps around the exterior of the south wing of Building One.

Mass timber is made by adhering smaller pieces of wood together to form pre-fabricated larger building components such as beams. By using BC-sourced wood for the mass timber features, the university is using sustainable construction options and lowering the carbon footprint for the entire build. This is due to two factors: the timber has been grown,



harvested and processed all within the province, lowering the carbon footprint incurred for shipping, and the production of mass timber is not as carbon intensive as the manufacture of other construction materials such as steel and concrete.

“When complete, these buildings will be gathering places on campus for students to live, learn, share meals and connections,” says Joel Lynn, executive director, UVic Student Services. “The facilities will enrich the student experience by creating a community gathering space on campus, and we’re very excited for our students to have access to this kind of facility during their studies at UVic.”

While construction is progressing

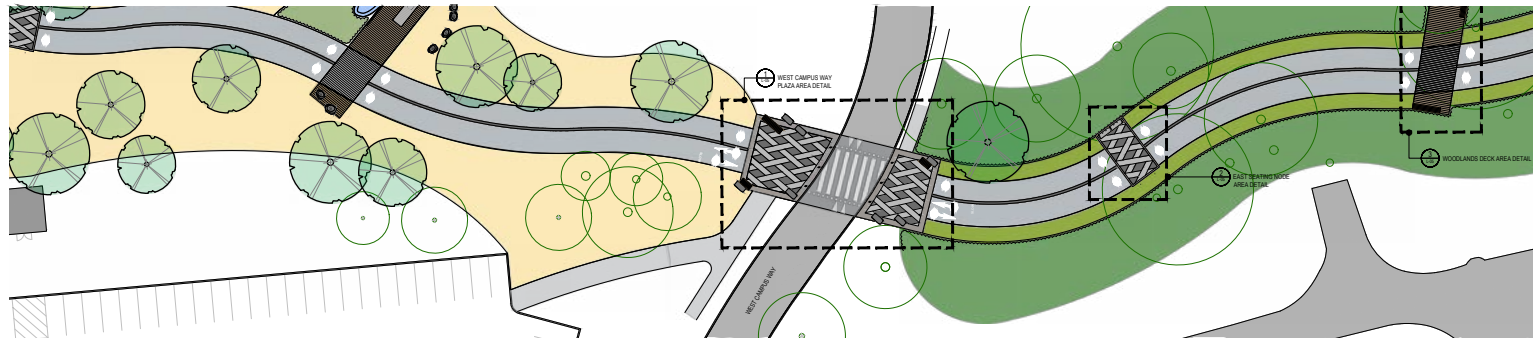
on schedule, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the project. Work safe plans and procedures are in place and strictly followed to keep personnel healthy, and they are routinely kept up to date as provincial health orders change. Because campus is quieter than usual, with student, faculty and staff learning and working remotely, construction has progressed efficiently with fewer constraints as vehicle and foot traffic on campus is currently very low.

A video tour of the site hosted by Sidney Reist, UVic engineering alumna and project coordinator with the EllisDon Kinetic joint venture, highlights the recent work including the mass timber features.

When complete, Building One will have six storeys on its south wing and eight storeys on its north wing. It will house the dining facility and student residences. Building Two is 11 storeys and will be home to student residences on its upper floors and classroom space, study and meeting space, conference facilities and an Indigenous student lounge on the lower two levels.

By expanding on-campus housing, UVic is striving to meet student demand and provide as many opportunities as possible that foster a socially and intellectually engaged and connected campus.

Full story and video: [bit.ly/21-shd](https://bit.ly/21-shd)



## Campus Greenway weaves from west to east

The westernmost segment of the Campus Greenway project stretches from Gordon Head Road to Ring Road. The entire greenway runs through the centre of campus, for a total distance of 1.3 kilometres, and when complete will be a multi-modal route for pedestrians and cyclists between Sinclair Road and Gordon Head Road.

Connecting buildings and public spaces while creating a vibrant academic and social hub, the greenway will be built in phases. The Central Campus portion is still to come and a segment of the East Campus Greenway will be completed in conjunction with the Student Housing and Dining construction project.

The West Campus Greenway is defined by natural features, including the protected area of Bowker Creek and the University Club pond. The pathway through this picturesque

area allows visitors to enjoy the third busiest cycling corridor on campus while viewing the ecological features of this portion of the greenway.

“The western section of the Greenway will tell the story of natural areas of campus like the Garry oak ecosystem and Bowker Creek,” says Mike Wilson, director of campus planning and sustainability. “It will also highlight some of the ecological practices we’re committed to at UVic such as storm water management, and become a much safer commuter corridor for active transportation.”

New public spaces will include a plaza and seating area near Gordon Head Road just off the Alumni Chip Trail and a viewing platform and seating area at the headwater of Bowker Creek. An additional viewing platform and seating area will be installed near the University Club pond.

Interpretive signage along the greenway will highlight Indigenous culture, language, history and connections to the land including ecological characteristics. Developed in consultation with the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement, the interpretive panels will tell the stories of relationships with the land that continue today. A cedar weaving design pattern that will be incorporated in the paving treatment was inspired by the metaphor of weaving in UVic’s Indigenous Plan.

Ecological restoration activities

will see the return of native plants and trees, including the planting of camas in the field between Gordon Head Road and West Campus Way, and wetland native plants in the Bowker Creek and University Club pond areas.

Pedestrians and cyclists will enjoy improved controlled road crossings at both West Campus Way and Ring Road. The crossings will be widened and reoriented to safely accommodate foot and bicycle traffic.

The Western Campus Greenway project is anticipated to be complete in Sept. 2021.

## ringers

On June 1, Syilx and Tsilhqot’in playwright and director **Kim Senklip Harvey** was announced as the winner of the Governor General’s Literary Award for Drama for her play *Kamloopa: An Indigenous Matriarch Story*. The first Indigenous woman to win the GG in drama, Harvey graduated this fall with a writing MFA, and will be starting her PhD in Indigenous Law at UVic in the fall.

Digital Humanities pioneer and literary scholar **Janelle Jenstad** has received a lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Society of Digital Humanities. Jenstad’s work focuses on building accessible, interactive digital editions of early modern texts for the semantic web. Best known for her work as director of the seminal *Map of Early Modern England*, she has played a leading role in several of Canada’s top digital humanities initiatives. The society notes that Jenstad’s “collaborative open-mindedness and innovation is the hallmark of leadership in a career filled with substantial achievements.”

The **Giving Tuesday team**, led by UVic Alumni and Development, picked up two Prix d’Excellence gold awards from the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCA) in the categories of “Best use of video under five minutes” for the creative sprinkle cookie recipe of university funding, featuring student Justin Little, and “Best New Idea: Creativity on a Shoestring” for engaging students in philanthropy via the online Campus Quest game and quiz on Instagram. Alumni and Development recognize the many partners across the university who help make Giving Tuesday a success and contributed to these efforts.

CCA also awarded the **uvic.ca central website** a Silver Award for Best Website in its annual Prix d’Excellence competition. The award recognizes excellence in the development of institutional websites and judges on several criteria, including “the efficacy and appropriateness of the [site] for the intended audience; design, creativity, and how these combine to capture the unique qualities of the institution and its brand identity.” The **uvic.ca** website was redeveloped and launched in 2020 to be among the most usable, accessible, well-designed and mobile-friendly websites in Canada.

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# Recognizing a global journey of community-driven change

BY TARA SHARPE

Budd Hall, highly respected for his tireless dedication to people, social change and community-based research, received a national award last month from a visionary organization focused on effecting the type of real change to which he has devoted his entire academic life.

Community Based Research Canada presented Hall with its 2021 Research Leadership Award on May 6 at this year's virtual C2UExpo award gala.

Hall, the UNESCO Co-Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education at UVic's Centre for Global Studies, and a professor in the Faculty of Human and Social Development, was recognized for the impact of his contributions, for his guidance on a host of initiatives and for shaping CBRCanada into its current form.

## Continually making a better world

Hall has helped propel the movement of community-based research around the world and, as a long-time ally of social justice movements, traditional knowledge keepers, grass-roots practitioners and many other partners, has earned the respect of innumerable collaborators over the years.

"Budd Hall is the model for this award," says Dr. Lorna Wánosts'a7 Williams, UVic professor emerita of Indigenous education. "He has devoted his life to community-based knowledge, where he learned its depth of meaning working with Nyerere in Tanzania, Wangoola in Uganda, Tandon in India and people around the world. Budd came back home to Vancouver Island

and had the courage to tell of his family's role in benefiting from the lands of the Halal't people. With his support, leadership and guidance, we were able to bring Indigenous knowledge to the very fabric of university learning. As the Elders would say, Budd leads from behind, he lifts the energy and supports people—staff, faculty, students—to carry out their dreams, bring their own knowledge systems to create and imagine ideas to serve the community. Congratulations, Budd for all your accomplishments to make the world a more just and respectful place to live."

Hall has worked in Nigeria, Tanzania, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Thailand, Yemen, Uganda, England and the US. And he continues to address the vital importance of social responsibility in higher education through the ongoing sustainment of numerous networks.

Recently, he also played a role in linking the norms for the United Nations' list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the global community-based research movement.

UVic is among the world's top-100 performing universities in addressing nine of the 17 numbered UN SDGs, and in the top 200 universities overall.

"The impact of Dr. Hall's work on knowledge democracy and engaged scholarship is considerable," says Catherine Krull, UVic's Special Advisor, International. "And the multitude of global networks that he has created is impressive. As a scholar, I have learned much from him, and as the senior academic leader on international at UVic, I am so grateful for his advocacy, global outreach and incredible gift of bringing people together."



Hall. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

## Four decades of community collaboration

Hall, a professor emeritus (public administration) and former dean of education at UVic, served as secretary-general of the International Council for Adult Education (based in Toronto) from 1979 to 1991 before coming to UVic. He has also worked closely with UNESCO and the UN since 1972.

"It's no secret as to why these kinds of social-justice oriented innovations come about," Hall adds. "It's because of people. Movements are people."

Hall is also a poet. At the gala, he delivered verse in his own words during his speech—in typical fashion, turning the attention to someone other than himself—to honour the late Paulo Freire, an influential phi-

losopher and educator who was a personal inspiration to Hall.

Over the years, Hall has undertaken theoretical and practical work in community-based research, often exploring critical pedagogy and working closely with the next generation to question what is entrenched or established and calling instead for new approaches.

"UVic, together with most of the universities in the world, is based upon a 550-year-old Eurocentric idea of the world, of how to understand the world, of what counts and how knowledge is constructed," Hall says. "Adding a course or four or five readings to everything else, as we know, isn't enough. It has to go deeper. We have to think about the very architec-

ture of knowledge."

"It's a dialogue of equals. We've made a lot of progress but the vision, if you think about this as a knowledge democracy, is the recognition that knowledge is created in all places and that lived experiences are equal to knowledge produced in the academy."

Hall shares the UNESCO position with his colleague and co-chair Rajesh Tandon, a UVic honorary degree recipient based in New Delhi, India.

The C2UExpo was the seventh Canadian-led conference (since 2003) showcasing community-campus partnerships.

UVic hosted the third, CUExpo in 2008, at which the seed of an idea for CBRCanada was germinated.

UVic video: [bit.ly/21-hall](https://bit.ly/21-hall)

# Linguist honoured for work with Salish communities



Czaykowska-Higgins. PHOTO: PHILIP COX

BY PHILIP COX

UVic linguist Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins has spent the majority of her decades-long career in collaborative, community-based work in Indigenous language documentation, maintenance and revitalization with Salish communities, effecting lasting change in the field of linguistics in the process.

For her leadership and lifelong commitment to community-engaged language research, she has been honoured with the 2021 Paz Buttedahl Career Achievement Award from the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA-BC).

"CUFA-BC represents more than 5,500 academics from the province's five research universities," says Faculty of Humanities Associate Dean of Research Alex D'Arcy. "The Paz Buttedahl award reflects the integral connections at the heart of Dr.

Czaykowska-Higgins' tremendous academic achievements and her deep-seated commitment to community partnerships."

Throughout the 2000s, Czaykowska-Higgins has worked closely and collaboratively with members of the Nxaʔamxčín-speaking community in Washington state, and the Hul'q'umi'num'- and SENĆOŦEN-speaking communities of southern Vancouver Island.

In 2002, she and Dr. J. SINTEN John Elliott Sr. initiated the groundbreaking Language Revitalization in Vancouver Island Salish Communities project, which was funded by an early SSHRC-CRSH Humanities Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) grant, in partnership with the Saanich Native Heritage Society, the Hul'q'umi'num' Treaty Group, the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, the First Peoples' Language and Culture Council, and UVic's linguistics department.

During the six-year-long project, which was steered by several Elders' committees, she served as principal investigator and director, working with a 100-member team to develop infrastructure and research that would facilitate and support the revitalization of the SENĆOŦEN and Hul'q'umi'num' languages.

These experiences informed her seminal, paradigm-shifting article "Research models, community engagement, and linguistic fieldwork: Reflections on working within Canadian Indigenous communities," which had a major influence on the trajectory of research in her field by defining and arguing for Community-Based Language Research as a model for linguistics in North America and beyond.

"Dr. Czaykowska-Higgins has had a transformative impact on linguistics, informing not only theory but, perhaps more importantly, how linguists reflect on the ways in which they do

their work and the ethical implications and responsibilities that infuse that work with meaning," says D'Arcy.

Throughout her extensive career, Czaykowska-Higgins has remained an active and engaged writer and researcher, regularly publishing in scholarly journals and books, and contributing papers, chapters, research reports and conference presentations.

Her contributions to public scholarship also include the Nxaʔamxčín language database, an online dictionary with 13,500 entries complimented by a 1,300 page digital document that was produced in partnership with the Nxaʔamxčín Language Program of Colville Tribes and a team of UVic researchers in response to community-identified needs.

At UVic, she has played a significant role in the development and delivery of the university's undergraduate and graduate Indigenous Language Revitalization programs.

## NAPOLEON

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

rights to their lands without a signed treaty—a precedent that set the stage for future land rights cases across Canada. It was during this time that Napoleon began working with Gitksan leaders and peoples, and other leading jurists like Peter Grant, Stuart Rush, Louise Mandell, among others.

## Founding of the Indigenous Law Research Unit

While working on the Delgamuukw case, Napoleon watched the Gitksan people arguing their case on the basis of their own laws from oral histories, and saw that the Canadian legal system had no understanding of Gitksan legal systems. This realization formed the basis of a new direction in her life, and the founding of the

Indigenous Law Research Unit, which she co-founded in 2012 with Hadley Friedland.

Napoleon's passion, determination and hard work couldn't even be sidelined by a concussion several years ago. That was when she started painting, and her artwork spoke about her views on law, feminism and symbolism in a powerful new way. Her paintings center on Ravens—typically tricksters in Indigenous lore—but with a twist. Her ravens are grandmothers and disruptors: a motif that's easy to see as a representation of Napoleon herself.

Napoleon holds the Law Foundation Chair of Indigenous Justice and Governance, has been named a Canadian Indigenous Bar Asso-

ciation People's Counsel—a rare distinction awarded to a First Nations, Inuit, or Metis lawyer for "outstanding achievements in the practice of law—a L'expert Zenith Award, and was inducted into the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars in 2017. She will receive an honorary Doctorate of Laws from UNBC in June 2021.

## National Centre for Indigenous Laws

And Napoleon isn't taking a break any time soon. In September 2020, UVic announced funding for the establishment of the National Centre for Indigenous Laws—the culmination of years of work fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call

to action 50, to build Indigenous Law institutes. Already more than 10 years in the making, the National Centre for Indigenous Laws is getting closer to becoming a publicly accessible national and international virtual forum for dialogue, gathering, teaching and furthering the resurgence of Indigenous laws.

Though its vision is broad in scope, the centre's physical home will be at UVic, in an addition to the Fraser law building set to complete construction in 2023. The building, funded by the BC and federal governments, the Law Foundation of BC and other supporters, will house the Indigenous Law Research Unit, the joint degree program in Canadian Common Law and Indigenous legal orders (JD/JID),

as well as ceremonial and community spaces.

"This physical structure represents a sanctuary where our laws, which enable us to be peoples, will be safe," explains Napoleon, "and where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students will learn about those laws, creating the foundation to a multijuridical Canada."

How the centre will facilitate and build those conversations and connections has been the focus of ongoing national outreach which continues to solicit feedback and ideas through its engagement hub.

An APTN/CBC special will air on June 22, highlighting the accomplishments of the 2021 Indspire award winners, including Napoleon.

# 3M Student Fellow: making good teachers great

**Samuel Seshadri becomes sixth UVic student in three years to become a 3M National Student Fellow**

BY ANNE MACLAURIN

UVic economics student Samuel Seshadri has some ideas about what makes an outstanding teacher—and some things that can help good teachers become great.

His plan to address this challenge, along with past work in peer mentoring, has helped him become one of 10 3M National Student Fellows for 2021. He's the sixth UVic student in three years to receive this award, which focus on student leadership in improving postsecondary education.

The annual awards recognize students' achievements and future potential to enhance teaching and learning at the post-secondary level. New fellows continue to support teaching and learning at their own institutions and through larger, collaborative initiatives, supported by the Council of 3M Fellows and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE).

The awards also show how UVic attracts—and nourishes—student leadership at the highest level. This year's UVic 3M student fellow epitomizes that, while also challenging



Seshadri (right), training with fellow Vikes rower Adam Miller. PHOTO: ARMANDO TURA/AP SHUTTER

the university to become even better.

Seshadri's 3M education challenge focused on 'making great teachers' and leadership. He points out that while post-secondary institutions do an excellent job of developing 'hard skills' that are job-relevant to graduates, they can lack some non-technical, softer skills such as teaching and communication.

Seshadri suggests that adding a teaching component to undergraduate curriculum would aid in

improving the communication skills of graduates. He also believes leadership is rooted in a passion for the collective good.

"Leaders must lead from within a collective good, by initiating plans, and then mentoring and supporting each individual along the way to move the entire collective forward," explains Seshadri.

Seshadri demonstrated strong leadership in both the UVic athletics and economics communities as a

varsity rower and as a BSc honours candidate. With a teammate, he spearheaded the "Imagine If They Stayed" project, providing mentorships to young university athletes by older athletes to combat athlete neglect and its associated negative physical and mental health effects—an issue which is all too common in competitive sport.

As the Director of the Economics Course Union, Seshadri oversaw the transition of a peer tutor centre for introductory economics courses and

ran volunteer-led final exam review sessions to help students succeed.

Seshadri joins ten other 3M fellows on a project that supports STLHE's vision for improved higher education practices. He also plans to pursue a career that continues to combine medicine and economics by working in preventative medicine and public health.

Seshadri graduated this spring, and will be starting a master's in economics at Queen's University this fall.

## PHILANTHROPY BOOSTS RESEARCH IMPACT

# COVID-19 health research gets boost



Dr Leigh Anne Swayne (centre). UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



Turner and Paterson. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



Urbanoski and Pauly. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

The global pandemic brought a year of disruptive shifts, rethinking and heartbreaking losses. Throughout, despite a year like no other, UVic researchers pivoted research and studied solutions to build more resilient communities in the wake of COVID-19.

This spring, UVic funded its first round of the Research Accelerator Fund (RAF), a seed fund to support and boost research at our university. The first RAF campaign focused on COVID-19 research that strives to make communities stronger and speed up recovery—locally and beyond.

"The Research Accelerator Fund supports recovery efforts through expertise, partnerships and infrastructure," says Nathan Lachowsky, special adviser of health research within the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation.

"Projects funded under RAF represent new and emerging partnerships and team-based interdisciplinary approaches—co-created projects with aspirations for significant impact in our communities."

UVic launched the seed fund last summer to empower the university's world-class researchers to re-

spond to the urgent needs of communities in areas of economic sustainability, the health of individuals and populations and Indigenous wellness.

Initial funds by donors under RAF contributed to providing \$165,000 to six projects, including the following:

Dr. Leigh Anne Swayne, a UVic neuroscientist within the Division of Medical Sciences, leads a team of researchers to understand the adverse effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection on the brain. More is known about COVID-19's impact on respiratory and cardiovascular systems, but its lingering effects on the brain—whether loss of smell or so-called "brain fog"—is more of a mystery.

Statistician Xuekui Zhang and his team of researchers are studying risk factors for COVID-19 and forecasting infection counts. They're looking at US infection data to model the trajectory of COVID-19 infection and apply that model to Canadian infection rates to better predict outcomes here.

### Exploring impacts of the pandemic

From understanding the mental health needs of older people to how

the COVID-19 pandemic intersects with the ongoing overdose public health emergency in BC, UVic researchers are creating solutions relevant to these lived experiences with support from the BC Ministry of Health.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, psychology researchers Brianna Turner and Theone Paterson (psychology) are leading a nationwide study asking how COVID-19 and the associated preventative measures are affecting the lives of Canadians. Partnered with researchers in the UK, Canada is one of 11 countries seeking to identify what has been helpful or harmful to our well-being throughout this time. The work is also supported by funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

Claire Cutler's (political science) research is entitled "The Legal and Political Vulnerability of PPE Supply Chains during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy Prescriptions for Enhanced Security." She is identifying critical nodes of legal and political vulnerability in the supply chains for Personal Protective Equipment, known as PPE, for Canada. The goal is to

provide policy prescriptions to assist provincial and federal governments in developing appropriate long-term cooperative strategies and partnerships in order to enhance the security of supplies.

UVic research led by Erica Woodin and Catherine Costigan (psychology) involves a community-engaged partnership with the Victoria Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Program, which consists of four interdisciplinary treatment teams that provide stabilization and rehabilitation to adults living with severe mental illness in the community. ACT team members are experiencing greater levels of stress than normal during the pandemic, which is due in part to the greater number of opiate-related deaths among ACT clients in recent months. The purpose of this project is to understand the practices being used that support interdisciplinary team-based care and the psychological health and safety of team members, and to provide recommendations to further support clinician well-being.

A UVic project led by Karen Kobayashi (sociology) will focus on frail and vulnerable seniors and assisted living technologies (ALTs) to over-

come challenges and improve life. The team is focused on improving the health and quality of life of seniors living with complex care needs, and multiple, chronic health conditions. They will investigate several innovative ALTs currently being developed in the province. By using a community-based participatory research methodology, they bring researchers, key health system decision-makers, technology developers, and older adult end-users together, focused on addressing and overcoming challenges to embedding ALTs in end-users' real-world contexts.

As the COVID-19 pandemic intersects with the ongoing overdose public health emergency in BC, the need to evaluate responses to both these crises is crucial. UVic researchers Karen Urbanoski (CISUR/public health and social policy) and Bernie Pauly (CISUR/nursing) are part of a multi-institutional team evaluating the rollout of "safer supply" prescribed alternatives to BC's toxic illicit drug supply. This research will provide critical evidence to inform pandemic planning and emergency response activities at federal, provincial and local levels.

# major medal winners

## Governor General's Gold Medal

Jessica Kolopenuk—PhD, Political Science

Denaë Dyck—PhD, English

## Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal (thesis)

Alyx MacAdams—MSW, Social Work

## Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal (other than thesis)

Kahentehtha Angela Elijah—MEd, Indigenous Education

## Governor General's Silver Medal

Etienne Lederc—BSc, Computer Science & Mathematics

## Jubilee Medal for Humanities

Lee Whitehorse—BSc, Linguistics

## Jubilee Medal for Science

Yakov Shklarov—BSc, Mathematics & Statistics

## Jubilee Medal for Social Sciences

Dylan Kruyt—BSc, Anthropology

## Certificate Distinction in the Faculty of HSD

Lara Lammers—BSN, Nursing

## Victoria Medal in Fine Arts

Boyana Makedonska—BMus, Performance

## Dr. Maxwell A. Cameron Memorial Medal

Sophie Lund—BEd, Elementary Teacher Education

Katharine Brooks-Heinimann—BEd, Secondary Curriculum

## Canadian Society for Mechanical Eng. Medal

Jacob Verhelst—BEng

## Department of Civil Engineering Graduation Medal

David Kinskofer—BEng

## Department of Computer Science Graduation Medal

Keanelek Enns—BSc (Honours)

Rebecca Thomson—BSc

## IEEE Victoria Section Gold Medal in Computer Engineering

Jason Tinker—BEng

## IEEE Victoria Section Gold Medal in Electrical Engineering

Levi Puckett—BEng

## IEEE Victoria Section Gold Medal in Software Engineering

Jamie St Martin—BSEng

## IEEE Victoria Section Gold Medal in Biomedical Engineering

Hanna Atmospacher-Wirth—BEng

# CONGRATS, GRADS



## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# A learning quest leads to story, artistry and resilience

BY KATE HILDEBRANDT

Shawna Bowler, a proud Métis woman from Winnipeg, and a UVic social work master's graduate, was a candidate for this year's Governor General's gold medal award for her thesis on Indigenous women's healing through beading methodology. Her thesis is also a testament to her experiences in reconnecting with her own Métis ancestry.

Recounting her quest, Bowler speaks with genuine amazement at just how far she has come during her studies, and just how big her awakening has been.

In 1997, Bowler was enrolled in computer science at the University of Manitoba. A writing-intensive curricular requirement led Shawna to a Native People of Canada course.

"I learned so much about my people. It made me want to know more. I switched to the Native Studies undergrad program and that learning changed my life."

Bowler continued to the social work undergraduate program to further her studies in social justice for Indigenous people. She wanted to better understand the lack of connection to family, traditions and culture which, as she has observed in her work today, is a loss that is difficult to mend.

## Gifts of connection, and amending uncertainties

"Where do my ancestors come from?" she asks. "I still don't know all the answers."

Bowler's parents split up before she was a year old. To this day, she doesn't know anyone from her father's side of her family—but she does know that her dad was from Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation in Saskatchewan. She, too, is registered there, but had never visited until she began her MSW research thesis with UVic in 2019.

Interestingly, this was not the point of inspiration that led to her

interest in beading.

"Somehow I got it in my head that I was going to make a pair of moccasins," she explains. "I looked on the internet, read books, talked to people about the process and I learned that it is the beadwork that makes the moccasins unique. So I taught myself."

It didn't take long for her to see she was good at this. "I gave moccasins to my grandmother for her 80th birthday." The beadwork features the classic five petal flower. Gifting, she explains, is the centrepiece to her studies on beading.

## Linking people with research methodology

Two years later, Bowler was knee-deep on her research paper and wanting to give back to the participants who shared their knowledge. She decided to make medicine bags with the four-petal flower beadwork.

"This became the centerpiece of my research methodology. It is stitched into that beadwork. Gifting the medicine bags and my story created that safe, supportive space for the participants to share their own story through their own beadwork."

"It was really important to me to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and to assert Indigenous ways of doing social work and healing. Engaging in this research allowed me to accomplish some of this and further my own process of decolonization and healing."

## Balancing studies and a career

During Bowler's four years of studies with UVic, she has worked full-time in social work.

"I've spent the last nine years working as a victim's advocate in domestic violence and crime, where the majority of people who need my support are Indigenous women. I help explain the legal system to them in plain language. I help them find their voice and share their story as testimony to the court."

## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

# A study in (very tall) landscapes

BY ANNE MACLAURIN

Persia Khan, who graduated this Spring with a BSc in geography and a minor in environmental studies, grew up surrounded by big mountain landscapes in Cochrane, Alberta.

After touring the UVic campus, Khan knew she wanted to trade the Rockies and Kootenays for a coastal environment and a future in conservation and ecology.

"My path at UVic was largely shaped by my recreational interests; exploring my environment through hiking, biking, skiing and climbing sparked my initial interest in conservation and ecological research," says Khan.

"This year I really fell in love with mountain biking on Vancouver Island. There is no better study break than chasing dirt with your friends," adds Khan.

Growing up, Khan says her parents were always very supportive of her achieving a university education and they made it clear early on that she was free to study whatever inspired her the most.

"My father immigrated to Canada in the 1980s; born in Bangladesh he completed his education in London,

England before making his way to Calgary," says Khan. "He focused on a professional program because of circumstances and my mother did not have the opportunity to attend university."

Khan started her degree in general studies in social sciences, where she felt lucky to sample a few different disciplines before ultimately landing on geography and environmental studies.

"I was lucky to get a few really exciting volunteer and work opportunities early on in my degree, where I was so inspired by the graduate students and scientists I was working with, particularly a few female mentors," says Khan.

Khan's honours research project investigated how mammals use time in high disturbance landscapes in the Canadian Rockies. She also had the opportunity to be a research assistant with UVic's Mountain Legacy Project. A highlight of Khan's degree was participating in research at UVic, and she intends to pursue a master's of science program, specifically in wildlife ecology.

When she reflects on her time at UVic, one of the most important things Khan learned was how the local community matters.



Bowler's self-portrait after defending her thesis, Oct. 2020

Social work is a high-volume, high-stress profession, she explains, and at times it's traumatic. But there's also something about the work that keeps her engaged.

"I see women come to terms with their own resiliency. What keeps me going is bearing witness in my work with those few women who are willing to press charges. It's their resiliency that keeps me going."

The practice of resilience is what Indigenous women do well, she says. "It's where our strengths lie. It's a powerful thing to see when people decide to change their lives. I like being part of that change."

"I have strong ideas around gifting," she explains. "When I present a gift

of beadwork to someone, I am giving away a part of myself. It is knowledge. It is story. It is a part of me I am giving away."

As with learning and sharing knowledge, she says, "beadwork is medicine."

And Grandma is still wearing those beautiful moccasins.



Khan backpacking in El Chalten, Argentina. PHOTO: KARSON SUDLOW.

"After learning on unceded lands over the past few years, specifically on the lands of the Songhees, Esquimalt, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, I have had the privilege of learning from elders and community members about the ways that my growing Western science education can be used to complement already existing Indigenous perspectives and knowledge," says Khan.

Moving forward, Khan wants to

decolonize her own research and continue to learn from those who have engaged with western ideals of conservation and environmental management.

She's currently working as a field technician monitoring wildlife in the Alberta Rockies, where she is looking forward to lots of hiking and biking all summer before beginning more studies in wildlife ecology.

## GUSTAVSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

# Global business program leads grad home

BY CARLOS CHICAS BERTI

When Kashtin Apsassin arrived in Austria for the last leg of his Master of Global Business (MGB) program in 2020, he was excited to spend another semester exploring a new country and continent with his international cohort of classmates. He didn't expect that he would have to fly home just a few months later due to a global pandemic. However, after a rollercoaster year filled with highs and lows, Kashtin is graduating and excited for the official start of his post-graduate life.

Apsassin is one of many new grads around the world who finished their degrees during a pandemic. In his case that also meant starting a co-op, beginning a job hunt and starting a new career, all without leaving his home. The situation was complicated by the fact that the conclusion of his final co-op coincided with the beginning of the pandemic and one of the most uncertain job markets in recent memory. He applied to dozens of jobs and received few responses. "Graduating from university is already an uncertain time," Apsassin says, "and added to that was the most unpredictable period in recent times."

During the tough months of lockdown following the end of his program, Apsassin found creative ways to use his time. "As I dealt with the new normal of the pandemic, I kept my spirits up by trying to be entrepreneurial," Apsassin says. He soon decided to start a photography and web design business, and even worked helping others spruce up their resumes. "I used the knowledge I had built with

my professional practice courses in the MGB to offer my peers support as they looked for jobs."

Another thing that helped Apsassin through this time: sharing his experience with peers. He highlights how important it is for graduates to be honest about their immediate post-graduation experiences.

"Coupled with COVID-19, I had to deal with post-graduate depression, which is a very real thing. It was the first time I had to face mental health issues in my entire life. What I soon found is that people need to talk and express what they're going through and communicate with others who are going through similar experiences so that they can know they're not alone."

In fact, it was through sharing publicly about the challenges he faced that Apsassin found the perfect job opportunity. After Apsassin posted to Facebook about his difficulty finding a job, a manager from a co-op Apsassin had previously had with the BC Public Service reached out and offered him a contract position working with Global Affairs Canada's Free Trade Promotion team. It turned out to be a job perfectly tailored to his background in global business. "I went from having dozens of applications and no responses, to being offered a great job on a silver platter with a team and role that I really liked."

Although his MGB experience was changed by the pandemic, for Apsassin the program offered him an invaluable experience and satisfied his life-long interest in traveling the world and getting to know other cultures. "During my MGB experience in Taiwan



Apsassin

and Austria I found myself serving in an ambassadorial role between cultures. Every time I met someone I felt I served the role of representing Canada," he says. "It was an incredible experience." Apsassin had originally been drawn to the MGB because of his interest in living abroad and working with other cultures; so how did that pan out in a time where global travel suddenly ground to a halt? "Even with the pandemic changes, the MGB prepped me for my work with government, whether it was working [through Zoom] with international companies during my internship with Global Affairs Canada or just learning about global approaches that I can apply to my current work"

Apsassin's application of his skills continues with his new job as a policy analyst for Indigenous Services Canada. Originally from Edmonton and a member of the Blueberry River First Nation, Apsassin is excited about his future and the projects he is helping develop. In his role as a policy analyst he will develop a process for Indigenous self-governance in the education sector, in particular looking at how education can be funded, organized, designed and delivered in First Nations communities, both for pre-secondary and post-secondary programs. It's something he feels a personal connection to. "I was myself a beneficiary of these [post-secondary] programs before I ended

up in this position," he says.

Apsassin is now officially set to graduate this summer, an event that brings up many fond memories of his time studying abroad. When the pandemic took hold and students were being flown home, Apsassin and his MGB cohort got together in their communal kitchen for one last dinner.

"That's when I realized the importance of the program," he says. "I realized how much I had embraced the people I was with. Many of those in my cohort are still near and dear to me, and when we left I thought I had missed out on developing those friendships. But I'm realizing now that many of them are going to be lifelong friends."

## SCHOOL OF NURSING

# Finding a love of science, and joy in the unexpected

BY KATE HILDEBRANDT

When Edget Waktola—who graduates this month from UVic's School of Nursing—left Ethiopia in 2011 for a new life in Canada, the last thing she expected to find was a nursing career on Vancouver Island.

She'd already had experience teaching physics in Ethiopia. Following her husband Ze Engida to Halifax, where he completed a master's at Dalhousie, Waktola discovered she really liked working as a care aide, which opened her eyes to new career possibilities. "That's when I knew I wanted to be a nurse," she says.

So while Ze finished his UVic PhD in Earth and Ocean Sciences at UVic, Waktola enrolled in the undergraduate nursing program—and soared.

Her practicum organizing a vaccine clinic with the Tsawout Nation's health centre team satisfied beyond her expectations.

While she knew in her heart that nursing was right for her, that surety was confirmed by the people of Tsawout Nation. "This was a very good experience," she says. "I felt welcomed. The people were warm and kind and so respectful."

### Interpersonal connections key to vaccine clinic

During her practicum, Waktola would go to people's homes and talk with them about COVID-19 and her role in planning a vaccine clinic. This helped boost pre-registration, an essential element to determine if an

on-site clinic would be viable.

"Edget was a terrific student," says Leanne Kelly, an Indigenous nursing teaching professor. "She is attuned to her own context, in touch with herself and how she communicates with others. She was able to create relationships quickly despite lockdown restrictions."

Four nurses worked at the clinic, joined by a few local doctors, giving around 180 injections per day—resulting in 498 people vaccinated and a letter of congratulations from the regional medical health officer.

"It was challenging," Waktola smiles. "Some people were very hesitant at first. We had to come up with a plan to deal with that hesitancy." In addition to sending personalized letters, they hosted information sessions using social media. They also produced a video featuring nursing alum Mandy Stobbe, the Tsawout Nation's community health nurse, who graduated one year prior to Waktola.

"Mandy and I developed a video script and I helped her rehearse," says Waktola, emphasizing a need to hit the right note with their 'layer cake' approach to communicating.

"Lots of people booked their appointment and attended, but then some people started changing their minds. The challenge, even after they registered for the vaccine, was learning how to speak to those who were not 100 per cent sure." That took time, patience and empathy.

"We would explain, answer their questions and do what we could to

calm their fears."

Stobbe says it was Waktola's deep understanding of science and teaching that helped people decide the vaccine was the right thing to do. "She fit in very well with the Tsawout community," says Stobbe. "She was a natural."

### A global perspective on health care

While Waktola admits this was her first such experience, she talks of having seen great numbers of people succumb to disease in her hometown. "I have seen many people suffering with AIDS, dysentery, measles. Most people in Ethiopia cannot afford to pay for the medicine they need."

As was the case with her baby brother who contracted measles at the age of two. He survived, but the fever robbed him of his hearing. "School was not available for him," she says. In general terms, education in Ethiopia is a privilege; education at a special school for the deaf was unlikely.

"So he and I made up our own sign language," Waktola recalls. Her brother did eventually attend a special school, is now 27 and thriving.

Considering all that life in Canada can offer, Waktola says she is still getting used to it. "Especially the challenge in creating a social life. The Indigenous community I observed at Tsawout reminded me of that. Not only the close family relationships, but the friendships between neighbours."

"Indigenous people are there for



Waktola

each other. I saw how families with a child are comfortable leaving that child with their neighbours." At home in Ethiopia, she says, people raise their kids this way. "Connection is also found through the church just like at home. Through spirituality, they maintain a routine which supports that connection."

While she misses her family and homeland dearly, Waktola says she

found another family at Tsawout Nation, which was most evident when the community came together to celebrate her last day. Stobbe also wanted to compensate for Waktola not having a graduation ceremony due to lockdown orders.

"It was so heartwarming," Waktola says, happy to have made so many good friends. "And they asked me if I would come back."

## Curiosity at heart of undergrad research



Anderson

BY DOROTHY EGGENBERGER

Most university students switch majors before they reach graduation—not Chris Anderson. “I was learning about the nervous system in my grade 12 science class when I realized how much we didn’t know about it,” says Anderson, “That’s when I knew I wanted to study neuroscience.”

Anderson graduates this month with his BSc in neurobiology. He is also one of the few undergraduates who has already co-authored a research paper—with a second paper on the way. His key to success, he says, is building strong relationships with his professors—don’t hesitate to ask questions and seek opportunities outside of the classroom.

“Faculty and instructors are always looking for undergraduate students to help out with their research, but they’re not necessarily going to post about it. They want you to come to them.”

Biology professor Raad Nashmi was one faculty member Anderson reached out to, and eventually Nashmi asked him to volunteer in the Nashmi Neurolab. The team used a mouse model to study a degenerative disease called phospholipase A2G6-associated neurodegeneration. The disease affects a region of the brain that deals with motor control. Anderson compared the number of neurons present in that region in mice that had the disease against mice that didn’t to see if there was a difference.

A few months after the study concluded, Nashmi asked Anderson if he’d like to be listed as a co-author in the study. Anderson was both surprised and thrilled.

He continued working with Nashmi—this time in a directed studies course. Focusing on the same region of the brain, Anderson worked with Nashmi and his graduate student to look at co-localization of different synapses. The work is part of a larger paper which, when published, will be Anderson’s

second co-authored paper.

“If you want to pursue research, directed studies is a great stomping ground and also a great way to get your foot in the door. I’ve always been super interested in research, but I wasn’t certain if it was something I wanted to do long-term. Not only did I cement my decision to pursue my master’s, I was also hired to two research positions this summer.”

This summer, Anderson is research assistant to biology professor Bob Chow and his graduate students. The team is studying three types of bi-polar cells in the eye that connect the outer retina to the inner retina, enabling you to process what you see. “I’ll use a process called immunolabeling,” explains Anderson, “Under a fluorescent light, the antibodies are fluorescently labelled, so it looks like something like a neon mosaic.”

He’s also working with Nathan Lachowsky, a professor in public health and social policy, and the Community-Based Health Equity Research group on the Canada-wide 2SLGBTQIA+ COVID-19 survey.

“I’m so happy I chose UVic because I’ve met so many life-long friends here, so many wonderful people including my current partner of four years. This was a great choice for me. It’s a great school and I can’t complain about it. I’m happy I get to stay at UVic because I’ve enjoyed my time here so much.”

After completing his degree in five years, he is eager to advocate for taking your time. “There’s no right or wrong timeline to complete your degree. I struggled a lot with taking five years instead of the ‘normal’ four,” explains Anderson, “You can take as much time off as you need. You can go to school, take a semester off, come back to school do that sort of thing. You shouldn’t be rushing something you don’t need to rush. It’s okay.”

Anderson will begin studies for his master’s in neuroscience this fall under Chow.

## From Saanich to Spain—and back again

Study abroad program builds global perspective—and an appreciation for the challenges international students face

BY PHILIP COX

One semester studying abroad in Spain gave UVic graduate Elijah Ackerly a new perspective on life back home in Saanich that would change his path forever.

“I fell in love with the language and culture in Spain, but also with the way that learning a new language can influence your perspective on the world,” Ackerly says. “I saw that life can be different from where I grew up.”

Ackerly, who graduates this month with a major in Hispanic studies and a minor in history, was raised with his sister by his mother in a single-parent, low-income home. Despite experiencing what he describes as “a noticeable class discrepancy” between himself and his elementary, middle and high school classmates, he never doubted that he would one day attend university.

“I didn’t always know what I wanted to study, but I always knew I wanted to go to university. It just meant that I had to take out student loans and work hard for scholarships,” Ackerly reflects.

Among the many merit-based scholarships that he received is the Elias Mandel Prize for Study Abroad in Hispanic and Italian Studies, which assists undergraduate students with tuition fees and travel costs associated with the university’s study abroad program.

After finding an advertisement for the program posted in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies hallway, Ackerly attended an information session, applied, and soon found himself in Alcalá de Henares—a small city with 200,000 residents, 35 km northeast of Madrid. He then spent the next three months studying Spanish language, culture and literature at the Universidad de Alcalá while earning UVic credits.

“The experience was really influential for me and solidified my desire to do a degree in Spanish. I came back and declared a major in Hispanic studies right away,” Ackerly explains. “And, although I was only in my second year, it also got me thinking about what would be a good next step.”

In addition to trying his hand at



Ackerly in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. PHOTO: PROVIDED

extra-curricular activities on campus, such as working as a co-editor of the Hispanic and Italian Studies undergraduate journal *PLVS VLTRA* in 2020, Ackerly also worked as a team leader at the Oak Bay Parks, Recreation and Culture’s Youth Centre throughout his degree.

“The centre is a free drop-in space open to youths from the neighbourhood to hang out, hold space, and find belonging,” says Ackerly. “I worked there every day after school, planned monthly events and sometimes taught courses on first aid, customer service or resumé development.”

Ackerly notes that his time overseas gave him unique insight into some of the challenges faced by many of the participants in the program, who had recently moved to Canada and were learning English as a second language.

“I could fully relate to what it’s like

to be in a new country where you’re learning the language, which is really difficult. Because of my experiences in Spain, I could definitely empathize with the participants who were new to Canada. It made me a better instructor.”

In the fall, Ackerly will carry these insights and experiences from Saanich to Spain once again when he returns to the Universidad de Alcalá in Alcalá de Henares to start a master’s in teaching, with a focus on bilingual and multicultural education.

“Study Abroad programs are an important way for our students to learn about other cultures and languages through mutually-enriching encounters,” says professor of Hispanic and Italian Studies Marina Bettaglio. “We are proud to be able to provide scholarships that break down financial barriers and make experiences like this possible.”



Ackerly exploring buildings at the Universidad de Alcalá, some of which date back to 1293. PHOTO: PROVIDED





Lee at Mason Lake, near the Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington

## Designing technology solutions for a better world

BY ANNE TOLSON

As a high school student trying to decide on a university major, Robert Lee recalls wanting to find a field where he could cultivate his keen interest in science, develop innovative technologies, and make a positive impact in the world.

“Ever since I was a child, I was interested in science, math and technology,” says Lee, who graduates this spring with a BEng in computer engineering, specializing in computational intelligence and machine learning.

“I saw engineering as chance to combine my strengths and interests in science with an opportunity to design and build the next breakthrough technologies, while also embodying the positive change I want to see in the world.”

It’s remarkable how successfully Lee has already been in achieving those early goals.

### Building breakthrough technologies

During his time at UVic, Lee spent three of four co-op terms at Microsoft, working on software solutions that have since been deployed and made available to the public. In the company’s Vancouver office, he worked as part of a team in an incubator-style environment to build a mobile application that demonstrated the deployment of machine-learning models. Later, at the company’s location in Bellevue, Washington, Lee worked on a software feature that generates a demo application for a search service. His final co-op, during which he worked remotely, involved creating another feature that improves search results when filtering or sorting data.

Last semester, Lee led a student team to develop a computer vision application that performs human pose estimation (HPE)—predicting the location of 17 key joints given a person’s input image.

“HPE is a difficult problem domain because of its unique challenges – variations in clothing and body physique, overlapping and strongly articulated joints, and complexities of the human skeleton,” explains Lee, whose work was featured on Streamlit, a website that helps developers build and deploy web applications for their data science projects. “Improvements in HPE can benefit industries such as animation, security systems, pedestrian detection, and much more.”

Later this summer, Lee will be joining Microsoft in Redmond, Washington, as a full-time software engineer with Azure, the company’s cloud platform for building, testing, deploying and managing applications and services.

### Pursuing a passion for STEM

In addition to the hands-on experience Lee gained through co-op and course work, he embraced several opportunities to test his STEM and leadership skills during numerous student competitions, which he says provided some of the best memories of his undergrad.

In his first year, after winning the UVic Engineering Competition, his team headed to the inter-provincial Western Engineering Competition (WEC), which was held in Banff during the middle of winter.

“In between competition days, we enjoyed hot springs, dinner events and games, and my team even hiked up Mount Sulphur despite all the snow,” Lee recalls. “I met some very close friends during that time and will cherish the experience forever.”

Early in 2020, Lee was part of a team that placed first in WEC’s Senior Design competition in Saskatoon and then competed nationally two months later at the Canadian Engineering Competition in Winnipeg. The events, which took place shortly before COVID-related travel restrictions went into effect, involved working on

intense, timed engineering challenges with limited materials.

In hindsight, says Lee, the team was extremely lucky to have been able to compete in person.

“These competitions were the highlight of my senior year,” he says. “It was an incredible experience to meet engineering students from across Canada, and to apply four years of theory from my courses to design, build, program and test an autonomous robot within eight hours.”

### Championing positive change

In the midst of courses, co-op terms and student competitions, Lee has still found time to give back.

He founded and led the UVic Senior’s Program, an ongoing series of free workshops designed to help seniors become more comfortable with using computers and the Internet. Over the past several years, the program has brought together UVic student volunteers and seniors from across the community. During four semesters, Lee also co-chaired the UVic IEEE Student Branch, organizing skill development workshops on topics ranging from circuits to machine learning.

Late 2019, he led a conference attended by more than 200 people featuring product managers from three top US tech companies who spoke about the fusion of technology and business strategy.

Lee, who at the start of his undergraduate degree won the highly prestigious Schulich Leader Scholarship, intends to keep looking for opportunities to make a difference, particularly in the area of climate change.

“Growing up in BC, I’ve been lucky to experience the sheer beauty of nature and want to do everything I can to help preserve the Earth for future generations,” he says. “I hope to make a positive difference and tackle the biggest challenges facing the world today.”



## A passion for community wellness launches career

BY AMANDA PROCTOR

Bringing together community wellness, education and digital media may seem like a challenge, but for recent UVic kinesiology graduate Ashley Hoydal-Payne, the connection between the fields is natural.

Hoydal-Payne graduates with a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology with a minor in education this May, after completing an internship as a digital marketing consultant at Extreme Outreach, a local organization that offers programs for street-involved and at-risk youth in the community.

Hoydal-Payne has been volunteering with Extreme Outreach since 2011. It was her work with the organization that first empowered her to get involved in community health and wellness. This ultimately led to her studies in kinesiology at UVic, where she hoped to learn how to promote healthy lifestyles within her community.

As she continued her degree, minoring in education was a “natural fit” for Hoydal-Payne. “I realized that to apply what I had learned throughout my major, in real life scenarios, it would be essential for me to become a better educator and gain a more holistic understanding of education on a local and global scale.”

### Teaching community wellness meets digital media

All of Hoydal-Payne’s interests came together through her internship at Extreme Outreach. “I was allowed to further explore my passions for community wellness, community education, and community building through the use of digital content and digital marketing strategies.” Hoydal-Payne’s digital media work enabled

Extreme Outreach to increase donations and continue to make an impact on youth in Victoria.

“Now more than ever, I believe that we need to collectively come together as individuals to cultivate resources, relationships, and a sense of belonging amongst our communities. Through organizations like Extreme Outreach, personal connection is fostered, support networks are built, confidence is developed, and wellness is promoted,” she says.

### From internship to career

Her internship made a difference in the community, but the experience also left an impression on Hoydal-Payne. In 2020 she was inspired to launch Well Said Studios, a digital media and marketing company that crafts strategies for small businesses and non-profits to grow their revenue and their business as a whole.

But Hoydal-Payne hopes to further hone the focus of the business: “I plan to spend more time developing Well Said Studios to specialize in cause marketing so that I can continue working directly on projects and with organizations, like Extreme Outreach, that will positively impact our community for years to come.”

Through her work in the community with Extreme Outreach and her studies at UVic, Hoydal-Payne has gained the valuable perspective she needed to launch her business. Her advice to incoming students about how to get the most from the UVic experience? “Slow down, practice kindness and gratitude for the opportunity at hand, and try out as many courses, internships, and extracurricular activities until discovering their true passions, while building community along the way.”

## SWAIN

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

“It’s kind of surreal to look back and see that the choices we made last year are still the standard of what we need to be doing now,” Swain admits. “I approached it with the idea that you should feel safer at the festival than you would walking down the sidewalk.”

But the pandemic isn’t the only change facing the arts sector, where IBPOC issues have increasingly been at the forefront.

“The arts are usually viewed as progressive from the outside, but that’s not always the case,” says Swain, who has Métis heritage. “Most companies have one person as artistic director—usually a mid-career white man who’s a former actor or director. It takes a lot of hard work and internal effort to change that, but it’s time.”

Indeed, Swain is currently part of a BC Arts Council-funded project researching alternative ways of artistic leadership, and a Canada Council-

funded group envisioning a succession plan for SKAM’s own leadership.

“What if you had four people leading a company instead of just one?” he wonders. “How can you have a more fulfilling career as an individual artist if you’re also running a company? SKAM is an ideal company for that kind of change, as we do so many different things: mount shows and festivals, operate a theatre school, run a rental space. I definitely think it’s positive progress—it feels like we’re heading in a good direction.”

With planning already well underway for the 13th annual SKAMPede Festival (running July 16-18 along the Galloping Goose Trail), Swain is feeling decidedly optimistic about keeping things live this summer.

“We have four versions of the festival right now, depending on what happens,” he chuckles. “It’s kind of fun, even if it is complicated.”

# HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

This spring, UVic is awarding seven honorary degrees that recognize notable achievements in scholarship, research, teaching, the creative arts and public service.

Honorary degrees have been awarded at UVic since its inaugural convocation in 1964. An honorary degree is the highest honour the university can bestow for distinguished achievement in scholarship, research, teaching, the creative arts and public service.

Senate confers honorary degrees based on the recommendations of a nine-member committee on honorary degrees and other forms of recognition. That committee, in turn, bases its selections on nominations invited from UVic faculty, staff, students and alumni.

This spring's recipients include:



## Josh Blair

**Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)**

Josh Blair is the co-founder and CEO of Impro.AI, a high-tech company enabling the benefits of executive coaching to be brought to employees at all levels of organizations. He is also a partner at Esplanade Ventures, a venture capital firm empowering entrepreneurs to deliver technology-based healthcare breakthroughs.



## Eric Metcalfe

**Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA)**

Since the 1960s, Eric Metcalfe's practice has epitomized the avant-garde in Canadian art, crossing disciplines of painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, installation, performance, music and video. It is often associated with the international Fluxus movement, which explored the intersection of artistic disciplines, media and contemporary culture.



## Bruce Poon Tip

**Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)**

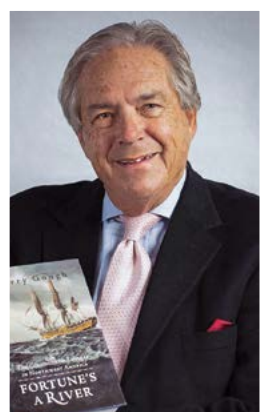
Bruce Poon Tip is a global leader in sustainability and social entrepreneurship. He is the founder of G Adventures, a travel pioneering company that is an advocate for sustainable tourism and environmental activism, and founded the non-profit Planeterra Foundation, which helps communities affected by tourism reap its benefits, protect the environment and develop social solutions to business challenges.



## Marvin Storrow

**Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)**

Marvin Storrow, QC, is a leading member of the BC bar with a national reputation for outstanding advocacy and a lifelong record of public service. His contributions to the development of Indigenous law in Canada are unparalleled, with his precedent-setting advocacy leading to many important Supreme Court of Canada decisions.



## Barry Gough

**Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)**

Barry Gough, is one of Canada's leading historians, and author of many prize-winning and critically acclaimed histories dealing with the Royal Navy and the British Empire. Gough's works include *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America* which won the John Lyman Book Award for best Canadian naval and maritime history.



## Teresa Petrick

**Honorary Doctor of Science in Nursing (DSN)**

Teresa Petrick has led an outstanding career as a nurse, nurse educator and administrator, helping to extend the reach of high quality nursing-education programs. Petrick has provided exemplary leadership and vision for a model for nursing education that has stood the test of time in British Columbia and beyond.



## Pauline van den Driessche

**Honorary Doctor of Science (DSc)**

Pauline van den Driessche is an internationally renowned scientist and UVic professor emerita who is internationally recognized for the depth and breadth of her work in linear algebra and was among the earliest researchers in combinatorial matrix analysis. She is also a leading international scientist in mathematical epidemiology.

## In Memoriam: Reg Mitchell

IT IS WITH PROFOUND SADNESS that we mark the passing of Reg Mitchell. Not only did he make incredible contributions to the field of chemistry, but he was also an enormous presence in the university's governance and its vibrant intellectual life.

"Reg loved UVic and he wanted to make it the best place he possibly could," says former UVic President David Turpin, a big fan of Reg. "He would sit on Senate and ask tough, tough questions but would do it in a way that was so disarming and friendly. But there was substance to it."

Mitchell was an award-winning teacher, well known for his "chemistry for poets" courses, for partnering in establishing the groundbreaking second-year spectroscopy course which was emulated across Canada, and for his many public lectures and radio appearances.

Mitchell was perhaps best known in the community as his alter ego, Dr. Zonk, a zany and charismatic character who enthralled thousands with his array of bangs, flashes and smells—all the while endeavouring to relate back to chemistry and its place in the real world. For his outstanding ability to promote and communicate science to students and to the public within Canada, Mitchell was recognized by the Royal Society of Canada with the McNeill Medal in 2006.

His humility, like his attentiveness to the field and his students, was simply part of his character. When asked by Turpin why he chose to retire with gas still left in the tank, Mitchell

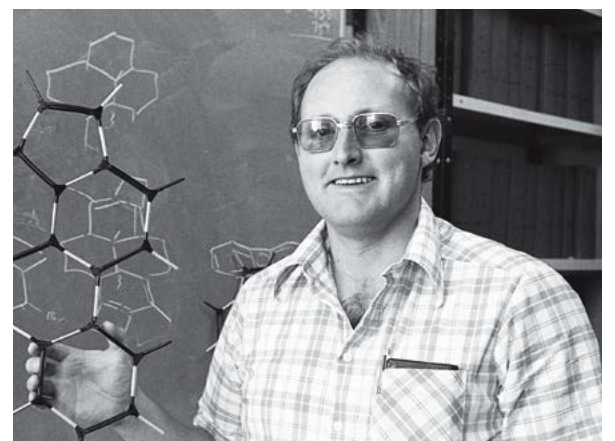
replied, "I've had a great run and I want to make room for others."

Mitchell rose rapidly through the ranks at UVic, becoming associate professor in 1975 and professor with tenure in 1982. He had a world-wide reputation from his research in the aromaticity of large ring systems, which resulted in 160 publications, three books and many invited and plenary lectures. His many successful undergraduate and graduate students, along with his post-doctoral fellows, would attest to his love of research and the attention he paid to it—and to their education and advancement in their chosen field.

Mitchell may also well hold the record for consecutive terms serving on the UVic Senate, during much of which he chaired and directed the work of many important committees, never being afraid to tackle a "thorny" problem which he perceived needed attention.

Whether it was working with the Faculty Association, serving on the local executive and the Board of the Chemical Institute of Canada, acting as a major force behind the construction of the University Club's new facilities as Chair of the Board, or serving on UVic's Ceremonies and Special Events Committee, Mitchell's contributions were impactful. He was always at the forefront, giving his utmost to ensure that things were done properly and well. He was an avid science fair supporter, fisherman and party organizer *par excellence*.

Reg was predeceased by his wife Wendy, and leaves behind



children Helen (Eric), Steve (Jodi) and their mother Mary; Kim (David); brother Rob (Dot) and four grandchildren (and Maggie).

Reg will be missed by all, but will never be forgotten.

—Gerald Poulton, UVic Associate Professor Emeritus

To commemorate Reg's legacy, friends and family are establishing the Reg Mitchell Memorial Scholarship. Anyone wishing to contribute can donate online at [bit.ly/reg-scholarship](http://bit.ly/reg-scholarship).

## A Fresh Tradition

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# Beaded creations string together beauty and life

BY TARA SHARPE

Carefully crafted creations of exquisite beadwork—moccasins, masks, dolls, cradleboard, purses, moss bags, hair ties and more—are featured in the current exhibition at UVic's Legacy Art Gallery Downtown. *On Beaded Ground* explores the essential role of Indigenous artists' creative practices in the reclamation and renewal of culture, identity, stories and teachings.

*On Beaded Ground* is curated by Lorilee Wastasecoot, Inineew (Cree) of Peguis First Nation, who is a UVic alumna and Legacy's curator of Indigenous art and engagement. Interviewed for CBC Radio's "All Points West" on the exhibition, Wastasecoot shared with that the beads in the collection "come together to create something that is whole and meaningful and beautiful, and the process of beading is medicine. And through the beading, the artists heal and become whole again."

The beaded artworks carry stories and transmit memories, legacies and narratives between people across time and space. The selection reflects the current proliferation of artists beading on this coast and explores practices past and present.

"The people who are making these things are Indigenous women. That information gets lost or it's not considered important to be recorded and passed along," Wastasecoot explains. "So that's how the erasure of Indigenous women and Indigenous artists happens with historical pieces and collections."

Legacy Downtown, UVic's free public art gallery, is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays to Saturdays with a full COVID-related safety plan in place.

## Interactive public series on beading

UVic's Legacy Art Galleries is also hosting a series of online events celebrating beads and beadworkers through this spring and summer.

Everyone is welcome to register for the online events and encouraged to bring their latest beading projects to the gatherings.

Upcoming in the summer series, on June 17 and 18, Nicole Mandryk and Lynette Lafontaine will teach an Indigenous beading workshop to make a beaded flower.



Lynette La Fontaine, Two-Spirit Otipemisiwak Artist, Kokuminawak Sakihitowin Kayas Ochi (*Grandmas' Love From Long Ago*) (naming credit: Dianne Ludwig), wool, seed beads, dyed caribou hair, dyed whitefish scales, 2021.

Later in the summer, Legacy will also feature "Bead 'n' Bitch" with Dayna Danger and Nico Williams.

The series will conclude on Sept. 9 with a final event, "Fostering Indigenous Cultural Practices through Museum Collections," moderated by Michelle Jacques, chief curator at the Remai Modern in Saskatoon, with artists Daphne Boyer and Bev Koski alongside Maureen Matthews, curator of cultural anthropology at the Manitoba Museum.

Visit [uvic.ca/legacygalleries](http://uvic.ca/legacygalleries) for more info.

## TELIDON ART PROJECT

# UVic recovery work on early Canadian digital art helps pave the way for national exhibition

## Obsolescence leads to passion project for digital archaeologist

BY LISA ABRAM

A UVic librarian has paved the way for a major retrospective of a digital medium that flourished, and fell into obsolescence, at the dawn of the internet age. John Durno's efforts to recover artworks made with Telidon, an obscure and long-obsolete technology, will provide an opportunity to peer into a set of newly recovered, uniquely Canadian digital creations with the 2023 launch of a national exhibit.

Over 40 years ago, UVic faculty members David Godfrey and Ernest Chang were at the forefront of Telidon research—part of a national effort to create what has since been described as the Canadian precursor to the world wide web.

The visual opportunities of Telidon weren't lost on artists. Glenn Howarth, a prominent artist and educator, used Chang's Telidon software to produce a major body of artwork while serving as a Canada Council artist-in-residence in UVic's Department of Computer Science—producing images in the flourishing art form.

But the pace of digital change was unforgiving. By 2015, Telidon was a footnote—an obscure curiosity—when Durno was asked to restore Howarth's work for a retrospective.

The resulting 2016 Legacy Art Gallery exhibit, *The Averted Eye Sees*, and the libraries' subsequent 2019 publication [untitled]: *The Artists' Archives at the University of Victoria Libraries*, gave Durno an opportunity to tell the tale of Telidon art—a creative medium embraced, and then abandoned.

"My restorations of Glenn Howarth's artworks demonstrated that it's possible to recover Telidon files from floppy disks and view them on a modern computer," says Durno, who has restored hundreds of Howarth's unique Telidon files on floppy disks housed in UVic Special Collections. "The success of that project led me to initiate contact with a group of original Telidon artists, to explore



Sherry 3 by Glenn Howarth

the possibility of recovering other lost works. Notably, I connected with Telidon art pioneer Bill Perry, who in 1983 co-founded an arts centre dedicated to the production of Telidon art called Toronto Community Videotex, which has since evolved into the media arts centre InterAccess."

In the years since the Howarth exhibition, Durno's techniques for restoring Telidon art have become more sophisticated—and the appetite for them has grown. "We're now able to display Telidon graphics on the web, using a method of in-browser emulation I developed," explains Durno. "This technique permits us to fully restore the interactive aspect of Telidon, allowing viewers to interact with the artworks in a manner similar to how they would have done using Telidon terminals back in the mid-80s. This is the core enabling technology that will drive both the web and gallery exhibitions."

A selection of the revived Telidon artworks will be shown to the public, many for the first time, as part of a research, conservation, and exhibition initiative.

Curated by Shauna Jean Doherty and funded by the Digital Museums Canada Investment Program, this 2023 online exhibition will be accompanied by programming that highlights the history of Telidon art, showcasing its trailblazing practitioners, and its ongoing influence within Canadian digital and new media arts.

More: [bit.ly/21-telidon](http://bit.ly/21-telidon)

# Wildfires and climate change

BY CARLY PHILLIPS,  
PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR  
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

As the 2021 wildfire season begins to unfold, the memories of past seasons linger—in the lungs of people, in the communities and landscapes that burned and in the atmosphere, where greenhouse gases from wildfires continue to warm our planet.

Wildfires wreaked havoc across the world over the past year. In Australia, bushfires spanning 2019-20 captured public attention as videos of scorched koalas and wallabies made the rounds on the internet.

Fires burned in Arizona and Colorado during the early waves of COVID-19. In Siberia, boreal forests and tundra fires burned in the far north. And as fall arrived, Washington and Oregon began to burn, with the consequences felt across the United States and into Canada as smoke and COVID-19 kept people indoors.

When it comes to climate, wildfires occupy an unusual space: they are driven by climate change and they help drive it. As this vicious cycle plays out and predictions of extreme future fire seasons continue, the need for human intervention to interrupt this cycle has never been more clear.

## Greenhouse gas release

Climate change is raising average global temperatures, bringing with it longer droughts, with cascading effects for forests and wildfires. These impacts are highly place-dependent—determined by the ecology and ecosystem and its history of disturbance, like wildfires, insect outbreaks or logging.

Across many forest types, increasing temperatures and droughts dry out fuels, including vegetation like dead trees and fallen branches, more quickly and completely, priming them to burn.

In some forests in California and BC, climate impacts can reduce snowpack and speed up spring snow melt, which can lead to even drier vegetation and increase fire risk. In ecosystems plagued by drought, like areas of the southwestern US, long stretches without rain can kill trees and leave dead wood ready to burn.

As a driver of climate change, wildfires release huge quantities of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. In British Columbia, extreme fire years in 2017 and 2018 each produced three times more greenhouse gases than all other sectors of the province combined. While trees can and do regrow after fire, building back carbon takes time, which is precisely what we lack in the fight against climate change.

That's not to say that climate change is the only thing driving massive wildfires, nor is greenhouse gas release the only consequence. People, specifically European colonizers in North America, have created and perpetuated conditions that increase the risk of large, severe fires. We are just one of many species that suffer from the consequences.

## An interrupted fire cycle

Fire has long played an important role in maintaining the health of many types of forest. For example, lodgepole pine relies on fire to reproduce by melting the resin that releases its seeds.

In the early 20th century, bans on controlled Indigenous burning and policies of fire suppression interrupted the fire cycle with which forests evolved, and removed regularly occurring fires from forested areas.

The exclusion of fire from temperate landscapes has disrupted the mosaics of ecosystems and recently burned areas that had once moderated fire spread and behaviour. Logging and

timber practices, like clear cutting and replanting, have also modified fire risk by favouring stands of coniferous trees nearly identical in age that can quickly carry and spread fire.

As the consequences from 20th-century forest management play out, people keep modifying fire regimes by unintentionally igniting fires and developing previously wild areas. By continuing to burn fossil fuels, humans further exacerbate climate change and fire risk, independent of forest management.

## How do wildfires alter the carbon sink?

Further complicating the grim picture of wildfires is the growing expectation among governments and policy-makers that forests and trees will counterbalance and offset our continued fossil fuel use. Increasingly severe and large wildfires could derail that plan.

Most forests are carbon sinks, meaning they take up more carbon than they release, with the amount of carbon taken up varying with age. As plants photosynthesize, they take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and integrate it into their leaves, roots and biomass. Over time, this leads to large carbon stocks in forests, stored in vegetation and importantly, soils. In cold, high-latitude environments, even more carbon is stored in permafrost soils.

Fires, along with other disturbances, release this carbon into the atmosphere, reducing the carbon stocks that have built up over time. Wildfires can also initially reduce a forest's capacity to pull carbon out of the atmosphere, also called "sink strength." Severe fires can inhibit forest regrowth and can change the species composition of the forest. Altogether, wildfires increase the amount of carbon leaving forests and can decrease the amount coming in.

## The wildfire season forecast

While predicting the intensity of fire seasons isn't foolproof and has its own limitations, many regions in Canada and the US face a greater than average risk for fires this summer, according to predictions. Extreme drought is occurring across the western US and the Prairie provinces—the effects of which are reflected in the elevated fire risk predicted for those same coastal and southwestern areas.

Despite these projections, wildfires aren't an anomaly, and for many landscapes, they're a critical process that maintains ecosystem health. But the wildfires of the past burn differently than the wildfires of the present, and now humans and wildlife are at great risk.

Humans, however, can also intervene to interrupt this cycle, with practices like prescribed burning and forest thinning that can increase forest resilience. This is an active area of research and many scientists, including a team from Canada and the US, are working to develop scientifically sound interventions.

Climate change doesn't operate like an on/off switch—meaning wildfires aren't part of a "new normal." We are experiencing the effects of climate change, but they will neither be consistent nor uniform. Rather, climate change is like a slide and, when it comes to wildfires, we are quickly spiralling downward.

This column appears as part of The Conversation Canada, a not-for-profit collaboration with UVic and other universities that delivers analysis and research from the academic community directly to the public. More info: [bit.ly/conversation-21](http://bit.ly/conversation-21)

# Indigenous resurgence in UVic tri-faculties

BY DOROTHY EGGENBERGER

Lydia Toorenburgh joined the Faculties of Science, Social Sciences and Humanities (the tri-faculties) as the Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator in December 2020. The new position, currently a three-year term, is another step towards the Indigenization of UVic. Toorenburgh will work with staff and faculty to forge systemic change, while also providing support to Indigenous students.

No stranger to UVic, Toorenburgh completed her bachelor's in anthropology here, worked as an Indigenous Student Recruitment Officer for a year, and is currently pursuing her master's degree, also in anthropology. As a graduate student, she is using audio-recording and walking methodologies to learn how Indigenous people with lower levels of English literacy interact with and access services in the health care system.

Toorenburgh is Cree-Métis and mixed settler on her mother's side and a first-generation Dutch immigrant on her father's side. She says balancing these three different identities has played an important role in her work and studies.

## Q&A with Lydia Toorenburgh

### Q. What role will you play as the Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator?

A. There are three main components of this role.

The first is to support the administration on how to better understand and implement Indigenization and decolonization. I spend a lot of time working with the associate deans of the three faculties.

The next component is to support current students. When we return to campus, I'll support our tri-faculty

Indigenous students by organizing events and referring them to on- and off-campus resources.

The third component, similar to the first, is to support faculty and staff on Indigenization and decolonization. I'll organize events, support Indigenous initiatives, and work with equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) committees.

### Q. Could you explain the terms Indigenization and decolonization?

A. Indigenization is the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems. Decolonization is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority of Western thoughts and approaches. At UVic, we want to weave Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems so learners can come to understand and appreciate both.

### Q. What is an example of weaving together Indigenous and Western knowledge systems at UVic?

A. There is a lot of conversation around how to decolonize and Indigenize the curriculum. I believe one of the best ways is to partner with the community, where the classes and coursework support those pre-existing relationships.

At UVic I was able to build on the community partnerships of my teachers. As an undergraduate student, I contributed to a video series that showcase local Indigenous artists at the invitation of Dr. Andrea Walsh, part of a directed studies course. As a graduate student, I had the privilege of being taught by Dr. Brian Thom who has worked with the Cowichan Nation for many years. Because of that strong partnership our class joined the Commemorating



Toorenburgh. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

Ye'yumnuts Project to create teaching resources for the sacred ancestral site, Ye'yumnuts. In both instances, I was able to earn credits, receive mentorship from my professors on how to approach this important work, while also making practical contributions to my field and our local community.

Academia at the service of the community is my value as an Anthropologist, and I carry that into this role. Decolonizing the academy is not just about internal change, it is also about breaking down the walls of the university. We must do more than invite Indigenous communities onto our campus, into our classrooms and into our leadership circles. We must also take our time, skills and bodies out into the community.

### Q. What do you hope to accomplish in this role?

A. I want my work to have a resounding impact on the kind of environment we work in and learn in here at UVic.

I'd like to see movement within the faculties towards decolonial processes, like preferential and limited hiring, and training to build a more diverse workplace and gain Indigenous expertise. I'd also like to see the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum. Change can be gradual, but I want to see movement toward those goals.

I also want to prioritize supporting students. There are times when just sending the right email to a student directing them to the right resources can be a real success for that student. I want to have as much positive contact

with students as possible.

### Q. What does 'resurgence' mean to you?

A. I'm always learning what resurgence looks like in relation to place, time and community. I'm not the authority, just one person trying to support that work.

For me, resurgence right now is community-level events and projects. Resurgence means supporting and returning energies to Indigenous peoples. It's about critical action and critical learning for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples to build stronger relationships and a stronger community.

Resurgence is about working with Indigenous partners so they can thrive.



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