

ANNUAL REPORT

MASTERMINDS 2021

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The MasterMinds series is an initiative to foster university:community engagement by providing high quality lectures at the University of Victoria to the public. The series has been offered for the past 14 years, delivering over 60 thoughtful and often thought-provoking presentations.

The MasterMinds series is comprised of four lecture presentations, one on each Wednesday evening in April. Each lecture is created and delivered by a distinguished University of Victoria retiree on a topic in their area of expertise and of general interest. Each year the series is developed by a collaboration of the UVRA, the Institute of Aging and Lifelong Health (IALH), and the University's Media Relations and Public Affairs group. UVRA is responsible for identifying and contacting UVic retirees who can and will develop thoughtful and stimulating presentations that are of interest to the community. The UVRA committee to do this consisted of Peter Liddell Margaret Klatt, and me. Leah Potter, with the IALH, took the lead in setting up the Zoom sessions and was masterful in making sure everything worked.

The series was fully planned for 2020 but then the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. The health-related restrictions on social gatherings resulted in the cancellation of that year's MasterMinds series. The series went ahead in 2021 using the Zoom Webinar format. We were very fortunate in that each of the MasterMinds who had agreed to present in 2020 sustained their commitment and were our 2021 MasterMinds:

- April 7
Nancy Turner, Distinguished Professor Emerita, Environmental Studies
Plants, People and Places: Lessons in Stewardship and Reciprocity
- April 14
Cecelia Benoit, Professor Emerita, Sociology
Commercial Sex: A Problem of Gender or Social Inequality?
- April 21
Richard Keeler, Professor Emeritus, Physics and Astronomy
Elementary Particles: The Fundamental Building Blocks of Nature
- April 28
Mary Ellen Purkis, Professor Emerita, Nursing
Thinking About Aging in Place

Each of the presentations was recorded, converted to YouTube format, and made freely available on the UVRA and IALH websites. To date, over two dozen views have been made on the IALH's YouTube channel.

Closed captioning was provided for each presentation with transcription provided by the Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre.

The webinar format allows for participants to write in questions and comments for the presenters to respond to at the conclusion of the presentation. This Q&A feature was well used in each presentation resulting in a lively discussion period to conclude the session.

The presentations were very well attended with 764 total registrations with 408 individuals registered for at least one lecture. In total 390 individuals participated in a session (51% attendance to registration).

Two thirds of respondents to the evaluation form stated that they preferred the Zoom Webinar format – one third preferred to on-campus lecture format. A number of individuals commented that the Zoom format had a number of benefits: travel to the UVic campus was not required, nor was parking, and the closed caption provided better access to the presentation for a number of the participants.

People learned about the lectures through:

- Word of mouth 33%
- UVRA newsletter 28%
- UVic website 17%
- IALH newsletter 11%
- Capital Daily 11%
- UVic Checklist 10%
- Other 1%

In summary – 90% of respondents rated the Zoom Webinar format as *Good* or *Excellent*.