An estimated 150,000 to 300,000 people are homeless in Canada, living in shelters or on the streets. On any given night, 40,000 people are staying in homeless shelters.

Families with children living in poverty, street youth, Aboriginal people, the working poor, people with mental illness and new immigrants are disproportionately reflected in Canada’s homeless population.

Bernie Pauly co-chairs the research and evaluation working group of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, which aims to end homelessness in the region by 2018. Without action, the coalition says, the homeless population would increase four-fold within five years.

Field work helps bring Pauly’s teaching to life. She’s pioneering a graduate-level course on housing and homelessness with UVic anthropology professor Margo Matwychuk. Students will work directly on finding information and resources on housing and homelessness issues of interest to the community.

UVic researchers were awarded more than $104 million in outside research grants and contracts in 2008/09—more than double the research support of five years ago.