



University
of Victoria

SPEED READING

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Cast your vote at the SUB

Voting in this year's municipal election just got a bit easier. Thanks to a multi-year campaign by the UVic Students' Society, **advance polls for Saanich, Oak Bay and Victoria** are coming to UVic. Students, faculty, staff and other eligible voters can cast ballots on Thursday, Nov. 6 from noon to 4 p.m. in the SUB Michèle Pujol room.

CONVOCATION 2014

Watch Fall Convocation on the web

The Fall Convocation ceremonies will be webcast live on Nov. 10–12. If you're not able to attend in person, you can watch the ceremonies at uvic.ca/convocation. The video of each webcast will be available for six weeks following Convocation. All ceremonies take place in the University Centre Farquhar Auditorium. For event times and more information, visit uvic.ca/ceremonies.

PATHS TO EMPLOYMENT

RUCBC study shows value of a university degree

It's a good investment, even in tough times: five years after graduating into one of the most challenging economic environments North America has seen in a generation, 2008 grads from BC's six research universities have lower unemployment rates and higher salaries than those who did not complete an undergraduate degree. More info about the *Putting Degrees to Work* report, from the Research Universities Council of BC: bit.ly/2008-RUCBC



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STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

P.8

THE RING

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

The University of Victoria's
community newspaper

ring.uvic.ca



Parker

1,272

NUMBER OF
STUDENTS WHO
WILL RECEIVE
A DEGREE,
CERTIFICATE
OR DIPLOMA
DURING FALL
CONVOCATION

FALL 2014 CONVOCATION

A Nobel-filled year for biochemistry grad

BY VALERIE SHORE

How many people can say they've rubbed shoulders with 37 Nobel laureates? For Michelle (Tonkin) Parker that amazing experience capped a remarkable academic career at UVic that culminates this month with a PhD in biochemistry.

This June, Parker had the privilege of joining 600 aspiring young researchers from almost 80 countries taking part in the 2014 Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting on Physiology and Medicine in Germany.

She and the other students—mainly master's and PhD students—attended lectures, panel discussions and master classes with 37 Nobel laureates at the meeting, which is intended to promote dialogue among generations, cultures and nations.

"It was an exceptional opportunity to meet the founders of modern science and top young scientists from around the world," says Parker, whose favourite lecture was by 89-year-old geneticist Oliver Smithies, co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

"He used his life experiences to discuss how the ordinary and extraordinary pieces of our lives intertwine with our scientific education and result in the evolution of ideas," she says.

Parker was selected for Lindau by the Canadian Student Health Research Forum after winning one of 10 Gold Awards of Excellence at a poster competition for the top five per cent of health research graduate students across Canada.

Of the 10 poster topics, judges deemed

Parker's to have "the greatest novelty and potential" and awarded her one of three Canadian nominations to attend the 2014 Lindau Meeting.

Parker's PhD research focuses on the strategy used by a group of parasites (the "apicomplexans")—including those that cause malaria and toxoplasmosis—to invade host cells and cause disease. "We see this invasion strategy as an 'Achilles' heel' for therapeutic intervention," she says. "One of our major goals is to support the development of more effective drugs and vaccines."

Parker has already published 16 papers in peer-reviewed journals, including *Science*, one of the world's leading research

SEE PARKER P.2

Challenges and opportunities highlighted at Campus Update

President Cassels emphasizes need to sharpen focus and build on strengths

UVic has made some big strides in the last few years—in terms of national and international recruitment, research and graduates' success—but that's not to say we're sheltered from demographic change, competition and the sustainability challenges facing post-secondary institutions, UVic President Jamie Cassels said during the Oct. 7 President's Campus Update session.

The town hall-style event—continuing the engagement and dialogue initiated during Cassels' *Campus Conversations* last year—was packed with more than 300 faculty, staff and students. Cassels spoke for 30 minutes and then fielded a variety of questions from the audience for another three-quarters of an hour.

While he was eager to celebrate the university's accomplishments, Cassels balanced the discussion with the need to work together to meet current

challenges—and be ready to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

The session tackled issues such as how do we as an institution continue to thrive, nationally and internationally, in a fiercely competitive post-secondary environment? And how do we maintain and enhance quality of the student experience during times of constrained economic resources?

Capacity and demographics driving change

Cassels began by outlining the challenge posed by increased university capacity across Canada coupled with a projected decline in youth population. Emphasizing the need to ensure that students from across Canada and around the world see UVic as a university of choice, Cassels said: "We're

starting from a position of real strength. [UVic] is a destination university, our enrolments are strong, our national and our international reputation is increasing, we have core strength in both our teaching and our research accomplishments, and we have differential strengths as well. . . . real reasons why people would choose the University of Victoria."

Among those reasons, said Cassels, are our size—big enough to offer comprehensive programs and small enough for a more personalized working and learning environment—our research accomplishments, the enrichment of graduate and undergraduate education by that research culture, our extraordinary faculty and the wealth of experiential learning opportunities for students.

SEE CAMPUS UPDATE P.3



Cassels. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

ringers

Rob McPherson (physics and astronomy) has been named deputy spokesperson of the ATLAS experiment, a 3,000-strong international scientific collaboration that built and manages one of two particle detectors at the CERN Large Hadron Collider on the French-Swiss border. The new position effectively makes McPherson the vice-president of ATLAS, working with the spokesperson to oversee detector and computing operations and manage relationships with funding agencies. The UVic ATLAS team designed and built several crucial components of the detector, which made scientific history by discovering the elusive Higgs boson particle in 2012.

Dr. Kelli Stajduhar (nursing / Centre on Aging) is the recipient of a 2014 Excellence in Nursing Research award from the College of Registered Nurses of BC for her clinically focused research on end-of-life and palliative care and her contributions as a research facilitator, mentor and communicator. Stajduhar began her career as a front-line nurse, but returned to an academic career with a desire to improve care for palliative patients and to reduce distress felt by nurses who care for them. Her work transcends the boundaries of practice, education and research, and speaks to her commitment to support patients, family caregivers, and nursing staff.

A UVic student team has won the Electric Mobility Canada annual competition that challenges engineering and business students to come up with a plan to improve electric vehicle infrastructure and promote the adoption of electric vehicles. Teams from across Canada had one week to assess an issue, conduct research and prepare a 10-minute presentation. This is the second year in a row the UVic team has won the competition. The winning team includes **Ted Alley, Martin Guinto, Mojtaba Lajevardi, Pouya Amid, Valery Heckel, Nima Tehrani, Adam Gray** and **Sahand Behboodi**.

CARSA now home to the Peninsula Co-op Climbing Wall

One of the focal points of UVic’s Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities (CARSA) is getting a new name even before it opens.

Peninsula Co-op was announced on Nov. 4 as the first corporate naming partner for CARSA, sponsoring the colourful 16-metre climbing wall that will now be known as the Peninsula Co-op Climbing Wall.

“Our board of directors and member relations are confident in the project and wanted to be involved in this fabulous state-of-the-art multi-use complex,” says Penny Sopel, marketing and community relations director at Peninsula Co-op. “CARSA will definitely be an asset to everyone on and off campus.”

CARSA is a world-class training and learning facility that will provide community members with access to athletics and recreation resources.

Sopel adds: “To know that CARSA has been designed to serve a diverse group of users such as students, staff, high-performance athletes, people with diverse abilities and the community-at-large is just fantastic. This emulates Peninsula Co-op’s culture and values of people first.”

The announcement comes as CARSA nears completion, with an expected opening in spring 2015. The value of the sponsorship is a mix of cash, scholarship funding and in-kind advertising over 10 years.

Clint Hamilton, director of athletics and recreation at UVic, adds: “We appreciate a partner like Peninsula Co-op coming on board to support this facility. The UVic community stands to benefit from this investment being made in CARSA.”

Peninsula Co-op (*peninsulaco-op.com*) is a local co-operative business widely respected for its commitment to integrity, excellence, accountability and respect.

In addition to the Peninsula Co-



L-R: Clint Hamilton, UVic director of athletics and recreation; Penny Sopel and Patti Hunter, Peninsula Co-op; and Tom Zsolnay, UVic associate VP, alumni and development.

PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

op Climbing Wall, CARSA features a two-storey fitness and weight-training atrium; a multi-purpose field house for a variety of activities; a 2,100-seat performance gym; multipurpose rooms for dance, fitness and club programs, including a yoga studio and spin classes; a rowing ergometer centre; squash and racquetball courts and more.

CARSA is also the new home for CanAssist, an organization dedicated to helping people across the ability spectrum improve their quality of life, with a focus on promoting independence and inclusion.

For more news on the Nov. 4 announcement, visit <http://bit.ly/10nY1JH>. For general information on CARSA, visit uvic.ca/carsa.

PARKER CONTINUED FROM P.1

journals. Her paper—the result of collaboration with French scientists—was chosen as the top biochemistry paper in that issue and has been cited more than 70 times since its publication in 2011.

Parker says her most memorable personal experience at Lindau was with Francoise Barre-Sinoussi, who shared the 2008 Nobel with her mentor for their joint discovery of HIV.

“I chose to sit with her at dinner one evening based on our common interest in the study of pathogens,” says Parker. “We had a memorable conversation that touched on a variety of topics from general life as a scientist, to her experience of win-

ning the Nobel, to the excitement of scientific discovery.

“Getting to know the personalities behind some of the most significant contributions to modern science was unforgettable,” she adds.

Parker plans to stay on in the UVic lab for another year to continue her investigations into pathogens and host cells while her new husband Matthew finishes his PhD in biochemistry. Then she’ll likely pursue postdoctoral studies in academia or industry.

“My main career goal is to be involved in fascinating science that has a clear path to beneficially impact the lives of others.”



DAVE LYNN

Navigate the ever-changing market

A longtime resident and UVic grad, Dave is helping local residents and new-comers to navigate their way through the real estate market. Whether buying or selling, he will assure smooth sailing. Just ask his many clients at UVic.

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BORROWS. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

Groundbreaking work on Indigenous law recognized with prestigious research chair

BY MARGARET SUDERMAN

UVic Law professor John Borrows secured one of the most prestigious research professorships in the country when he was officially named Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law last month.

“The Canada Research Chair will enable me to devote more resources and time to figuring out how Indigenous peoples’ laws can be studied and applied in Canada,” says Borrows. “With the profile and the resources that come with the chair, I’ll be able to involve more students and Indigenous communities in that work as well.”

A homecoming for Borrows

Borrows arrived back at UVic this May following several years at the University of Minnesota. His new position at UVic is in many ways a homecoming, since Borrows served as the Law Foundation Chair of Aboriginal Justice and Governance at the law school from 2001 to 2011.

One of Borrows’ greatest hopes for his research chair is for it to help bring the proposed JID program—a

four-year dual Indigenous law degree program where students will receive an Indigenous law degree and a Canadian law degree—to fruition.

“Faculty Council has approved, in principle, an Indigenous law degree and I am hoping that this research chair will be a catalyst to move that into approval in practice,” says Borrows.

In addition to his research chair, Borrows says further work in the field and direct engagement with Indigenous communities is a priority for his future at UVic.

“The other plan is to go into communities, particularly Ojibway communities of which I am a part, to work with them in developing regulatory and dispute resolution systems that build upon their own legal orders,” says Borrows. “I find they have already done the preliminary groundwork so my job is to help them reach the next level.”

Two other Canada Research Chairs at UVic have also been renewed: Aaron Gulliver (Advanced Wireless Communications) and Clay Holroyd (Cognitive Neuroscience).



Indigenous economic development consortium announced

L-R: Law Dean Jeremy Webber, Miles Richardson, Robina Thomas, Elder May Sam, Chief Andy Thomas and Gustavson Dean Saul Klein at an October ceremony to mark the launch of the National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development (NCIED). Full story: bit.ly/ncied. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

Lawyer & Notary Public



Bob Reimer

** Ask about alternatives to costly litigation **
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Enhanced planning: tools for today and tomorrow

If you're inclined to think that planning might be the tiniest bit dull, you'll quickly be set straight by Dr. Sarah Blackstone. Generally, she's knee-deep in the Faculty of Fine Arts as its dean, but as acting associate vice-president academic and chair of the Enhanced Planning Tools Working Group, she's busy thinking a decade ahead.

"Most universities operate in a resource-constrained environment," she says, "and that means effective planning tools are critical. When this project is complete, campus administrators at all levels will have reports that provide relevant, accurate information to support their strategic decision-making processes."

Meeting since December 2013, the working group started by identifying seven criteria that align with UVic's strategic priorities. Focussing initially on the criteria of quality, demand and financial considerations, the group determined what qualitative and quantitative measures might be appropriate. This process will continue with the other criteria.

The working group takes its initial recommendations to an advisory committee, then to Integrated Planning, Executive Council and others

who are involved in planning. In June, Blackstone presented a progress report at the university community campus update. She has also reported to Deans' Council and Senate.

From November to January, Blackstone and Acting Provost and VP Academic Valerie Kuehne will visit every faculty council on campus to talk about the proposed enhanced planning tools.

Working group member AVP Financial Planning and Operations Kristi Simpson explains: "The goal of the tool is to provide a mix of current and new data from central systems augmented with data and qualitative responses provided by units."

A financial template with easily accessible information is also on the drawing board. Humanities dean John Archibald, another working group member, adds: "While these tools incorporate new ways of measurement, they will also draw on data currently in a number of systems and bring it together in a way that's truly useful to administrators."

Faculty of Social Sciences Dean Catherine Krull says: "I know from experience that when a dean, head or a director needs to make financial



L–R: Blackstone, Janet Dixon and Archibald. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

choices, it's vital that we have appropriate tools and accurate data/information. It's reassuring that this committee is asking what tools we need to ensure the success of our programs."

Blackstone emphasizes: "When complete, these tools will provide a way to align resources with strategic priorities by enhancing our existing planning processes with qualitative and quantitative measures that are consistent and transparent campus-wide."

And she knows that the criteria will be responsive as UVic's strategic priorities change. "The measurements within each criterion will be about what's important today, but can be augmented or changed to work with what's important five or 10 years from now."

For more about enhanced planning tools, visit uvic.ca/vpacademic/resources/enhanced-planning/

around the ring

Computer Help Desk expands services and locations

The Computer Help Desk has expanded its operations to provide more knowledgeable staff, extended hours and twice the number of locations. The new locations will be familiar: computing classrooms and drop-in spaces in Clearihue, Business and Economics, and HSD are now full Help Desk locations. As a result of the expansion, Help Desk assisted over 5,000 students, faculty and staff in the first five days of September and received 9,793 contacts throughout the month—nearly double last September's figures. Faculty, staff and students can also contact the Help Desk by telephone and email from 8 a.m.–11 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m.–10 p.m. weekends and 10 a.m.–6 p.m. on stat holidays.

Celebrate extraordinary service

Do you know a faculty or staff member who makes UVic a great place to work and learn? Then why not nominate him or her for one of this year's President's Distinguished Service Awards? Any UVic employee or recognized student organization can nominate an individual, group or team for these awards. Winners receive a plaque and a \$1,000 professional development allowance (to a \$6,000 maximum limit in the case of team awards). The nomination deadline is Nov. 21. More information and nomination forms: web.uvic.ca/hr/pdsa

Setting fundraising priorities for 2015/16

Philanthropy plays an increasingly important role in ensuring that our university provides a first-class educational experience to students and continues to build on its research strengths. UVic President Jamie Cassels has introduced a transparent and robust process for setting fundraising priorities to guide campus leaders at all levels. The PDF document about how UVic is setting fundraising priorities is at bit.ly/1516-fundraising

CAMPUS UPDATE CONTINUED FROM P.1

Several times in the discussion, he returned to the importance of focusing on student success.

Cassels also addressed the challenge of the "systemic deficit" where costs rise faster than revenues from government grants and tuition. Acknowledging that resource challenges have created concern across campus among faculty and staff who are committed to the university's mission, Cassels outlined the need to carefully align resources with priorities "by being more rigorous, more evidence-informed and more transparent about how we use our resources, and more focused on what our strengths are and how we want to build our strengths."

Tools and transparency

A more strategic, transparent and evidence-based approach to managing resources will be made possible by the Enhanced Planning Tools project currently underway, which Cassels cited as providing support for UVic decision-makers at the unit, faculty and division levels to align resources with our priorities and overall mission. Greater transparency will also enhance internal communications—providing faculty and staff with the information they need and opportunities for input and influence.

Also in the works is an updated Strategic Research Plan, which is about to launch into its consultation phase. In the last 15 years, explained Cassels, universities have been transformed by an expanded research agenda, and faculty and staff are now working in a complex environment of regulatory and accountability requirements. The plan will assess support and services for faculty; establish benchmarks and assess strengths to be ready for new opportunities; and address ways to enhance social impact, knowledge mobilization and innovation.

Reaffirming the core value of universities

Cassels identified social anxiety about the value of post-secondary education as an additional challenge facing universities. "There's an interesting governmental, policy and media narrative expressing some skepticism about the

value of what we do—expressing some concerns about the escalating costs of university education and research, and skepticism about the benefits."

The solution is not to be defensive in the face of this growing anxiety, the president explained, but to be responsive to those concerns and to "get in front of the curve and reaffirm our social mission" in broad and inclusive terms. He referred to what he called the "autonomy/accountability bargain"—emphasizing that universities have been allowed great independence to shape their programs, and that independence is based on our willingness to be accountable and socially responsive. He emphasized that we can continue to prove our social value by supporting strong programs that do indeed produce job-ready students—and by continuing to offer programs across the disciplines of the arts and sciences that have different academic objectives, noting that those programs also prepare graduates for "the long game" of an intellectually engaged existence and enhanced life prospects. Cassels used graphs to punctuate his point, showing that 94 per cent of UVic alumni are employed in fields related to their studies within two years of graduating.

Cassels also referenced the vital social, economic and technological impacts of research as fundamental to our societal contribution, noting the opportunity to better benchmark and communicate those impacts.

"We want to make a difference, and we can be trusted to make a difference," said Cassels. Promoting strong stories and key messaging, much of which is currently being shaped by *The UVic Difference* positioning project, will help us to seize control of our future, and in turn will help us continue to recruit students, funding agencies, philanthropists and public support.

Overall, the university must continue to look for ways to maintain and sustain its core strengths and functions, he said.

"This is our challenge. We need to work together to ensure that we continue to enhance the quality of what we do. Because we're starting from an extraordinarily strong position, I'm utterly confident that we'll be able to do that."

Build a better blog with UVic's Online Academic Community

BY LINDSAY GAGEL

Looking to create a personal website? A blog to discuss your latest research? Maybe you want a place to show off photos of your cat? Thanks to the Online Academic Community (OAC), current UVic employees and students can now create their own websites and blogs—all you need is a NetLink ID. With more than 100 themes and plugins available, UVic faculty, staff and students can create, customize and manage their own sites—professional or personal—through a university-supported WordPress platform.

Unlike much of the rest of the internet, the OAC doesn't default to kitten-related content, but it does make it easy to showcase your portfolio, photos, research or hobbies—or to connect with peers, discover and comment on sites, and facilitate forums. Engagement depends entirely on the user.

Instructors can also create sites for academic courses, but these sites must be requested through




My page. Departmental administrative staff can request course websites through apex.uvic.ca/olsa. Official faculty, department and unit websites are not eligible for OAC and should instead


use the standard UVic template in the Cascade content management system.

OAC can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection, meaning you don't have to be on campus to view or manage websites. And, it's mobile-friendly, so you can access sites from a tablet or smart phone.

If you're new to WordPress, online instructions for the creation and management of OAC websites are available at oac.uvic.ca/help. Drop-in help sessions are also provided, and you can email til-help@uvic.ca for information about workshops. Contact the Computer Help Desk if you're having problems accessing OAC with your NetLink ID and password.


Log in through oac.uvic.ca to get started.


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REGISTERED RETIREMENT INCOME FUND (RRIF)							
	AGE	55	60	65	71	75	80
Minimum Payout *		\$238	\$278	\$333	\$615	\$654	\$729
Total Payout to Age 100		\$163,776	\$152,038	\$141,336	\$129,728	\$124,921	\$118,147
Accelerated Payout:							
Income over 5 years	...		\$1,779				
Income over 10 years	...		\$947				
Income over 15 years	...		\$671				
Total 5 year payout	...				\$106,718		
Total 10 year payout	...				\$113,637		
Total 15 year payout	...				\$120,834		

* Based on best current GIC of 2.55%. Returns will vary depending on investment vehicle. Monthly income based on \$100,000

LIFE ANNUITIES (PER CANNEX BASED ON INITIAL INVESTMENT OF \$100,000)							
	AGE	55	60	65	71	75	80
Male							
...payments cease at death		\$455	\$516	\$585	\$718	\$851	\$1,109
...10 years guaranteed		\$449	\$505	\$562	\$658	\$729	\$852
Female							
...payments cease at death		\$422	\$464	\$524	\$628	\$724	\$918
...10 years guaranteed		\$419	\$460	\$512	\$600	\$664	\$785
Joint Life: 10 yrs guaranteed		\$398	\$438	\$470	\$547	\$607	\$725

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2015 *Maclean's*
rankings

Once again, UVic is ranked among the top Canadian comprehensive universities by *Maclean's* magazine. This is the eighth consecutive year that UVic has been ranked either first or second in this category. In a strong showing across the board, UVic racks up top-three finishes in eight of the 12 key performance indicators used by *Maclean's* for its 2015 rankings. In recent years, UVic and Simon Fraser University, which finishes first in the comprehensive category this year, have moved back and forth between the top two positions among Canada's 15 comprehensive universities, a category that denotes a significant amount of research activity and a wide range of programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including professional degrees. UVic receives top scores for student awards and medical/science grants, and second for total research activity and library acquisitions.

Recognition for
community-engaged
scholars

Nominations are being accepted for the new Provost's Engaged Scholar Award. This award has been recently established to recognize those faculty members who have achieved great distinction as community-engaged scholars. Nominees must be tenured regular faculty members. Up to two engaged scholar awards will be granted this academic year. The deadline is Dec. 12. Details at [bit.ly/14-engaged](#)

Working together
for health

An enhanced research partnership between UVic and the Vancouver Island Health Authority (Island Health) is the goal of an MOU recently signed between the two organizations. Island Health is one of six health jurisdictions in BC, providing health care and support services to more than 760,000 people. The agreement will streamline how the two organizations work together by creating new opportunities for collaborative research, joint funding and skills training; exploring commercialization of innovative health research and related technology; and promoting information-sharing and database development. "Our researchers already have strong ties with Island Health and this agreement paves the way for even more engagement," says Dr. Michael Hayes, UVic's director of health research and education. More collaboration will help improve patient outcomes and open up opportunities for our researchers by giving them access to clinics and physicians." Hayes notes that Island Health has identified three priority populations: seniors, Aboriginals and those with mental health and addictions. "UVic has research centres in all three areas, so this is a perfect fit for us," he says.

Convocation

Engineering a
culture shift on
campus

BY JULIE SLOAN

Some people are born leaders, and convocating graduate Tiffany Yu undoubtedly falls into that category. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Yu saw a need in the Faculty of Engineering and set out to create change, becoming heavily involved with the Engineering Student Society (ESS). After attending the National Conference on Women in Engineering, Yu was inspired to create an engineering group for women at UVic. With help from faculty members and fellow ESS members Taylor Entz and Alisa Minderova, the organization "Leadership Through Diversity" (LTD) was born.

"In engineering," says Tiffany, "you meet a lot of shy people, but also a lot of people who just don't know how to get involved. I really wanted to find a way to connect everyone and bring people together."

The student-run organization within the ESS has been going strong for two years and is designed to be inclusive and supportive of all types of diverse student populations. LTD created a tri-mentorship program, which matches first-year students with third- and fourth-year students



Yu conducts equipment testing while on a co-op work term with Teck Highland Valley Copper.

and with industry partners including Viking Air, Schneider Electric and BiC.

Besides being an exceptional student herself, Yu—the second oldest of five children—is driven to challenge the way things work, and make them better. In recognition of her years of service to the ESS and her visionary role in creating

LTD, Yu was nominated for the Provost's Advocacy and Activism Award in Equity and Diversity.

Working in operations engineering at Spectra Energy is not what Yu dreamed of as a little girl—it's way better. She initially applied to study humanities at UVic, but after attending a mother-daughter robotics work-

shop on campus ("because of the free pizza," she quips), she quickly changed her mind. After the workshop, Yu was hooked. She switched to engineering and says it was the best decision she's ever made.

If her success at UVic is any indicator, she'll be taking on leadership roles wherever she goes.

UVic degree is about learning
and action, says grad

BY ANNE MacLAURIN

A passion for making social connections and getting her hands dirty in community work makes social sciences grad Kathryn Juricic tick. Juricic began at UVic with the intention of moving on after her first year; however, after taking some environmental studies courses, she didn't want to leave.

"I felt I wouldn't receive the same calibre of learning and atmosphere anywhere else. I was surrounded by inspirational people who were bound together through learning and action," she explains.

It was the study of power that excited Juricic about the political studies program and a professor who "lit a fire that has yet to die out." Her courses in political science inspired her to do a double major in another area of interest, environmental studies—leading to a double major in political science and environmental studies.

"Environmental studies at UVic offers an integrated, experiential and impassioned course-load. The school really balances the despair you get from learning about the state of our global environment and social health with the tools and passion to get out in the world and do something about it," she explains.

During her degree, Juricic sought out a field school with the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society. "It is safe to say my mind, body, heart and soul were full! It certainly prepared me for my life because my perspective has been deeply impacted by the experience." The field school taught aspects of resource management and First Nations self-governance, says Juricic, who says it was one of the



Juricic

most wonderful experiences of her undergraduate degree.

Even though Juricic says she didn't want a career in politics she still jumped at the chance to work in Ottawa for the Green Party—as parliamentary intern in the office of Elizabeth May—a dream job in Juricic's eyes. She says getting that kind of start in her field has been awesome, and it's been a fascinating glimpse into the world of law-making. "Elizabeth May is truly a rock star and her staff is super. They are all kind and generous individuals who make this experience so rich!"

Combining political science and environmental studies firmly puts Juricic at the intersection of development, energy, First Nations title and many other pressing issues of our time. "I am passionate about all these issues," she continues. "My future goals include being at this intersection and doing what it takes to make positive change."

After her internship in Ottawa, Juricic plans to return to Victoria. "I hope to help build a resilient local economy in Victoria and beyond."

Commerce grad is in a New York
state of mind

BY MOIRA DANN

Ross Rich, who graduates this November with a commerce degree from the Gustavson School of Business, has spun himself into his dream job already—as a marketing assistant with Columbia Records in New York City. Rich will also maintain the artist-management firm he started in 2013, which includes talented singer Jade Tjorhom (another UVic student) on its artist roster.

Rich's road to music industry opportunity included creating a production/promotion firm, Victorious Events, with his brother, Ryan, and fellow commerce students Code Workun and Tanner Manning. Rich credits Gustavson for honing his entrepreneurial instincts.

He explains that the combination of teachers, students and the overall environment created at Gustavson was one of the biggest contributors to his undergraduate success: "It's very nurturing," he says. "It's an environment you prosper in if you're doing something you enjoy."

Rich's interest in the music business grew from performing rap, along with his brother. "It's funny to think about," he says, now that he's surrounded by internationally recognized recording artists, but it was his own performing experience that equipped him for work in the entertainment industry.

He says living with his brother and another roommate, Devon Vivian (another BCom student)



L–R: Ryan and Ross Rich

was a "defining part of my degree" because all three are "entrepreneurial spirits." They lived it all the time: talking about their business ideas and discussing inspirational business biographies they'd read (Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos, for two). They kept one another inspired.

Rich says his learning outside the classroom was "110 per cent" where he learned the most, adding he wouldn't have been able to take full advantage of volunteer and extra-curricular opportunities without the foundation of his classroom learning.

Rich talks about all he learned from his peers and professors and has a long list of fellow classmates and professors who were central to his Gustavson experience. "For me, it was all about the people I was surrounded by that helped give me the confidence and the experiences to do this."

"I mean, here I am in New York...I can't believe it."

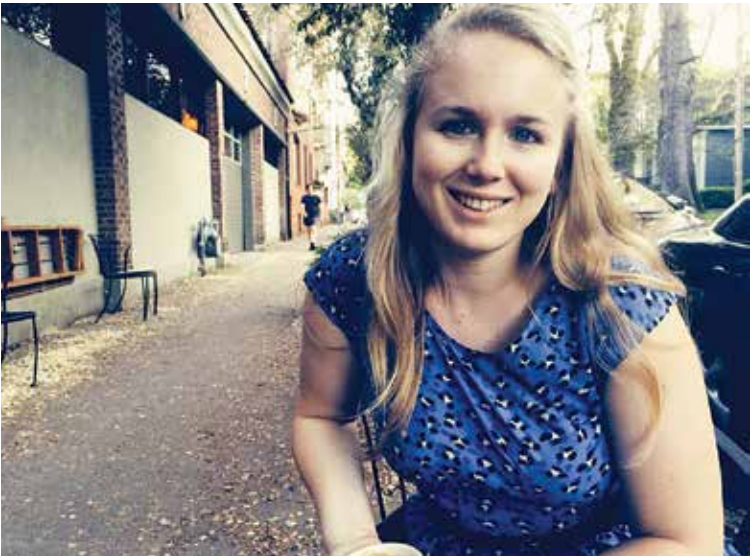
Urban design to support the disoriented

BY AMANDA FARRELL-LOW

You may have heard of care facilities designed specifically for people with dementia; they have features such as circular walkways, colour-coded areas that help people recognize where they are, or simple signs hung at eye level. But what if we started taking the needs of people with dementia into consideration when we designed a new park or a city street? These were questions Maria Przydatek explored as part of her master’s thesis on dementia-friendly urban planning. The idea for her thesis first came to her during a class with UVic professor Trevor Hancock on supportive environments and healthy public policy. “I was just really drawn to the idea of the environment and how much it impacts our mental, emotional and physical well being. Because dementia is the main focus of my work, I started wondering, ‘Have connections been made with this?’” says Przydatek. “I

began to realize there were opportunities to add to that body of work, because it’s relatively new.” And Przydatek certainly did add to that body of work. Through a review of existing policies, conversations with urban planners on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, and a review of some core elements of dementia-friendly design, Przydatek’s master’s research helped her draw up a list of recommendations municipalities should consider when it comes to making public places more accessible for people with dementia. “I think that making modifications to the built environment offers a broader range of support, rather than just individualized programs targeting a particular lifestyle choice or behaviour,” she says of the importance of applying this work in public spaces. “They offer really positive solutions for a lot of other people with different impairments.” Przydatek is a graduate of the

Social Dimensions of Health program, with Neena Chappell from the Department of Sociology and Joan Wharf-Higgins of the School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education supervising her work. She says the interdisciplinary aspect of that program was a great way to respond to the complicated real-world situations in healthcare—and a huge asset to her research. “I really appreciated being connected to various researchers across campus,” says Przydatek. “It was really valuable to reflect on various perspectives. That allowed me to think more critically about best approaches to research questions and how that research might add value to a field of study.” Not surprisingly, Przydatek’s research has led her to the Alzheimer’s Society of BC, where she’s now working as a research analyst. She’s continuing where she left off with her master’s, working to provide



Przydatek

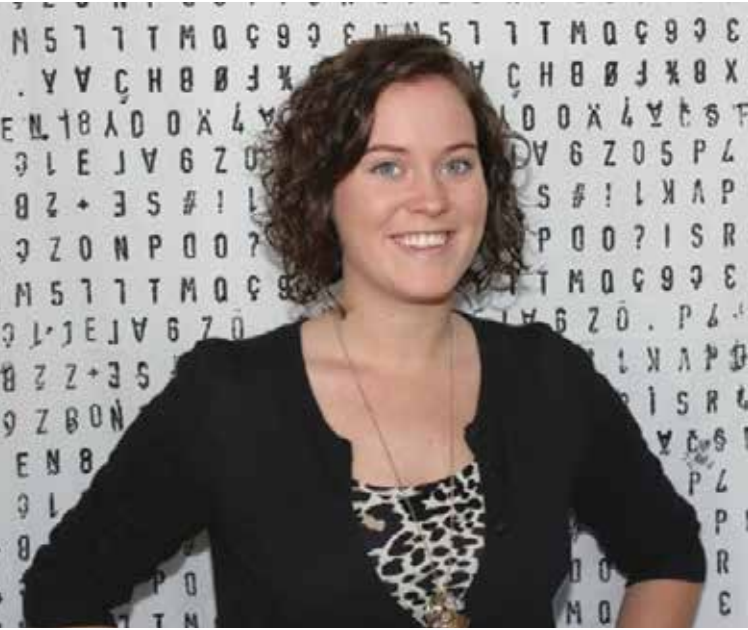
tools that municipalities can use to make their communities more friendly for people with dementia. She says a presentation by the society’s CEO at this September’s Union of BC Municipalities meeting has

led to many communities expressing interest in the work. “I’m excited to be at the society,” she says. “It’s really neat to see your master’s work develop into something bigger and be a part of that.”

Graduating with a provincial contract

BY VANESSA STOFER AND MEGHAN THOMPSON

For new grad Darcie Scollard, co-op has made her future a lot less daunting—and helped her pocket a contract with the provincial government to carry her into post-grad life. “As a humanities student, I was particularly worried about life after university,” Scollard says. “Since I became a co-op student, a lot of stress around finding a job after graduation has been lifted off my shoulders.” While pursuing a degree in English, Scollard signed up for a professional writing class, thinking she might try to break into journalism. “I loved the program, and it shifted my skill set more toward web content creation and user experience design,” she says. Late in her third year, with graduation on the horizon, Scollard joined the co-op program to gain work experience relevant to her degree. Despite a late entry into the program, she was still able to complete five work terms with three different organizations. “I knew that as a co-op student I could gain practical work experience while still testing the waters in various industries and work environments, so I tried to do as many work terms as possible,” she says. Trying out roles across a diverse spectrum of work settings, Scollard’s skillset grew. Her co-op placements took her to the University of Calgary,



Scollard

where she worked on financial data for research projects. Then she went to UVic Libraries, focusing on a large content migration project and communications support. Scollard spent her final work terms at the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines as a technical writer and web coordinator. Responsible for a broad range of tasks, she worked on web development, logo design and event planning—and captured promotional video footage at a mine. This August, she was hired on contract by another provincial resource ministry—the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations—as a web publisher. She works with clients from the six natural resource ministries to migrate outdated website content into a new content management system. This involves

writing, editing, and gaining approvals on content; creating new pages; and eventually, retiring the old sites. “The website project is government-wide, so I get to interact with colleagues in many areas,” she says. “As a recent graduate, I am very excited to be gaining valuable experience in project management, government communications and information technology.” Now feeling confident in her career aspirations, Scollard has laid a path for her future paved with relevant work experience—and she’s happy to recommend co-op to others. “I think everyone should be a co-op student,” she says. “You really can’t put a price on experiential learning—and the value that working in your field before graduation will add to your academic and professional career.”

Grad is first WSÁNEĆ lawyer

BY MARGARET SUDERMAN

When UVic law graduate student Robert Clifford was called to the bar in 2012, the celebration at the Victoria Law Courts involved much more than the usual fanfare of family and friends with cameras and congratulatory flowers. A special ceremony with traditional drumming and singing took place to honour Clifford—a member of the Tsawout First Nation—and the first person of the four Saanich (WSÁNEĆ) Tribes to become a lawyer. Now, more than two years later, Clifford’s family and community are marking yet another of his academic milestones. This November he graduates with a Master of Laws from UVic. For Clifford, the occasion marks the end of a long era at the university. Originally from Sidney, he chose to attend UVic and major in anthropology for his undergraduate degree. He chose UVic for both of his law degrees in part because of its focus on Indigenous legal traditions. “When I went into law school it was always with an interest in Aboriginal law and Aboriginal rights and the different ways I could assist my community and First Nations communities in general,” says Clifford. “UVic was the only school I applied to—it was my overwhelm-



Clifford

ing interest.” Clifford’s master’s thesis reflects a desire for meaningful change within the legal system. He focused on the potential contribution of Coast Salish traditions and knowledge to legal practices in the coastal regions of BC, particularly in the remediation of oil spills. His thesis, “WSÁNEĆ Law and the Fuel Spill at Goldstream” examined a large fuel spill that occurred in 2011 after a tanker truck crashed and spilled gasoline into Goldstream River. Clifford is already pursuing the next step in his academic career working on a PhD at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. Clifford says the decision to move across the country was informed by his desire to broaden his network and connect with the different work in Indigenous law that is underway throughout Canada. He aims, however, to return home as a visiting scholar—and perhaps a future professor—at UVic.



SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR RESEARCH

The current phase of Faces of UVic Research wraps up in December. You still have time to join in.

If you’re a full-time UVic faculty member, contact vprvideo@uvic.ca or 250-853-3853 to book.

 www.youtube.com/facesofuvicresearch 

Writing grad sees beyond perceptions of limitations

BY JOHN THRELFALL

As a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) candidate in the Department of Writing, Hannalora Leavitt has spent the past two years fulfilling the same kind of duties and responsibilities as most UVic graduate students: conceiving a thesis, working with a supervisor, giving lectures, teaching classes, marking papers, reading, writing, research. But given her specialty in creative non-fiction, Leavitt is also tasked with interpreting the world as she sees it—no easy job when you're a blind writer.

After losing most of her vision from a brain tumour at age 10, the 55-year-old Leavitt now sees the world in more conceptual terms: blindness is not a challenge to be conquered but the space she inhabits—which, for a writer, can create unique opportunities. “People say, ‘We don’t know what your characters look like’—but neither do I,” she chuckles. “I haven’t seen details of my environment and people for so long, I don’t reflect them in my writing.”

By its very definition, creative non-fiction is inevitably as much about the writer as the subject, and necessitates the skills of both chronicler and bard. “I’ve always been a storyteller,” says Leavitt, who arrived at UVic with a stack of published newspaper and magazine profiles behind her. Yet, after beginning an English undergrad program, she soon transferred into writing. “Non-fiction with a creative element, that’s what I was looking for. I can’t make up anything better than the truth.”

Leavitt’s MFA thesis, *In Plain Sight*, is a blend of her own experiences and a look at society’s relationship with blind people. “The



Leavitt and her guide dog Calvin at UVic

blindness I’ve figured out how to live with, but the attitudes about it are where I always stumble: how did I instinctively know to be ashamed of it? How did I, even as a young kid, know blind people lived in the margins?” And while her historical discoveries have been fascinating—ranging from Industrial Revolution-spawned syphilis and both world wars to 1950s “incubator babies” and contemporary macular degeneration—Leavitt’s biggest hurdle has been the same as any other writer: herself. “It’s been a huge emotional challenge,” she admits. “I like telling other people’s stories, not my own.”

Realizing that being identified as “a blind writer” could be both a niche and trap, Leavitt didn’t just want to write about growing up without sight. “There are already a lot of memoirs out there about that. I don’t try to write straightforward ‘how to be a successful blind person’ stuff because I don’t think it’s all that interesting. I’d rather make people

think a bit more about it.”

Leavitt credits her MFA supervisor, Dr. Lynne Van Luven, and UVic’s Resource Centre for Students with a Disability as being “pivotal” to her academic success. Pointing out how the basic mechanics of research—reading, writing and editing—held her back as an undergrad, Leavitt now has a research assistant and screen-reading software on her computer . . . which, while essential, can also be downright annoying. “I’ve read a lot of material with Stephen Hawking’s voice echoing in my mind,” she laughs. “Dealing with that repetitive monotone synthetic speech all the time is a whole other level of challenge.”

Ultimately, Leavitt has no desire to be framed as any kind of leader or champion; like any other writer, she’d rather be known for her words. “We can’t all be superheroes,” she says. “Some of us are just normal, everyday people with plenty of challenges that nobody ever sees.”

FALL 2014 HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Inspired leadership

The University of Victoria will present two honorary degrees for outstanding achievements in public health promotion and journalism during fall convocation ceremonies.

The university confers degrees honoris causa to individuals who have exceptional records of distinction and achievement. Honorands include world-renowned scholars and artists, celebrated and visionary public figures, prominent professional and community leaders, and philanthropists.



Rootman

Dr. Irving Rootman, Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)

10 a.m., Nov. 10

A leader in health promotion research, Dr. Irving Rootman has indirectly improved the health of millions of Canadians. He designed and implemented the Canadian National Health Promotion Survey in 1985, the first survey of its kind in the world. The data aided researchers and policy-makers in understanding the factors that contribute to, and may improve, individual health.

The survey—implemented while Rootman was employed by Health and Welfare Canada—collected information on a range of issues of current or potential concern, including tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, nutrition, fitness, safety, and mental health.

With the new information in hand, the stage was set for the creation of new health promotion programs designed to address the factors that contribute to health and well-being.

Rootman helped establish the Canadian Consortium for Health Promotion Research and developed a national program of research in literacy and health. He also chaired the advisory committee for the recently established UVic School of Public Health and Social Policy.



Nolen

Stephanie Nolen, Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)

2:30 p.m., Nov. 10

Journalist and author Stephanie Nolen won four national newspaper awards for her reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa and the wars and humanitarian crises in Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone. Her book *28 Stories of AIDS in Africa* won the PEN Courage Award and was nominated for the Governor General’s Literary Award for Non-Fiction.

She requested and received a posting as chief of the first African bureau for *The Globe and Mail*, subsequently reporting from more than two dozen countries.

In 2006, her editor, Edward Greenspon, stated that Nolen “has probably done more than any single other person with the possible exception of Stephen Lewis to educate and sensitize Canadians about the horrible human toll HIV/AIDS is taking in Africa.”

Nolen opened the *The Globe and Mail*’s first New Delhi bureau and her “Breaking Caste” multimedia project received the 2014 Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award for “coverage that most accurately and sensitively portrays India to a foreign audience.”

Note: Due to personal circumstances, Ruby Dunstan is unable to attend fall convocation to accept the honorary Doctor of Laws she had been scheduled to receive. Dunstan, the first female chief of the Lytton First Nation and a leader in the fight to protect the Stein Valley from logging, will have her degree conferred at a future convocation ceremony.

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calendar highlights

Events free unless otherwise indicated. For a complete list of events, visit the online calendar at events.uvic.ca

at the galleries

uvac.uvic.ca
250-721-6562

- **Salish Reflection.** Coast Salish art and artists on campus. Until Jan. 10. Curated in collaboration by Caroline Riedel, Justine Auben Drummond & Dr. Andrea Walsh. This exhibition honours Coast Salish artists Chris Paul, Maynard Johnny Jr., and knitters May Sam and the Olsen family (Adam, Joni, and their mother Sylvia) who were part of UVic's Artist in Residence Program through the Dept. of Anthropology between 2011 and 2013. Legacy Art Gallery. 630 Yates. 250-721-6562

at the theatre

phoenixtheatres.ca
250-721-8000

- **A Midsummer Night's Dream.** By William Shakespeare. Nov. 6–22. Directed by Fran Gebhard. Ignited by misplaced passions and political maneuvering, two pairs of lovers become entangled. Set in the underground culture of Greenwich Village in the late 1970s—as punk rockers begin to usurp the flower-power children of the 1960s—Gebhard's "Dream" is a fun, edgy spin on Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy. Tickets \$16–\$24. 250-721-8000.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6

- **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Did Romeo Rape Juliet?: The Christian Origins of Rape and Consent.* Justine Semmens (UVic). Turpin A104. 250-721-6325

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

- **Music.** 12:30 p.m. *Fridaymusic.* Featuring School of Music woodwind students. MacLaurin B125. Admission by donation. 250-721-8634
- **Lecture/Seminar.** 2:45 p.m. *Anarchism, Women, and Public Space.* Prof. Kathy Ferguson, College of Social Sciences, Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa. Turpin B215. 250-721-7327
- **Music.** 8 p.m. *Faculty Concert Series: Lafayette String Quartet.* MacLaurin B125. Tickets \$25. 250-721-8634

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

- **Special Event.** 9:30 a.m. *Life Draw-*

ing Sessions. And Nov. 15/22/29. Our weekly life drawing sessions. Visual Arts A150. \$5. 250-721-8011

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- **VNHS Lecture.** 7:30 p.m. *Juan de Fuca Forest: A Green Space Solution for Climate Change.* Nitya Harris and Saul Arbess. Fraser 159. 250-479-6622

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

- **AHVS Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Culture of the First World War. Daughter of Empires: The Archaeological and Political Activities of Gertrude Bell in Mesopotamia, 1909–1926.* Lisa Cooper (UBC). Strong C118. 250-721-7942

- **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Aristotle's Philosophy and Religious Belief—Sites of Controversy, Sites of Consilience.* Margaret Cameron (UVic). Turpin A104. 250-721-6325

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14

- **Special Event.** 12 p.m. *McPherson Library 50th Anniversary Celebration.* Stop by for cake and share your memories of the library. Mearns Centre/McPherson Library. 250-721-6132

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 7 p.m. *The Mathematics of Bats.* Cedric Villani, Fields medal winner and Director of the Institut Henri Poincare in Paris, France. Wright Centre B150. 250-472-4749

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 3 p.m. *Acceleration of Oceanic Denitrification During Global Warming.* Dr. Markus Kienast (Dalhousie). ECS 104. 250-721-6200

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

- **Special Event.** 9 a.m. *UVic Libraries Book Sale.* UVic Libraries fundraiser for United Way Greater Victoria will be happening again this year from November 18 to 20, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. Michele Pujol Rm in the SUB.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

- **CAPI Lecture.** 12:30 p.m. *Anatomy of an Election Observation Mission—Mongolia, 2013.* Ivan G. Somlai, CAPI Assoc. and Director of Global Collaboration. Hickman 110. 250-721-7020

- **Neither a lecture nor art?** 7:00 p.m. *Nein! Social Media Demystified: a conversation with Eric Joroszinski on humanities in the digital age.* Hickman 105.

- **Lansdowne Lecture.** 7 p.m. *Geophilia, or The Love of Stone.* Jeffrey Cohen (George Washington U). Strong C118. 250-721-7267

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 8 p.m. *Visiting Artist Series presents Gary Hill.* Visual Arts A162. 250-721-8011

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20

- **CAVI Lecture.** 7:30 p.m. *Monumentalizing the Past: Excavations at Ancient Eleon (Boeotia).* Dr. Brendan Burke (UVic). Clearihue A212. 250-721-8514

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 2:45 p.m. *Eco-urban Neighbourhoods and the Prospect of Sustainability Transformations.* Meg Holden (SFU). Turpin B215. 250-721-7327

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24

- **VNHS Lecture/Seminar.** 7:30 p.m. *The Invasive Intertidal Cordgrass Spartina spp. Are We on the Path to Coast Wide Eradication?* Dr. Matthias Herborg (UVic). Fraser 159. 250-479-6622

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

- **Special Event.** 9:30 a.m. *UVic Winter Artisans Market.* And Nov. 26. The newly minted UVic Winter Artisans Market is a great place to find unique, handmade gifts and support local charities. University Centre Lobby.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26

- **Special Event.** 7 p.m. *That Chemistry Show for United Way.* Coordinated by the UVic Chemistry Students' Society, the event carries on a tradition started by the legendary Dr. Zonk, UVic Prof. Emeritus Dr. Reginald Mitchell. Wright Centre B150, Flury Hall. Tickets \$10. Contact chemsoc@uvic.ca

- **VNHS Lecture.** 7:30 p.m. *Bring Back the Bluebirds.* Jemma Green. Fraser 159. 250-479-6622

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27

- **AHVS Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *From Ithaca to Number 31328: Greek Literature of the First World War.* Evanthia Baboula, UVic. Strong C118. 250-721-7942

- **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 5 p.m. *New Centers of Islamic Theology at Universities in the EU: The German Case.* Prof. Scheer, Author. Turpin A104. 250-721-6325

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 7 p.m. *Bishop's Distinguished Lecture.* Dr. Charles Taylor, CC, GOQ, FRSC, Eminent Philosopher & Distinguished Author. Response by Dr. Christine Jones, President, Redeemer Pacific College. MacLaurin Bldg., David Lam Auditorium. 250-721-8339

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 7 p.m. *2014 Distinguished Professors Lecture.* Authenticity at Work: Doing What You Love, Loving What You Do. Dr. A. R. Elangovan (UVic). Turpin A110. 250-721-7626

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

- **Lecture/Seminar.** 2:45 p.m. *Would You Like Carbon or Chimps With That?* Conserving Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in African Rainforests. Aerin Jacob (UVic). Turpin B215. 250-721-7327



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UVic launches student mental health strategy

BY JOANNE MCGACHIE

Rebekah Erickson's life profoundly changed shortly after graduating from high school, when someone very close to her tragically passed away from suicide. In learning to cope with the grief, confusion and sadness, Erickson found her passion in life—helping others.

“I realized the importance of having a strong support network around you,” said Erickson, in her fourth year of psychology at the University of Victoria. “The loss I experienced really ignited my desire to help people who are dealing with mental illness and struggling to find that support.” A peer helper in the university's counselling services, Erickson is pursuing a career in the mental health field.

Student well-being in a time of transitions

Many mental illnesses are initially diagnosed in the ages of 18 to 25—a time when young people are dealing with the challenges of university and perhaps living away from home for the first time.

“Stress can sneak up on you, and suddenly you can feel overwhelmed and unable to cope,” said Anthony Fast, another UVic psychology student who lives and works in campus resi-



Participating in group activities can reduce stress and social isolation. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

dence. He sees the stresses many new students go through, and appreciates the training UVic provides to him and his co-workers to help students cope. “It's important to realize you are not alone, you are not a failure, and the people around you really do care and can help.”

Working collaboratively with students, faculty and staff, UVic has developed its Student Mental Health Strategy to support and care for the mental health and well-being of students facing the challenges and stress of university life. The new strategy goes far beyond the traditional counselling and health services model, by providing campus-wide resources and training to identify students at risk and respond with appropriate actions and tools.

Cause for concern

The numbers are unsettling. Some 36.4 per cent of UVic students surveyed in 2013 in a national assessment felt so depressed at some point in the previous 12 months that it was difficult to function, while 9.1 per cent say they seriously considered suicide. These figures are only slightly lower than the national student responses (37.5 and 9.5 per cent), indicating that, despite the natural advantages and environment enjoyed in Victoria and on campus, students face mental health challenges as much here as anywhere.

President Jamie Cassels emphasized the strategy's importance at its official launch on Oct. 22.

“Our new strategy is a comprehensive plan. We know that students who are engaged in their coursework and

have a strong support network are more resilient, confident and successful,” said Cassels. “We are strengthening programs and supports to assist undergraduate and graduate students build resilience and healthy coping strategies, thereby fostering personal and academic success.”

Stigma and misunderstanding

The keynote speaker at the launch event, Mark Henick, spoke eloquently about the challenges faced by youth struggling with mental illness. Henick is the youngest-ever board member for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, a national youth advocate for mental health and empowerment, a renowned TEDx speaker and author. His life's work in this field had its genesis in his own battle with depression as a teen.

“Our perception of life is guided by our individual biology, psychology and society; and that perception expands and contracts constantly as we go through our daily lives,” Henick said. “But for someone dealing with mental illness, that perception can collapse into a dark and constricted place, where light and hope are squeezed out. For too many people in that place, suicide seems to be the only choice they have.”

“Almost a quarter of 15- to 25-year-olds who die, die by suicide—and that's not acceptable,” he continued. “We know that about 90 per cent of the people who die by suicide have a mental illness at the time of their death. We also know that mental illness is treatable, but stigma and misunderstandings too often act as barriers to getting treatment.”

“At the individual and societal levels, we must challenge our old ideas. We must have this conversation, and I am extremely pleased to be here to witness the beginning of UVic's conversation on mental illness.”

Reaching out, with new tools

The three-year strategy describes initiatives that will focus on reducing

the negative stigma associated with mental health issues, building a more welcoming and supportive university community and enhancing the university's ability to support students who may be at risk. The strategy will provide practical tools to students in distress or crisis and offer employees the training and resources needed to support student mental health.

All university community members are encouraged to take an active role in implementing the goals, objectives and initiatives.

“The people who interact with our students on a regular basis are the ones who are most likely to notice if someone is in distress,” said Jim Dunsdon, associate vice-president of student affairs. “We want all of our employees—whether they're faculty or the folks who work across the university's various frontline services—to have simple, practical and effective tools to recognize the signs and know what they can do to help.”

The first four initiatives within the strategy are being launched immediately:

- A dedicated Student Mental Health website provides information to students, faculty/staff and families. The website enhances and reorganizes information to be more accessible and current.

- Campus-wide training for faculty and staff will enhance awareness about issues and good practices. The training will strengthen faculty and staff ability to identify students at risk, provide assistance, and know where and when to refer students for more support.

- Student Mental Health activity grants are available to support student-led activities. There is \$10,000 available per year for activities, events and programs supporting student mental health.

- An “Assisting Students in Distress” folder provides faculty and staff with quick tips and resources to support students at risk. There will be broad distribution across campus and online.

For more information on UVic's new Student Mental Health Strategy and its initiatives, visit: uvic.ca/mentalhealth.



You are not alone.

Learn about the new tools, resources and initiatives supporting positive student mental health.

- Resource website
- Campus-wide faculty/staff training
- Activity grants to support student-led mental health activities and events
- ‘Assisting Students in Distress’ folder with quick tips and resources to help staff and faculty support students at risk

uvic.ca/mentalhealth



UVic Student Mental Health Initiative



University of Victoria

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The Student Mental Health video can be viewed from uvic.ca/mentalhealth