Topics to dazzle the mind

Are hotter, drier summers the new norm for BC and what are the implications? How will cybersecurity help us understand its complexity? What happens when two galaxies collide? Are hotter, drier summers the new norm for BC and what are the implications? How will cybersecurity help us understand its complexity? What happens when two galaxies collide?

OCEANS RESEARCH

Funding allows ONC to expand earthquake detection network

The BC government is investing $5 million in Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) to advance the development and use of earthquake early warning systems in BC. ONC, a University of Victoria initiative, manages and operates world-leading cabled ocean observatories off the coast of southern BC. More than 200 undersea instruments connected to the internet continuously send data in real-time from a range of seafloor environments. The one-time funding will allow ONC to add more offshore motion sensors and help integrate them with land-based sensors for more robust collection and analysis of seismic activity off the BC coast. Monitoring earthquakes and getting accurate information to people quickly is critical to public safety. ONC currently collects data from offshore and coastal seismic sensors that will link into networks of land-based sensors from other agencies, including those owned by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Resources Canada and the University of British Columbia. The new investment will bolster the integrated network of earthquake sensors, increase the reliability and effectiveness of the data and analysis that comes from them, and feed it to a centralized source that can immediately deliver early detection notifications prior to the arrival of damaging earthquake tremors.
Changing the culture of campus drinking

A project dedicated to changing the culture of drinking and other substance use among post-secondary students was launched with $400,000 from the province this February.

Co-led by the University of Victoria Centre for Addictions Research (CARCRC) and the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division, Changing the Culture of Substance Use (CCSU) is a long-term project that’s helping 11 campuses across BC access evidence about alcohol and substance use, assess the cultures on their campuses, decide on—and try—ways to influence their campus cultures, develop tools, and share those tools and experiences with other campuses.

“Culture is incredibly complex,” says Dan Reist, CARCRC associate director. “We’ve already seen that life in residence shifts when campus communities openly discuss these issues and acknowledge their ‘responsibilities.’”

According to the 2013 National College Health Assessment Canadian survey, among post-secondary students who reported drinking the last time they socialized, 26 per cent had seven or more drinks, and 39 per cent of students who drank alcohol in the last year said they later regretted something they did while drinking.

At UVic, one of the first initiatives under the CCSU funding was the ‘Check-Up To Go’ product—a personalized online tool to assess alcohol and marijuana risk factors.

For more information about the project, visit bit.ly/campus-drinking

Foundation creates fossil-fuel-free fund

The University of Victoria Foundation trustees decided at their Feb. 23 meeting that an endowment fund that will not invest in companies that have proven and probable thermal coal, oil and gas reserves.

In so doing, the foundation also reaffirmed its decision not to divest or sell fossil-fuel investments related to oil, gas and coal in the main investment fund.

Over the last several years, the foundation has adopted responsible investing practices that consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, including signing the United Nations’ Principles for Responsible Investment. The foundation’s investment managers are now also required to report annually on the ESG factors that inform the fund.

The foundation, which is a separate entity from the university, manages the $357-million-endowment fund that disburses money for scholarships, bursaries, awards and faculty development projects, including the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, a province-wide hub for international climate change research.

UVic is committing $25,000 to seed the new fund, which is the amount required to establish an endowment. This will allow smaller donations to be matched by individuals or organizations.

The distribution of the endowment will support Campus Sustainability Fund initiatives on campus. The sus- tainability fund provides one-time allocations, which focus on energy or water saving or a sustainability awareness or learning opportunity. The fund also provides seed money for projects relating to the Sustainability Action Plan.

Addressing the challenge of climate change is a pressing societal issue that has engaged researchers, campus administrators, faculty members, and student groups for many years.

Besides being home to PICs and the sustainability-focused Institute for Integrated Energy Systems at the University of Victoria (IIESUVic), UVic’s School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, School of Environmental Studies and Department of Geography have a strong educational and research focus on climate science and the biological, environmental and social consequences of climate change.

In its campus operations, UVic has reduced its own carbon footprint and the Sustainability Action Plan has concrete goals and strategies that have been internationally recognized for their impacts.

At its Jan. 26 meeting, UVic’s Board of Governors discussed climate change and responsible investing in response to long-standing concerns from faculty members and the University of Victoria Students’ Society asking that the university divest from investments in fossil-fuel companies. About 40 students were in attendance at the meeting.

Chair Elect Erik Mohr thanked the students for attending and showing their commitment. “We share so- ciety’s concern about climate change,” through research, academic programs and campus operations, UVic is con- tributing to solutions and reducing our own carbon footprint,” Mohr said.

He said the board had thoroughly reviewed submissions and discussed on a number of occasions—including for the January board meeting—re- quests for divestment. The board re- views the independence and the evolving approach to responsible investment. He also explained the foundation’s independence as being separate from the university with specific initiatives.

“We acknowledge that efforts need to continue on a number of fronts and we will strive to stay involved and contribute to addressing this multi-faceted challenge in keeping with our academic mission of excel- lence in education and research,” said Mohr.

Dunsmuir Lodge is expected to be- gin life anew, as the non-academic property on the Saanich Peninsula returns to its roots in health and wellness. UVic has reached an agreement for the conditional sale of Dunsmuir Lodge and 25 acres of woodland to Home Health Health of Guelph, Ont.

The agreement with Home- wood, a leading Canadian com- pany that provides mental health and addiction treatment services, includes the lodge building and 25 acres of surrounding property. Adjacent to John Dean Provincial Park, the Dunsmuir property includes another 75 acres of wood- land, which is subject to contin- uing discussions with Pauquachin First Nation regarding this land.

UVic and Homewood have many shared values. We respect the wellness, dignity and integrity of all, we believe in cultural diver- sity and we create opportunities for the greater benefit of society,” says Gayle Gorrill, vice-president of finances and operations. “Home- wood will be a good steward of Dunsmuir Lodge and we are pleased that the opportunity con- tinues for First Nations to acquire the majority of the land.”

“The Pauquachin First Nation has a continuing interest in the Dunsmuir lands and we have had positive discussions with the Uni- versity of Victoria and Home Health Health,” says Pauquachin First Nation Chief Rebecca Harris. “We look forward to further consulta- tion and discussion.”

Home Health Health will pro- vide UVic with excellent opportuni- ties to collaborate on research and educational initiatives on the Saanich Peninsula, says David Castle, vice-president of research. “UVic looks forward to exploring initiatives with Home Health Health so we can improve lives through research, learning and services.”

Nested on the pine slopes of Mount Newton in North Saanich, Dunsmuir was originally known as Gillian Manor, built as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in 1974. The property was donated to UVic in 1985 by the late George Poole and operated as an educa- tional conference centre until its closure in 2009. The lodge build- ings includes 45 guest rooms and several meeting and conference spaces.

Homewood intends to use the facility to provide medically based treatment services for mental health, addiction and concurrent disorders. Employers, insurers and individuals would support these private-pay programs and those participating would do so voluntarily to accelerate their recovery and return to life and work.

“The University of Victoria has worked closely with us towards our goal to establish our Western Canadian campus site to provide immediate access to the best mental health and ad- diction treatment in the region,” says Jagoda Pike, president and CEO of Homewood Health. The agreement with Hom- wood remains true to the intent behind the support of the educational mission of UVic, says Gorrill. The purchase price will be con- firmed once the sale agreement is finalized.

Proceeds from the sale of Dun- smuir will go towards the capital costs of the Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities (CARSA), a key priority of the university. The sale agreement is subject to conditions including municipal approvals for zoning and approval by the Ministry of Advanced Education.

Dunsmuir Lodge
President and his family fund new graduate fellowship

A new fellowship award is now available to graduate students, thanks to the leadership and personal generosity of UVic President Jamie Cassels and his family.

The Cassels-Shaw Graduate Fellowship was recently approved by the University Senate and the Board of Governors.

The new fellowship (named jointly for Cassels and his wife, Erin Shaw) will be awarded to new and continuing master’s or doctoral students selected on academic merit and demonstrated financial need. All departments will be invited to nominate one student from their graduate ranks each year, with the first fellowship to be named this coming fall.

“In some ways, Ideafest has become a routine part of our lives at home. What started in 1998 with provincial regulations requiring paper recycling has gradually grown to include yard waste, refundable containers, recyclable tins, glass and plastics, electronics, batteries, and most recently, kitchen scraps. As the regulations have expanded, we have adapted to new requirements and practices and, although it takes more personal effort, we can all agree— it’s the right thing to do.”

“A new fellowship (named jointly for Cassels and his wife, Erin Shaw) will be awarded to new and continuing master’s or doctoral students selected on academic merit and demonstrated financial need.”

“I would like to express our appreciation to Professor Cassels and his family for this extraordinary endowment,” says Dr. David Capson, dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. “We are incredibly grateful to Jamie for his integrity, generosity and personal commitment to UVic’s graduate programs. This fellowship establishes a legacy that will benefit our graduate students for many years to come.”

In 2014, in response to fiscal challenges facing UVic, Cassels requested his employment contract be amended to reduce the compensation he would otherwise receive during his five-year tenancy as president. Through a combination of salary freezes, reduced increases and savings from his administrative leave entitlement, Cassels has arranged to forego a total of $330,000 in earnings, and requested that the Board of Governors redirect those funds: a third each to CARSA, general revenue, and graduate student scholarships. Subsequently, he and his family made contributions to the fellowship.

“For more information on the Cassels-Shaw Graduate Fellowship and other graduate student awards, visit bit.ly/uvic-awards.”

PHILANTHROPY

IDEAFEST CONTINUED FROM P1

Sectors may differ. With just a few seconds of warning, automatic high-tech “pop-up” arcade and downtown locations, more experience and far more students will discover more for their kids to see and do, from the credible celebration of UVic scholarship, rooted in ONC’s vision to enhance alternative fuels. That, combined with improved food waste composting, has led to an overall diversion rate of 68 per cent at UVic today.

But, to reach our goals—and to comply with regulations—we need to do more. A university waste audit undertaken in 2012 showed that, at 45 per cent, recycling rates in office areas were significantly lower than that of other areas on campus. That’s about to change. After a successful pilot project in four office buildings in 2013, a new recycling system is now being implemented in all office spaces on campus.

What’s changing?

During the first week of March, all offices on campus will see the installation of new three-bin recycling stations where waste can be sorted into mixed paper, recyclable cans and plastics, or landfill waste. These stations will be placed in convenient sites on every floor. Each building will have at least one recycling bin for glass, located in a central area, to accommodate recent requirements to separate glass from other recyclables.

At the same time, desk-side waste bins will be removed and replaced with mini-containers that will hang from each desk’s blue recycling bin. All faculty and staff members will be responsible for emptying their own bins at the central sorting stations. At their convenience, janitorial staff will no longer be emptying desk-side paper and garbage bins, but will instead service the 238 additional sorting stations on a frequent basis. Janitors will also continue to service common areas such as meeting rooms, labs and cafe rooms.

Originally intended for a January launch, the program has been delayed to allow Facilities Management and the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability to respond to questions and concerns raised by some members of the community. Since early January, meetings have taken place with union groups and other members of the community to better inform people of this initiative.

UVic is a recognized leader in developing and implementing sustainable operating practices that reduce the overall impact to our environment. As members of the university community, we all have the responsibility to reduce the large volume of banned recyclable materials that are currently being sent to landfill. Together, our individual efforts can add up to big changes across campus. Please contact Nadia Ariff, waste reduction coordinator (nariat@uvic.ca) or Lynn Bartle, implementation project lead (lbarke@uvic.ca) with any questions or suggestions you may have to ensure this project has a successful rollout.

Full program info: bit.ly/sort-source

Sorting-at-source office recycling

Sorting and recycling our garbage has become a routine part of our lives at home. What started in 1998 with provincial regulations requiring paper recycling has gradually grown to include yard waste, refundable containers, recyclable tins, glass and plastics, electronics, batteries, and most recently, kitchen scraps. As the regulations have expanded, we have adapted to new requirements and practices and, although it takes more personal effort, we can all agree— it’s the right thing to do.

“It’s as much about the interaction of recycling as it is about the ideas themselves.”

“Their mission is to work with the Emergency Management BC community, we all have the responsibility to reduce the large volume of banned recyclable materials that are currently being sent to landfill.”

“Some in ways, Ideafest has become a routine part of our lives at home. What started in 1998 with provincial regulations requiring paper recycling has gradually grown to include yard waste, refundable containers, recyclable tins, glass and plastics, electronics, batteries, and most recently, kitchen scraps.”

“At the same time, desk-side waste bins will be removed and replaced with mini-containers that will hang from each desk’s blue recycling bin.”

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“One of the UVic Genome BC Proteomics Center’s founders, Dr. Ann Loring, notes that this event challenges the status quo and develops new approaches in the areas of social justice, food security and financial empowerment. UVic is one of these founding partners of the YLS. Launched in 2004, the festival awards celebrate local community heroes who help tackle some of the most challenging social, cultural and economic issues in Greater Victoria.”

“Christoph Borchers, director of the UVic Genome BC Proteomics Center, says the YLS’ focus on community-based innovation and evidence-based research is shared across the globe.”

“I would like to express our appreciation to Professor Cassels and his family for this extraordinary endowment,” says Dr. David Capson, dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.”

“ChrIsoph Borchers, director of the UVic Genome BC Proteomics Center, says the YLS’ focus on community-based innovation and evidence-based research is shared across the globe.”

“On the other hand, UVic’s curriculum in arts and humanities is designed to provide an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the world. At the UVic centre, Borchers directs a research program that applies proteomics technologies to areas such as medical diagnostics, drug development, forestry and alternative fuels.”

“The Ring March 2016 Page 3
Around the ring

Sustainability fund expanded

Do you have an idea that would make our campus more sustainable? The Campus Sustainability Fund can help make that idea a reality. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to submit sustainability project proposals, which can include ways to increase sustainability awareness, provide student learning opportunities, or reduce energy use and water consumption. Projects that are budgeted at less than $1,000 will be accepted throughout the year. Projects budgeted over $1,000 will be accepted until March 6, with other intake opportunities later in the year—the next one is expected in the fall. For details, read the full RFP notice at bit.ly/ring-fund. Application info at Campus Planning and Sustainability website bit.ly/green-fund

Celebrating UVic authors

Each year UVic faculty, staff, students, alumni and retirees provide an incredible amount of intellectual content reflecting the breadth and diversity of research, teaching, personal and professional interests. UVic Librarians and the UVic Bookstore will celebrate this scholarly publishing at UVic on March 17th from 3-5 p.m. at the UVic Bookstore. Author Panel: Karen Hidsbii, Erin Joseph, Frances Backhouse, Troy Wilson and Rob Hancock. Moderator: David Leach, UVic Writing Department.

Community engagement conference

CUVC 2016: Reconciliation, Inclusion and Transformation through Engagement is just over a month away. Register today to take part in this exciting conference, which will focus on how local communities and UVic are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action around child and family。Learn more and register at uvic.ca/cuvc2016.

New crosswalks, sidewalks, bus stop

If you’ve noticed lane closures along Ring Road, there’s a good reason. New crosswalks and sidewalks are being installed in front of CARSA on Gabriola Road; at the intersection of Finnerty and Ring Roads, and on University Avenue at Alumni Alchemi Chip Trail crosses the road. As well, a new BC Transit bus stop will be coming to the in-bound side of University Drive across from the campus, allowing easier access for transit users going to the Phoenix, Fine Arts and Visual Arts buildings. Construction is expected to wrap up this week.

Carmanah Technologies named 2015 UVic Co-op Employer of the Year

It takes a very special co-operative education (co-op) program to stand out from the 1.310 organizations that provided outstanding dynamic learning opportunities for UVic co-op students in 2015. Victoria-based LED and solar technology provider Carmanah Technologies Corporation has been named 2015 UVic Co-op Employer of the Year for putting students at the forefront of emerging clean energy technologies, and for welcoming and mentoring them in the workplace in exemplary ways.

Carmanah Technologies has provided positions for an impressive 18 co-op students since 2011 and has hired 13 of these former students into full-time positions after graduation. The company, which will celebrate its 10-year anniversary in 2016, is known for welcoming students into Carmanah’s open and inclusive culture as valued team members rather than temporary employees.

“Carmanah is passionate about co- op,” says Alison Kellner, a UVic Bachelor of Commerce graduate, currently Carmanah’s business development team. “Students are excited to be part of our community conscious and environmentally engaged workplace, and to see the impact that our products and their work have on the world around them.”

The organization has hired co-op students from a wide range of UVic programs to work in diverse areas, including sales, business development, engineering, product development, product design and more. Students are mentored throughout their work terms and are encouraged to learn about all aspects of the company, products and projects—that accelerates their personal growth and career success.

Carmanah has also supported experiential learning right here on campus. Staff regularly volunteer to take part in UVic’s Co-op and Career’s mock interview clinics, and also assist with the “What can I do with your degree” event series.

Carmanah Technologies has committed to providing ongoing commitment to fostering exceptional student learning opportunities,” says Dr. Norah McRae, executive director of UVic Co-op and Career. “The quality of students’ work experiences, the mentorship provided by senior staff, the ability to support students’ personal growth and the focus on developing products that make a positive impact on our communities are just a few of the reasons that we are thrilled to count Carmanah as a valued partner in education.”

Carmanah Technologies Corporation was formally recognized at Co-op and Career’s Employer Appreciation Reception on Feb. 16, 2016. This year’s run-upers for the Co-op Employer of the Year award are Kiewit and Larry Dill (Simon Fraser University), with support of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, showed that fear itself has a positive impact on ecosystem health.

Racooncs on the Gulf Islands are devastating populatons of crabs and fish in the intertidal zone, and need new strategies to deal with the elimination of wolves, bears and cougars from the Islands almost a century ago. Today the only animal these raccooncs recognize as a threat is what the ecological consequences of their being in check is very important to restoring these ecosystems.

“With what we’ve shown is that we have to consider the behavioral interactions of predators like raccooncs with their prey and not just the actural predation—the killing and consumption—when we’re thinking about how to restore ecosystems from which large carnivores have been lost,” says Suraci.

What raccooncs can teach us about the value of fear

It’s long been known that animals living without fear of predation will thrive and reproduce faster. Think rabbits and deer: What hadn’t been demonstrated is that fear of large carnivores—or lack of it—hasripple effects on the whole web of life.

BC’s Gulf Islands—where the formerly nocturnal racoon population now forage unabashedly day and night in intertidal zones—was the site of a creative experiment led by Jason Suraci, a UVic PhD candidate in biology, published this week in Nature Communications.

The study, done with co-researchers Lisa Zandee (Western University) and Larry Dill (Simon Fraser University), with support of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, showed that fear itself has a positive impact on ecosystem health.

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Honorably dated, for Reconciliation Activist

Mavis Gillie, an advocate for Aboriginal rights and reconciliation, will be granted a UVic honorary degree at a special convocation ceremony on March 9 in the University Club of Victoria.

In her younger years, Gillie spent a decade in the Northwest Territories, where the plight of First Nations peoples captured her attention and ignited her lifelong activism for justice and healing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

After moving to Victoria and during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry in the 1970s, Gillie was a founding member of Project ‘Victoria Chapter’, which offered assistance and support for the Dene and Inuit in their opposition to the pipeline project.

Her later work included aiding First Nations in opposing logging in Haida Gwaii and the Stikin River Valley, and organizing support for the Nisga’a Treaty.

Gillie’s activism has been carried out through the Anglican Church, Project North and Aboriginal Neigh- bours for which she is also a founding member. Her honorary degree nomination con- cerns her tireless commitment to correct injustice wherever it is found—in government and church policies, community atti- tudes, or individual bias. They note that she is equally comfortable in Aboriginal communities, churches, corporate boardrooms or the halls of the legislature.

“Through all of her work her un-assuming, cooperative and respect- ful approach to finding concrete solutions to the issues have made her loved and revered within First Nations and settler communities.”

Lindsay Hardcastle (commerce) spent a work term a a sales rep with Carmanah Technologies.
Finding better ways to detect and treat cancer, understanding how to navigate global economies, expanding our mapping of the modern South Asia, helping us make sense of complex datasets, and improving the success of addiction treatment—these are the goals of UVic’s five newest Canada Research Chairs.

The five chairs were announced on Feb. 9 by Kristy达勒, Minister of Science, as part of a national announcement of new chairholders across Canada.

Now in its 16th year, the Canada Research Chairs program helps Canadian universities attract and retain the best scholars in the world and build on existing areas of research strength. The chairs also give students the opportunity to work side by side with researchers who are world leaders or emerging world leaders in their field.

New ways to fight cancer

Cancer is responsible for 30 per cent of all deaths in Canada and medical physicist Magdalena Razalov-Carter is determined to reduce that toll. As the Chair in Medical Physics, she’s looking at ways to improve how we diagnose and treat cancer using innovative new technologies—such as nanomimics of particles of gold injected into the bloodstream.

Razalov-Carter plans to design and build a high-resolution desktop imaging system that chemists, biologists, and immunologists will use to develop and test new imaging techniques. “We know that cell death is enhanced when gold nanoparticles are irradiated with low-energy x-ray beams,” she explains. “We hope to design a new cost-effective, low-energy, nanochip technology for improved patient outcomes.”

Restoring the forgotten voices of history

Our telling of world history and politics has mostly been thin on marginalized voices. As the Chair in Global and Comparative History, Mary Rozalov-Carter, historian Neesh Boston, is expanding our knowledge of decolonization, diaspora, and migration, particularly in the context of his main area of research—South Asia.

Bazalova-Carter is exploring the oral histories of Bengal intellectuals at the end of the era of the British Empire who voiced critiques of Britishism as well as the modern state. “I want my work to enable students around the world to have the kinds of discussions that will expand our understanding of modern South Asia and its role in globalization,” he says.

Exploring global economies

The “emerging economies” of many low and medium-income countries in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America are expected to dominate world markets over the next 20 years. As the Chair in Global Economy, business professor Ravish Chittoor is examining how multinational firms from developed countries such as Canada can operate and succeed in these economies.

“Emerging economies are attractive opportunities for domestic and foreign corporations, but they are also challenging to navigate due to their unique political, economic and social environments,” says Chittoor. “My interest is to understand how institutional environments influence firm success and performance in these emerging economies.”

Our new world of big data

The rapid growth of computing and social technologies is generating an overwhelming amount of data. As the Chair in Human and Social Aspects of Software Engineering, Margaret-Anne Storey studies how technologies can help people explore, understand, visualize and share big data sources and complex information.

Storey is currently looking at how social media can advance a more participatory culture in the software development community. “My goal is to improve software tools that encourage knowledge workers to think and work together, making it easier for people to learn, share knowledge and collaborate,” she says. Other application areas have included biomedicine, security and education.

BLADES continued from P1

children into efficient and submissive workers for the capitalist state. “It gives them a real feeling for the literature, and for the flaws in it,” he understated.

As he rounds a curve in his career, his research and teacher education is becoming increasingly focused on ethics and aesthetics.

Where wondering can lead

Wearing his research into his teaching, Blades recently introduced an experiment of his own into his UVic class room. “If students were to study some aspects of how I, as a human being, have studied it, and depicted their journey of understanding from where they were to where they ended up, in some form of artistic expression—a painting, a poem, a song, a play—would that affect our understanding of the nature of science?”

The result of this, in his assessment, about 80 per cent of the students considered deeply their understanding of the nature of science.

First of all, he did the assignment himself. He studied snowflakes. Using the principles of scientific inquiry he conducted multi-source research and then wrote up his findings. When it came to depicting that authentically, he kept coming back to the idea of snowflakes as primarily water, and as fragile and beautiful and individual as human beings. Inspired by his research and his students, Blades says: “The influence of teaching for me where I just became ‘I am going to share my poem with my students’.

“It became an incredible moment of teaching for me where I just became completely vulnerable in front of my students,” he recalls. Many students told him how his openness gave them the courage to do the assignment themselves. “Again, it’s modeling. If you’re going to ask them to be vulnerable, you need to be vulnerable first.”

Asked what it brings to the classroom when the teacher is vulnerable, he answers: “Humanness. It just brings a real humanity to the classroom.”

The influence of a master teacher

Jayanna Barnes was part of the first Aesthetics Project experiment during her fourth year of the elementary teacher program at UVic, and she wrote that being part of it was a “defining moment” in her education. It encouraged her confidence, “ignited an internal drive to succeed” and led her to “engage in a higher order of thinking.”

Julie Lohb, now a French immersion teacher in the Saanich school district, refers to Blades as a “master teacher” and in her 3M letter she summed up Blades’ influence on her this way: “All of my teaching stems from the pedagogical model he introduced to us in class… I demand that my students take risks in their learning and ask themselves the ‘why’ and ‘to what end’ of the material we cover; I catalize all forms and levels of authentic curiosity and questioning; I practice humility and self-effacing warmth when communicating with parents, students in need, or administration; I try to be quick to listen and slow to speak and never hesitate to ask questions or seek mentorship when I’m in unfamiliar territory; I value collaborative thinking and love seeking out new ways to spark interest in science.”

Of the generation of teachers over whom he’s had such an influence, Blades says: “There’s such a positive attitude among them about what education can do. They seem on a mission and I find it thrilling to be with them.”

Blades is UVic’s 11th recipient to be awarded the 3M National Teaching Fellowship. Past recipients include Prof. Jin- Sun Toon (Child and Youth Care), 2013; Dr. A.B. (Elango) Elangovan (Gus- tavson School of Business), 2012; Dr. Gwendeth Doane (Nursing), 2006; Prof. Jamie Cassels (Law), 2002; Dr. Marty Devor (Sociology), 2000; Dr. David Devor (Sociology), 1998; Dr. Lisa Cervone (Chemistry), 1998; Dr. Janet Curley (Chemistry), 1996; Dr. Elizabeth Tumasonis (History in Art), 1992; Dr. Andy Farquharson (Social Work), 1986.

New horizons in addictions and recovery

Why do some people forced into alco- hol and drug treatment programs succeed or fail? What programs and services are needed to increase suc- cess? These are questions epidemi- ologist and health services researcher Karen Urbanoski intends to answer as the Chair in Substance Use, Addic- tions and Health Services Research. “No one has studied whether or how historically resistant people come to accepting treatment,” says Urbanoski. “Findings will help us move beyond the pervasive thinking about drug addiction as an individual disorder and develop effective ways of reducing the burden of addiction.”

Today’s announcement also inclusions the renewal of computer science scientist George Traenakas as the Chair in Computer Analysis of Audio and Music. Traenakas develops computer-based tools for manipulating large audio collections for more effective interactions between computers, musicians and listeners.

UVic currently has 30 filled Canada Research Chairs.

Indigenous Academic Plan consultations

UVic is developing its first Indigenous Academic Plan (IAP). The planning committee—chaired by Director of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement Dr. Robin Thomas and Dr. Anna J. Davey—and current students, staff and Indigenous communities are being invited to participate in schedule for campus consultations, and links to emails to provide feedback are available on the UVic website at bit.ly/uvic-iap.

Draft International Plan for collaborations

International Research and Academic Planning Group (IRAP), also chaired by Katy Matsee, is working on a refresh of the university’s international plan (Making a World of Difference: A Plan for Furthering Internationalization) which was developed in 2006. A draft update to the plan is now available on the VPAC website, as is the schedule of formal campus consultations. IRAP is seeking feedback from students and staff on the plan at these events or by email. Full info: bit.ly/uvic-iap-pl.

Virtual tours, real-world outcomes

Since its October launch, the UVic virtual campus tour has guided nearly 12,000 visitors around our extraordinary academic environment. Traffic statistics including 1-in-4 visitors who spend more than 10 minutes exploring the site—are also leading to online enrolment applications (and other calls to action) reaching double the average for universities using the YouVisit platform. youvisit.com/uvic.

A reminder about lynda.com

A reminder that UVic is partnering with lynda.com, virtual training and education platform, until May 15, 2016. If you haven’t tried the lynda.com service yet, log in at the UVic portal using your UVic email address and you have access to thousands of videos ‘just in time learning’ for personal and professional development. If you already use lynda.com, try using the app on your go to develop playbooks to enhance your career development and training plans in your unit. uvic.ca/lynda
PHOENIX THEATRE

Designing a new future—after 28 years at UVic

BY ADRIENNE HOLIERHOEK

After 28 years in the Department of Theatre, design professor Allan Stichbury says his favourite show continues to be whatever he’s currently working on. And while his beautiful, Mississippi-inspired set for the Phoenix Theatre production of Tennessee Williams’ Summer and Smoke (running Mar. 10–19) is no exception to this rule, it will be his final play before retiring from UVic this spring.

Stichbury’s path to theatre was a little circuitous, but it started right here at UVic. After high school he traveled the country, with plans of returning to his native Saskatchewan to attend university in the fall. But upon visiting Victoria and learning of UVic’s new law school, he decided to stay. But pre-law political science classes didn’t capture his imagination. “In 1971, there were not a lot of women in political science courses,” he recalls, “but in my English course, there were a number of women from the theatre department, so I began to hang out there. And theatre was much more interesting. So I dropped some other classes and registered for Theatre 100—and by second year, I had changed my major.”

At UVic, Stichbury saw his very first play, took up acting and learned how to design and build sets, working with then-design professor Bill West. He realized that he loved it—so much so, that he dropped out of school after second year and began working at Victoria’s Bastion Theatre. After two years, this work experience solidified his resolve to return to school for theatre design, this time at the University of Alberta. Since then, he hasn’t looked back. With a career designing scenery and lighting for major theatre and opera institutions across Canada, Stichbury has also designed shows for Broadway, in Washington DC and Bangkok, Thailand.

For Summer and Smoke, the director wanted to stay true to the realism exemplified in the original 1948 production, but in a way that would help translate it to a 2016 audience. Instead of having more traditional scene locations on stage left, stage right and centre, Stichbury has designed the various locations using a revolving turntable. “We can maintain the poetic symbolism of having everything on stage at one time, but the revolve allows us to select which scene we feature, and bring that location downstage so that the communication between the actor and the audience is the strongest it can possibly be.”

With a vast southern sky and a nod to Mississippi architecture, Stichbury’s designs for Summer and Smoke have a beautiful and elegant sense of minimalism. But he’s clear that, as well as serving the play, his designs for the Phoenix are also about creating opportunities for student learning and exploration. “It’s important to use design elements every few years—like a turntable or a cyclorama screen to project a huge sky onto—so that each cohort of students can be introduced to and explore these concepts.”

As for retiring, Stichbury feels “it’s not stopping. It’s about changing your focus and moving on to something else.” With a Bangkok University production of West Side Story opening at the same time (where Stichbury recently helped set up a UVic exchange program for theatre students), and upcoming plays across Canada, he is definitely not stopping soon. “It will be a variation of what I do. Will it involve teaching? Will it involve designing? Probably.” Stichbury pauses and chuckles, “It will probably also involve some time at the beach.”

MFA exhibition goes solo

Rather than the traditional group exhibit, this year’s annual Department of Visual Arts MFA exhibition will be presented as a solo series, featuring staggered exhibits by each graduating MFA in the Visual Arts building’s Audain Gallery. Up first is Tristan Zastrow (March 14–18), followed by Ryan Hatfield (March 21–25) and Rachel Vanderzwet (March 28–April 1), with more to come in April. See the Visual Arts event page for more information. finearts.uvic.ca/visualarts/events/
**An algorithm for teamwork**

**Game programming contests drive student interest, experience and skill**

**BY LINDSAY GAGEL**

On Saturday, Feb. 20, UVic played host to a virtual battle, attended by more than 300 students and developers wanting to test their artificial intelligence programming skills. It was the third annual BattleSnake competition.

In the classic arcade game Snake, a player maneuvers a growing ‘snake’ around the computer screen. As the snake grows in size, it becomes more difficult for the player to avoid making the snake run into itself.

BattleSnake builds on this simple game: as the snake eats apples, it grows in size. Run into a wall, your own tail, or another snake’s tail and it’s game over. But there’s a competitive aspect to this version: run head-on into another player’s snake and the longer one consumes the shorter one.

At BattleSnake, teams of two to five programmers compete in a snake with artificial intelligence, to compete against other teams’ snakes. And the winners claim more than just bragging rights—$5,000 worth of prizes were awarded throughout the day to teams of various skill levels.

Teams showed up at 11 a.m. to begin strategizing and programming using an app that allows developers to write code together. The main event, showcasing the ‘intelligent’ snakes battling on large screens, kicked off at 6 p.m.

**A sport where all competitors win**

BattleSnake was sponsored by a San Francisco-based company specializing in app development that frequently hires UVic co-op students. Participants included teams from UVic, Camosun College, Royal Roads University and Vancouver Island University. There were also three teams representing Women in Engineering and Computer Science (WECS) as well as employees of local IT companies.

Programming competitions like BattleSnake get students out of the classroom and engaged in an exciting and creative coding environment with fellow programming students and local developers.

“Programming competitions get students working on code outside of class projects,” explains Alydn Chevlos, WECS vice-president and third-year computer science student. “I think what makes BattleSnake stand out is how welcoming it is to programmers of all experiences. Coding competitions can seem pretty intimidating and the organizers really made an effort to make it welcoming environment to anyone.”

Additionally, having corporate teams compete and provide ‘bounty snakes’—which students could beat for additional prizes—created a fun way to meet and network with some of Victoria’s local tech companies. This was Chwols’ second year attending BattleSnake.

A team of UVic students took first place. The second-place team was captained by a student who initially formed UVic’s Web Development club, who now owns his own start-up company.

According to Sarah Ing, a fourth-year UVic economics student and co-ordinator of BattleSnake, it’s a great opportunity to gain hands-on experience. “It’s a project that [students] can put on a resume and portfolio when they go out and apply for jobs,” she explains.

**Bragging rights**

Windward Code Wars is another big programming competition for students, collecting 75 teams from around the world for bragging rights this year. As in previous years, teams of UVic students competed against teams from Georgia Tech, the University of Maryland and other heavy tech hitters—and a UVic team placed second overall.

“The competitions are definitely a lot of fun,” says Anthony Estej, PhD candidate and CSC 110 sessional instructor. “From what I saw, the competitions are also really challenging. Not because students are struggling with the technical aspects, but because of the heavy emphasis on teamwork and collaboration… To me, the emphasis on teamwork and collaboration is where these competitions shine, and why I think they complement the skills these students learn in their courses at UVic so well.”

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