



THIS YEAR'S LIST GOES TO 11

2020 UVIC NEWSMAKERS, PAGE 5

THE RING

JANUARY 2021

The University of Victoria's
community newspaper

ring.uvic.ca



University
of Victoria

SPEED READ

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

UVic Alerts system changes

UVic Alerts is the university's notification system for students, staff and faculty. As part of ongoing improvements to the system, testing will be conducted during January/February 2021. You may receive a test notification to your UVic email account, via text message or on other channels. If you have not already downloaded the UVic Safety app—part of the Alerts suite—it is the fastest way to receive notifications from the university, plus important safety information, contacts, maps and procedures. The app is free to download at the Apple App Store or Google Play. Info: bit.ly/21-alerts

WEBSITE UPDATE

New employee services features on My Page

Some of the employee services features within My Page have a new look. The interface to view pay information and enter or approve time and leave has been updated. Look for more information on how to use the new features on the employee dashboard webpage. Info: bit.ly/21-dashboard.



UVic marine biologist Julia Baum sampling *Platygyra* colonies on Kiritimati (Christmas Island), 2019. PHOTO: KRISTINA TIETJEN

61%

OF THE 103
CORAL COLONIES
STUDIED IN
THIS RESEARCH
SURVIVED THE
GLOBALLY
UNPRECEDENTED
HEATWAVE AT
KIRITIMATI.

Coral recovery after prolonged heatwave offers new hope

BY VIMALA JEEVANANDAM

University of Victoria biologists have discovered how some corals managed to survive a globally unprecedented heatwave, in a first-ever study that provides new hope for the long-term survival of coral reefs in the face of climate change.

"The devastating effects of climate change on coral reefs are well known. Finding ways to boost coral survival through marine heatwaves is crucial if coral reefs are to endure the coming decades of climate change," says UVic marine biologist Julia Baum, the study's senior author.

Published in December in *Nature Communications*, the study presents the discoveries made by the international research team as they tracked hundreds of coral colonies on reefs around Christmas

Island (Kiritimati), throughout the 2015-16 El Niño. Heat stress from that El Niño triggered the third-ever global coral bleaching event, causing mass coral bleaching and mortality on reefs around the world. Its epicentre was Christmas Island, where the heatwave lasted an unprecedented 10 months.

Worldwide, coral reef fisheries are worth US\$6.8 billion annually, and are a vital source of food and income for hundreds of millions of people in tropical island nations. In the lead-up to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-30), there is a renewed and global call to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health.

"Understanding how some corals can survive prolonged heatwaves could provide an opportunity to mitigate the impact

of marine heatwaves on coral reefs, allowing us to buy time as we work to limit greenhouse gas emissions," says Danielle Claar, who led the study as a UVic doctoral student and is now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Washington.

Climate change threatens the world's coral reefs because corals are highly sensitive to the temperature of their surrounding waters. During a heatwave, corals release the algae that live in their tissues and produce food for them, causing the coral to turn completely white—a phenomenon known as coral bleaching. Prolonged bleaching often causes corals to die from starvation. If they can reclaim their food source within a few weeks, they can usually recover.

SEE CORAL RECOVERY P.6

Keeping campus safe, with an eye on the future

As a Food Services employee for the past 10 years, Paula Burns never imagined that her daily routine would be upended by a previously unknown virus. When the shift to remote learning and working happened suddenly in the spring and UVic scaled back service at its retail food outlets, Burns was temporarily laid off.

Almost as rapidly, Burns was asked if she would be interested in being redeployed on campus in the new Classroom Safety Ambassador program, which launched in September to support face-to-face delivery of classes.

As an ambassador for the David Turpin Building, she greets those entering the building, helps students find designated study spaces, cleans high-touch surfaces in those spaces, and provides information about campus safety protocols.

"We're an extra layer of safety on top of all the work that Facilities Management and janitorial

does," says Burns.

More than that, though, the ambassador program allows both staff and students to stay connected. "A lot of students were isolated and didn't have much contact with other people. People feel really grateful to have a chat when they come in, even if it's once a week. It's been like a lifeline to many students and makes a big difference in my life too—it's been a real eye opener."

With 57 ambassadors in 14 buildings across campus, the ambassador program is helping the university maintain safe campus operations while the majority of students, faculty and staff work and study remotely.

At the same time, planning is underway to envision how the campus will look in summer 2021 and beyond. AVP Human Resources Kane Kilbey is cautiously optimistic about the new year, noting that leaders continue to "discuss

different approaches for getting more students, faculty and staff back to campus as soon as it is safe to do so."

Campus operations and services have been maintained over the past several months by a core group of staff from areas such as Facilities Management, Campus Security, Custodial Services, University Systems, Athletics and Recreation, the bookstore, Child Care Services, Food Services and Residence Services.

It's estimated that approximately 20 per cent of staff in departments and units are working on campus at least part of the time. That number is expected to steadily rise as the COVID-19 vaccination program rolls out across the country.

According to Andy Mavretic, director of occupational health, safety and environment, more than 500 safe work plans have been approved or are in progress for university classrooms and

studios, research and research centres, specialized units and office environments.

"Our campus community has worked well together to safely re-open research and creative work spaces, which are so critical to upper-level undergraduate and graduate learning," says Rachael Scarth, associate vice-president research services.

Approximately 3,500 students were enrolled in face-to-face classes in the fall term, in courses with a significant experiential learning component, such as theatre production, visual arts, chamber music, ecological restoration, organic chemistry and engineering drawing. Work-integrated learning opportunities, including practica, clinical placements, field experiences, law clinics, community placements and co-op,

SEE SAFE CAMPUS P.2

around the ring

Call for Convocation Roll Senate nominations

Starting on Jan. 25, a call for nominations for Senators to be elected by and from the University's Convocation Roll will be issued. All Convocation members are eligible to be nominated and to vote for these positions. In accordance with the University Act, Convocation Senator positions are for persons who are not UVic faculty members. To learn more about the Convocation Roll or for nomination forms, please visit uvic.ca/convocation-senators.

The Senate is responsible for the academic governance of the university. This includes matters related to libraries, faculties, departments, courses of instruction, fellowships, scholarships, exhibitions, bursaries, prizes, admissions, student appeals and the granting of degrees. Learn more at uvic.ca/universitysecretary.

PHILANTHROPY

Help United Way campaign reach its goals

BY MARINA HADEN, UVIC UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN ASSISTANT

This year's UVic United Way campaign has been extended until April in an effort to meet our goal of \$280,000—an ambitious but necessary target in the face of COVID-19 impacts in our community.

Restrictions on gatherings mean that some events have been restructured or cancelled, but we've been able to find new opportunities for collaboration. For instance, the online auction created in partnership with Royal Roads University (RRU) raised more than \$5,000 in December.

We are also collaborating with RRU on the campaign's first-ever online trivia event, happening on Feb. 12—a great way to get together with colleagues virtually and test your local knowledge in friendly competition.

All participants will be entered into a draw for a 64GB iPad Air. Play by yourself or form a team with up to five people. Tickets are \$10 per person with all proceeds to United Way

Greater Victoria. You can register at uvic.ca/unitedway.

Match Fund

This year, new donor contributions will be matched (to a maximum of \$15,000) through the UVic United Way Match Fund, sponsored by personal donations from the university's executive team. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity. All new donors will be entered in a draw to have lunch with President Kevin Hall (when COVID protocols allow).

"This has been a deeply challenging year for many of us personally and financially," says Michele Parkin, UVic campaign co-chair. "Our campaign is a great opportunity to show your local love, and for UVic to come together to help our Greater Victoria community members and United Way-supported organizations."

Please consider becoming a payroll donor, participating in online events and letting your colleagues know about the campaign. All donations stay local, and are needed more than ever this year. Find out more at uvic.ca/unitedway.

SAFE CAMPUS CONTINUED FROM P. 1

also continued.

To ensure equitable access to student services, many support services—including counselling, health and academic advising—were made available virtually, along with the Learn Anywhere online student portal and the SupportConnect program, which provides 24/7 confidential mental health supports for students by phone or online.

The New Student Connect program, which pairs first-year students with volunteer upper-year student mentors, also kicked off in the fall. "Having an amazing experience outside the classroom is part of the reason students choose a university," says Angi Ross, program manager for new student engagement in the Office of Student Life. "We're trying to create and hold a virtual space to build up the student body, and make it as accessible as possible."

With the goal of helping new students build connections to UVic within a new virtual community, the upper-year Engage Leaders lead online events and activities and provide supportive guidance and resources, offering weekly posts and chats, monthly activities such as games, movie or meditation nights, individual check-ins and a variety of "pods" (e.g., international, LGBTQ2, mature students, Indigenous) that students can join.

"We know that students want to maintain their connections to UVic, and that faculty and staff also miss interacting with students in person," says Susan Lewis, acting vice-provost. "We are prioritizing everyone's health and safety. We want to welcome more students to campus as soon as we are safely able to do so, and we hope to offer more opportunities for face-to-face educational activities this summer."

Campus is expected to continue to look different for some time, with ongoing opportunities for innovative and interactive learning. This means courses may offer both face-to-face and online components, while services may be available both in-person and remotely.

"We will work toward having all university employees return to campus at least on a part-time basis by summer or fall 2021, as the health guidelines allow," says Kilbey. "As a destination university, we know how important it is for UVic to offer a full range of activities and services on campus, and we want to make sure we get there safely."

Some of the principles and guidelines university leaders are using to make decisions about the future are available at bit.ly/21-return.

For detailed information about the university's response to COVID-19, including current health and safety protocols, visit uvic.ca/covid19.



Impressions of my first 50 days

KEVIN HALL, PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

In my first town hall I asked what word best describes UVic. The word that rose to the top was "community," and I can say that has been confirmed in every meeting and chance encounter I've had since arriving. Whether walking around Ring Road, across campus or downtown, people have stopped to welcome me to Victoria and the university. Victoria is as beautiful a city as I remembered, but I had forgotten how cold and damp it is at this time of year—at least compared to Newcastle, Australia!

Learning from you

My first priority when I arrived was to connect with as many people as possible and hear about your hopes, concerns and ideas for UVic. I want to learn about the university, about you as individuals and about the culture of this institution.

As president, my job is to enable us to build a collective vision about what we want as a community and institution; to come to a consensus about where we want to be in three, five, 10 years; and to identify how we can really make an impact in our region and beyond.

The passion and dedication of this community has been evident in everyone I've met—from students to staff, from faculty to deans, and from members of the Board of Governors and Senate. We've spoken about what drew us to this university, what we hope for the future of this institution, and about how we, together, can rise to the opportunities and challenges ahead of us.

In my first town hall I heard strong support for action on climate and sustainability; equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism; and truth, respect and reconciliation. You also shared with me the

importance of strengthening UVic's global ranking and reputation, the impact of our teaching and research, and our connections with alumni, community and government.

These are all things that I am passionate about and which inspired my decision to join this university. I am looking forward to continuing these conversations over the coming months through my Listening Tour.

A wider community

Our community is much bigger than just the people I have met inside 'the ring'. I have enjoyed meeting with local politicians and community leaders—the sense of pride they have in UVic is clear. Connecting with my colleagues at our partner universities and colleges is opening opportunities to share best practices and work together to advance shared goals for higher education in this region.

Innovative community engagement will be critical for us and for the province as we start a new year. Let's make sure we're an exemplar and that we continue to enable and drive social change, environmental change and economic prosperity.

Looking forward

This has been a challenging year, but there are reasons to be optimistic. As I write this, some of the first vaccines are being administered in BC and we can look forward to an exciting new year as we gradually emerge from the pandemic.

My first 50 days have confirmed for me how fortunate I am to be UVic's president. I look forward to working with all of you—students, staff, faculty and alumni—to build a sustainable future that creates impact for the region, the province and across the globe.

uvic.ca/listeningtour



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Student housing dining project video. A new video tour on UVic’s student housing dining project is now available at bit.ly/SHD21. The two new buildings east of Ring Road will add 621 student housing spaces to campus, as well as a 600-seat dining hall, lecture hall, meeting and study spaces and an Indigenous student lounge. One of the biggest passive house projects in the province, building 1 will open in Sept. 2022, with project completion in fall 2023. More info, including time lapse photos of the construction, at bit.ly/20-SHD.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

UVic investment honours Indigenous economic reconciliation

In December 2020, UVic announced a \$500,000 investment into the Raven Indigenous Impact Fund LP. The Raven Fund was created by Raven Indigenous Capital Partners, an Indigenous-led and owned financial intermediary that invests in Indigenous enterprises as catalysts for social change and prosperity. This is UVic’s first impact investment under its new policy for responsible investment adopted earlier this year.

The investment into Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses affords new opportunities for UVic in its ongoing work toward respect and reconciliation. It is five years since the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Dec. 15, 2015 and the university remains

deeply committed to heeding the calls to action in the recommendations of the report.

“This investment enables UVic to support Indigenous-led social enterprise and promote the development of financial tools that address critical social, financing and policy barriers,” says UVic Treasurer Andrew Coward. “By investing in Raven, this is the first step UVic has taken to align our investments with our strategic framework. Specifically, the Raven Indigenous Impact Fund aligns with UVic’s responsible investment strategy to promote Indigenous economic development while generating positive social impact alongside a financial return using solid impact investment practices.”

Raven, a leader in the field of impact investment and Canada’s first Indigenous intermediary, focusses on deal sizes that range from \$250,000 to \$2 million and aims for annualized returns to investors of six to eight per cent.

“It is an honour for the Raven Fund to be UVic’s first impact investment under its new responsible investment policy,” says Managing Partner Paul Lacerte, one of Raven’s three founders. “By pairing this investment with a robust case study and ongoing student engagement, we are role modelling the way that reciprocity can show up as a key feature of real economic reconciliation.”

What is unique to Raven and different from other impact funds is the

firm’s vision of a measurement framework for investment that integrates Indigenous worldviews and Indigenous communities through storytelling and ceremony. Three UVic researchers collaborated on a case study, which grew out of Raven’s engagement with the university. The framework envisioned by Raven has been studied this term by the first cohort of students in a new MBA program in sustainable innovation at UVic’s Gustavson School of Business.

The university also recently funded the Vancouver Island Impact Investing Hub (VI3Hub). Hosted at UVic, the hub is designed to help accelerate private investments into climate solutions and climate-focused innovation on Vancouver Island.

VIKES ATHLETICS

Initiatives around Safe Sport affirm Vikes culture of excellence

The Vikes head into 2021 having implemented several significant initiatives to provide a safe and supportive environment for student-athletes to pursue high standards of sports performance.

Together the initiatives provide new and additional resources, education and support for students and coaching staff in the Vikes Varsity Program. They also reaffirm Vikes’ commitment to a culture of excel-

lence free from bullying, harassment, discrimination or abuse of any kind.

The initiatives include a new senior leadership position. As Director of Varsity Performance Sport, Nick Clarke’s responsibility is to provide additional oversight and accountability of the varsity performance sport program, with a clear focus on safe sport and the specific needs of performance athletes.

Also in place are a professional

code for coaches, a new in-depth student-athlete handbook on a comprehensive range of topics for athletic and academic success, a guide to support resources and reporting concerns, a student-athlete leadership council and a new position to support Varsity athletes in the Office of Student Life.

A leader in Canadian university sport, UVic has a rich history of athletic excellence which includes 80 national titles and numerous inter-

nationally accomplished alumni to its name. The Vikes athletics program takes pride in being one of the best in Canada.

“Every student-athlete in the Vikes Varsity Program can be assured we are firmly committed to providing them with the highest quality athletic experience in a safe sport environment,” says Clint Hamilton, senior director of Vikes Athletics and Recreation.

bit.ly/21-sports

ringers

John Borrows, Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Law, has been appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada for his scholarly work on Indigenous rights and legal traditions, which have had a significant impact across Canada and abroad. Borrows, co-founder of the Indigenous law degree program at UVic, was among 62 new appointments to the Order of Canada announced Dec. 30.

In December, UVic professor emerita **Lorna Wanótsis’a Williams** was part of the first ever virtual investiture of the Order of Canada. The esteemed member of the Lil’wat First Nation and the first Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Knowledge and Learning at UVic was appointed an Officer in December 2019 for her trailblazing contributions to Indigenous education, language revitalization and advocacy. “Having my daughter Megan step in to assist the Governor General put the medal on me made the award even more special,” she said from the home-bubble she’s grateful to be sharing with her daughter and grandson.

In November, **CANEU-COOP**—an international partnership between UVic, the University of Waterloo and two European institutions—was awarded the Canadian Bureau for International Education’s (CBIE) Panorama Award in recognition of innovation and excellence in the delivery of high-quality international programming. Through CANEU-COOP’s hybrid exchange model, UVic and University of Waterloo students complete co-operative education work terms with European organizations. The program has just marked its 10-year anniversary, with more than 100 UVic student exchanges to show for it.

Kiffer Card, a post-doctoral fellow with UVic’s School of Public Health and Social Policy and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, was recently awarded the 2020 CIHR-IHSPR Rising Star Award. The award is in recognition of OurStats, a data-visualization tool developed with the Community Based Research Centre. The OurStats dashboard uses data from the national Sex Now Survey of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, allowing users to access this wealth of information in what one CIHR reviewer described as “a major step towards the democratization of research.”

Long-time residents and UVic grads, Dave and Tara are helping local residents and new-comers to navigate their way through the real estate market.

Whether buying or selling, they will assure smooth sailing — just ask their many clients at UVic.

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NOMINATE UVIC CONVOCATION SENATORS

Nominations are invited for four non-faculty members to the Senate, by and from members of the UVic Convocation, for three-year terms commencing July 1, 2021.

UVic Convocation members include:

- Alumni
- Past and present members of Senate and the Board of Governors
- Regular and retired faculty members
- Regular staff members holding a university degree who have been employed at UVic for at least 12 months
- Persons who completed one full year at Victoria College prior to 1963

Nomination forms must be received at usec@uvic.ca between **January 25 and February 8, 2021 4:00pm (PT).**

For information and nomination form:
uvic.ca/convocation-senators | 250.721.8101 | usec@uvic.ca

If more than four valid nominations are received, an online election will be held March 8 to March 22, 2021 4:00 pm (PT).

 **University of Victoria**

More intense precipitation—and the resulting damage—projected in a changing climate

BY JODY PATERSON

In a warming world, most extreme weather events become even more extreme. Temperature records are broken and wildfire risks rise. Heavy rains and “pineapple express” events intensify. Extremes that once happened every 50 years begin to happen more often.

Now, the work of a postdoctoral scientist at the University of Victoria’s Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) has updated global figures on daily extreme precipitation and confirmed that extreme rainstorms are intensifying and becoming more frequent in much of the world.

Climatologist Qiaohong Sun worked with 69 years of data from 7,293 weather stations, mostly from North America, Asia and Europe, but also some from Australia, Africa and South America. She found that extreme one-day rain storms have intensified at 68 per cent of the stations, and intensification was statistically significant at about 10 per cent of them. These heavy rainfalls are growing more intense with each degree of warming.

One in 10 stations may not sound like much, says UVic climatologist and PCIC Director Francis Zwiers. But compared to what researchers would expect to see in an unchanging climate, it’s four times higher. Sun’s research also supports what climatologists expect from theory: That for



Zwiers (left) and Sun at the Gonzales Hill Observatory. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

every degree of global warming, the intensity of extreme rainfall events goes up by about seven per cent.

That means that if the global climate warms by three degrees, extreme precipitation events around the world will be about 20 per cent more intense than they are now, says Sun. The findings emphasize the need to build for a changing world, she adds.

More intense rain storms will bring more damage, for example, from overwhelmed storm drains and backed-up sewage systems. Homeowners, municipalities and provincial governments all have a stake in mitigating and managing the impact of extreme precipitation events, says Zwiers.

“If an extreme event used to mean 50 millimetres of precipitation and it warms by one degree, that event is now 53.5 millimetres. So, is that important?” asks Zwiers. “One way to answer that is to think about where you live, and the fact that the storm

sewers have fixed capacity. If rainfalls exceeding that capacity start to happen more often, then costly damage will also start to happen more often.”

PCIC is a regional climate service centre located at UVic, providing practical information on the physical impacts of climate variability and change in Canada’s Pacific and Yukon regions. The increase in the climate service centre’s staff to 31 from 13 in the decade that Zwiers has led it highlights the rising demand for climate knowledge and the tools PCIC develops to help with long-term planning.

Zwiers notes that many organizations are beginning to take the latest research on climate change into account in their policies. For example, BC’s Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure requires that new engineering designs for provincial transportation infrastructure incorporate climate projections and risk analysis.

Sun’s study was funded by the

Pan-Canadian Global Water Futures research program. Her work is an important contribution to the growing body of climate studies that are informing government, developers, insurance companies and the public as they prepare for a new reality in a warming world, says Zwiers.

Qiaohong Sun’s study adds nine more years of observations to an earlier study of historic weather-station data, making it current to 2018. As well, it adds regional data that wasn’t part of the first study and examines extreme precipitation trends for individual continents and regions, as well as looking at trends across the globe.

Water has replaced fire in recent years to become the leading cause of damage to Canadian homes. Damage to homes from sewer backup and basement flooding now exceeds \$2 billion a year, and has been on the rise for more than 25 years.

Although mounting insurance

losses show that vulnerability to local flooding is increasing, rainfall observations in many places don’t yet show the effects of global warming on extreme rainfall. Zwiers points out that the expected effect of warming on extreme rainfall is nevertheless evident in enough places to indicate that climate change can’t be ignored.

With climate warming, the “one-in-20, 50- and 100-year” extreme precipitation events that guide the design of the world’s infrastructure are expected to occur more frequently, as well as with more intensity.

Workforce needs are growing for knowledgeable people able to incorporate climate science into their work. PCIC and the Canadian Centre for Climate Services are exploring how to ensure sufficient capacity. Zwiers notes that UVic is considering the introduction of a bachelor of science degree in climate science.

Mental health impacts of COVID-19

Depression and anxiety on the rise in Canada since start of pandemic

BY ANNE MACLAURIN

As the global pandemic enters its eighth month, many Canadians say they are experiencing higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts since COVID-19 and associated lockdown measures began in the spring.

Fear and anxiety about the novel coronavirus and the uncertainties in everyday life it has brought can be overwhelming and create strong reactions in adults and youth. As people react differently to stress, University of Victoria researchers Brianna Turner and Theone Paterson are working with a global team of scientists to understand the different impacts and improve the mental well-being of communities in Canada.

Early survey results show gaps in Canada’s mental health services. Younger Canadians, or those under 35, are especially feeling their needs aren’t being met, given reports of higher rates of depression, anxiety, loneliness and poor social support relative to older individuals.

This may be because younger people feel more vulnerable to certain economic impacts of the pandemic such as job loss. There may also have been a higher rate of pre-existing mental health concerns in this group before the pandemic, explains Turner.

Paterson, an assistant professor of psychology at UVic, says the

study will give researchers a unique understanding of the impact of the pandemic across participating regions around the world to compare country by country what people are experiencing. This will help inform mental health policy and services. Paterson, who is a clinical neuropsychologist, is working alongside Turner, a UVic clinical psychologist whose research focuses on youth, self-harm behaviour and suicide.

“We are investigating the psychological impacts of COVID-19 and the public health response across time,” says Paterson. “Research conducted to date has reported increases in self-harm and suicidal thoughts, experience of domestic violence, experience of symptoms relating to anxiety, depression and stress, as well as changes in substance-use experiences in different regions.”

A higher number of Canadians are experiencing at least a moderate level of depression or anxiety, while the number reporting suicidal thoughts has increased by about 50 per cent. However, about 40 per cent of Canadians needing mental health services say they are not receiving professional or community supports.

“We hope to develop practical recommendations to improve practitioners’ ability to match the best types of mental health services to meet people’s needs,” says Turner.

Comparing Canadian findings with data from other countries will give researchers a unique understanding of the impact of the pandemic across participating regions. It may also shed light on changes to available mental



Paterson (left) and Turner. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

health services that could be beneficial in the Canadian context.

COVID-19 has been compared to the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, and it is likely this historical event had significant psychological impacts. But there are some unique features of the current pandemic. The virus’ ease of transmission compared to others has led to more broad-reaching public health responses.

“There have been lockdowns of cities, extensive business and school closures. Around the world, the public health response has hugely impacted our lives,” says Paterson. “It is important to improve our understanding of how all these changes have affected

our mental health.”

The study is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research COVID-19 Mental Health and Substance Use Service Needs and Delivery program.

Mental health during COVID-19 is a leading concern for researchers and governments. Local and federal governments need more information to support decision-making around mental health responses to the pandemic.

The UK’s National Health Service launched the worldwide survey in August. UVic is the only Canadian university participating in the global collaboration. There will be multiple

rounds of surveys happening throughout the fall and winter months.

The top issues identified in Canada are depression, suicidal thoughts and anxiety. An important early finding is that the proportion of men reporting suicidal thoughts has increased. Also, men under age 35 report they are not receiving services and supports that they need.

Research partners include the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Ontario Social Workers Association. Turner and Paterson are working with a team of seven graduate and undergraduate student researchers at UVic.

Top UVic newsmakers of 2020

THIS YEAR'S LIST GOES TO 11

In a year like no other, our UVic community of students, faculty and staff took care of each other, innovated, pivoted research and provided recovery solutions—all working together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although 2020 was filled with disruptive shifts and heartbreaking losses, the UVic community kept doing what we do best—learning, teaching and conducting vital research to protect our health, as well as working with the community to ensure the social and economic resilience of our society. Links to full stories and videos: bit.ly/11-for-2020



Rising to the challenge

As our faculty, staff and students all shifted to new ways of teaching, working and learning, UVic researchers also led dozens of COVID-19 recovery projects. That sweep of initiatives—a whole category that emerged from necessity, shaped by UVic researchers' determination to make a difference—includes many divergent projects:

- a chemist's work to accelerate development of a low-cost COVID screening test,
- a shared effort by a plant biologist a biochemist to solve a shortage of COVID-19 spike protein needed for antibody testing,
- the development of virus-resistant coatings for sinks and other high-touch surfaces,
- the use of sewage monitoring to track and predict coronavirus outbreaks,
- understanding and managing the psychological impacts of COVID-driven isolation and stress on children and adults,
- research on the pandemic's impact on Indigenous communities—from First Nations' efforts to protect their own communities during COVID, to how those communities are working to prepare for a healthier and economically stronger future, and
- gathering the best research-driven guidance from exercise psychology to help us all stay physically active during the COVID-19 crisis, despite lack of access to gyms and other social supports for staying fit.

In any other year, each of these stories would fit right in to a “newsworthy stories of the year” list. This year, they stand together as one.



Support with substance

Staring down two public health crises at once, PhD nursing student Meaghan Brown and nursing prof Bernie Pauly are working together at UVic's Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research to save lives of people struggling with severe alcohol dependence by developing pandemic guidelines for implementing managed alcohol programs across the country.



Pulling together

While much of the world's attention has been focused on the pandemic, the students, coaches and supporters of the UVic Vikes have also showed how important grit, love and kindness can be in confronting a more singular crisis. Former Vikes men's soccer captain Mackenzie Rigg was unexpectedly diagnosed with a Stage IV brain tumour this summer. The varsity teams and their supporters were able to come together to carve a different type of victory out of heartache—starting a fundraiser that brought in more than \$80,000 for the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada.



Coral recovery offers hope

In a year that can be characterized as an ocean of bad news, UVic biologists discovered how some corals managed to survive a globally unprecedented heatwave. The first-ever, international study led by UVic marine ecologist Julia Baum provides new hope for the long-term survival of coral reefs in the face of climate change. Full story starts on page 1.



Scales of Change—a climate action podcast

A new podcast produced by Future Ecologies, the media company of UVic environmental studies alum Adam Huggins, launched this year with support from UVic. Based on the highly cited research of UVic environmental psychologist Robert Gifford, *Scales of Change: a field guide to the dragons of climate inaction* is an eight-part miniseries exploring the psychological barriers to action on the climate crisis and how to overcome them.



UVic to build a National Centre for Indigenous Laws

In September, the Province of BC announced a \$13-million contribution to support the building of the National Centre for Indigenous Laws at UVic. This is in addition to the \$5 million from the Law Foundation of BC, and \$9.1 million from the federal government, committed in 2019. The building will be home to the Indigenous law degree program (JD/JID) and the Indigenous Law Research Unit.



Truth and reconciliation leader to advance decolonization work at UVic

Ry Moran, a member of the Red River Métis and founding director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, is UVic's inaugural associate university librarian—reconciliation, the first position of its kind at a Canadian university. For the past five years, the dynamic Indigenous leader guided the creation of a national archive for all materials gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He now leads the efforts of UVic Libraries to decolonize approaches to the university's archives and collections, and will help guide UVic along its path towards truth and reconciliation.



Three graphic novels frame lasting lessons of the Holocaust

An international initiative brought together four Holocaust survivors living in the Netherlands, Israel and Canada with graphic novelists from three continents to teach new generations about racism, antisemitism, human rights and social justice while illuminating one of the darkest times in human history. The project is led by UVic humanities scholar Charlotte Schallié.



Facial recognition software can help in grizzly conservation

Facial recognition technology used on grizzlies in two sites in Western Canada caught the attention of international media and outlets across the country. The BearID research project led by UVic geography postdoc Melanie Clapham uses a sophisticated “deep learning” method of artificial intelligence to identify particular bear faces and facial landmarks without physically or genetically tagging the species.



UVic cosmologist a “research giant”

Cosmologist Julio Navarro's revolutionary work on dark matter halos has influenced our modern understanding of how galaxies form and evolve, and the changing cosmic structure of the universe. For his remarkable contributions in this area, Navarro was recognized this year as a Citation Laureate or “Nobel class” researcher.



When it comes to fish noises, hearing is believing

For fish ecologists, there's a new spin in the old adage that seeing is believing. For biologists like Francis Juanes, hearing is believing, and the understudied sounds that fish make—farts, burps and coughs—are music to their ears when it comes to discovering biological sounds in freshwater habitats. The fish noises give scientists a better understanding of aquatic ecosystems and potential threats from human-caused noises.

Lecture series goes virtual, draws major headliners



Chomsky. PHOTO: ULI DECK

BY TARA SHARPE

It occurred to UVic linguistics professor Martha McGinnis early in the pandemic that COVID-related closures might finally afford an opportunity to bring fellow linguist and renowned public activist Noam Chomsky to campus—at least virtually speaking. Thanks to McGinnis, Chomsky who now lives in Arizona, will present a free virtual talk next month for a series of talks which have been connected to UVic for the past two decades—launched during the same period McGinnis attended MIT. She met with Chomsky every couple of weeks in the mid 1990s when he was on the dissertation committee for her PhD. “I always wanted to invite him here,” says McGinnis, “but it’s hard for him to travel to all the places people want him to travel to.” As soon as McGinnis realized

everyone was “connecting online through the pandemic,” she acted fast. As a result, Chomsky is presenting the third talk (Feb. 2 at 11 a.m.) in the long-running lecture series. The 2020/21 lectures are exploring some of society’s most pressing questions about systemic racism, economic inequity and the climate crisis. For more than two decades, the John Albert Hall lecture series (uvic.ca/csrs/events/jah), a joint initiative of UVic’s Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) and the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets of British Columbia, has featured prominent thinkers speaking on topics related to the changing role of religion in contemporary society. And last year it was reinvented, like so much else right now, by going virtual. The series, “Values for a New World,” runs through March 2021. It



Edugyan. PHOTO: TAMARA POPPITT

launched Dec. 3 with internationally acclaimed author and writing alumna Esi Edugyan in conversation with Tim Lilburn, poet, essayist and faculty member of UVic’s Department of Writing. Nearly 400 people tuned in to the inaugural talk. The prominent group of forthcoming speakers also includes public theologian Miroslav Volf from Yale University (Jan. 7); Canadian political scientist and well-known author Thomas Homer-Dixon (Feb. 23); and Linda Woodhead, professor of religion from Lancaster University (March 4). The series wraps up March 16 at 11 a.m. with a panel discussion of all five speakers, moderated by CSRS Director Paul Bramadat. Later in March, Chomsky will also present a live-streamed public Lansdowne Lecture on linguistics and cognitive science, sponsored by the Faculty of Humanities.

CORAL RECOVERY CONTINUED FROM P. 1



A coral reef site on Kiriritimati before and after the 2015–16 marine heatwave, May 2015, 2018. PHOTOS: DANIELLE CLAAR, KEVIN BRUCE

To date, coral recovery from bleaching has only ever been observed after heat stress subsides. With global climate models predicting that heatwaves will continue to increase in both frequency and duration, a coral’s ability to recover its food source during a prolonged heatwave is essential to its survival. “Observing corals recovering from bleaching while still baking in hot waters is a game changer,” says UVic marine biologist Julia Baum.

Baum adds that corals only exhibited this capacity if they were not also exposed to other types of human-caused stressors, such as water pollution. Until now it’s been unclear if local reef management could help improve corals chances of surviving climate change. “We’ve found a glimmer of hope that protection from local stressors can help corals,” says Baum. “Although this pathway to survival may not be open to all corals or in all conditions, it demonstrates an inno-

vative strategy for survival that could be leveraged by conservationists to support coral survival,” adds Claar. The research was supported by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the US National Science Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts’, the Rufford Foundation, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Shedd Aquarium.



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A dog walker is overshadowed by coastal waves. PHOTO: MARC CHRISTENSEN

Studying the physics of ocean waves to improve coastal safety

BY KIM DIAS

Living on an island, it’s easy to be familiar and comfortable with the ocean. But this can lead to a false sense of security. The ocean naturally fluctuates, making its behaviour hard to predict, and can appear deceptively calm right before a wave twice as large as any other appears. Even a wave that isn’t particularly large can be dangerous if it catches people by surprise. In September this year, two Ucluelet locals were hiking on the Wild Pacific Trail on the west coast of Vancouver Island. They stepped onto a lookout above the sea and were swept off the cliff by an unexpectedly large wave. Both hikers survived, but suffered injuries.

UVic researcher Johannes Gemmrich studies extreme wave events on this part of BC’s coast, in the Pacific Rim National Park. He aims to increase the safety of beach visitors by improving the ability to forecast extreme wave events and by raising visitors’ awareness of potential dangers, reducing the amount of search and rescue incidents. “People should be aware that there are unexpected runups on the beach and they occur regularly, several times a day, says Gemmrich. “You can’t know when it will happen, but you should be aware that it can happen. There’s an old saying, never turn your back to the sea, and it is true.” Gemmrich’s research, funded by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR-NIF), combines physics with public safety and climate concerns. He and his team use a combination of observational, theoretical and modelling approaches to better understand the conditions that lead to dangerous wave events. These events can include strong rip currents, unexpected runup on beaches and dangerously large waves. “There are basically two ways that large wave runup generates on the beach,” Gemmrich says. “One is that there is a large wave in the open ocean

and it washes up on the beach. The other is that there is one wave that catches up with another once it’s in shallow water, close to the beach. Then you have two waves coming in together at the same point.” Before Gemmrich’s research began, most extreme waves went undetected or unreported. Either no one was there to witness them or nothing bad happened, meaning there was nothing to report. All evidence of extreme wave events was anecdotal, with no indication of frequency. Now, however, Gemmrich has recorded observations of extreme wave events and has an idea of how frequently they occur. His team is also working on methods to predict extreme wave events.

Coastal community safety Gemmrich’s research will be particularly valuable to people living in coastal communities. Right now, extreme wave events appear to happen at random, but Gemmrich’s research will make them easier to predict. An end goal of his research is for site-specific forecasting tools to be put in place. Results and warnings will be made available to the public through the CoastSmart initiative, a pilot project led by Parks Canada, the District of Tofino and the District of Ucluelet to raise awareness of beachside hazards. Gemmrich has two master’s students from UVic working on this project, Carmen Holmes-Smith and Leah Cicon (School of Earth and Ocean Sciences). “The Tofino and Ucluelet area gets so many visitors every year who are unaware of the dangers of the ocean,” Cicon adds. “Extreme wave events and extreme runup are not well understood phenomenon so we’re essentially trying to uncover correlations to improve our understanding. So it’s a little bit of a treasure hunt to find those dependencies.” Gemmrich and his team are at the halfway point of their three-year project, and Parks Canada—a close collaborator in the project—is already using their real-time data daily.

LIQUOR AND LOCKDOWN



Stockwell. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

BY AMANDA FARRELL-LOW

It's official: British Columbians have been drinking more alcohol during the COVID-19 pandemic, with private liquor store sales accounting for the bulk of the increase in consumption—and the biggest spikes happening during lockdown.

New analysis of BC alcohol sales data from UVic's Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) shows that, although increases in overall alcohol consumption were modest, there was a significant rise in alcohol purchased in liquor stores.

Government vs. private sales

Private liquor stores saw per capita consumption rise 18.5 per cent in March-July 2020 (the last recent month for which data was available) compared to 2019. At government stores, consumption rose by about eight per cent. Last year, about half of all alcohol consumed in BC was purchased at a private liquor store, a number that has been rising steadily for the past two decades.

"We suspect part of this increase at private stores has to do with the fact they have been making alcohol more convenient to buy, by offering home delivery with a minimum order or listing its products on third-party delivery apps," says CISUR scientist Tim Stockwell, who led the analysis. "Government stores are not using these services."

Drinking by the numbers

Drinks quaffed in bars and restaurants historically account for only around 15 per cent of all alcohol consumed in the province. Predictably, on-premise establishments saw sales decline to virtually nothing (<1 standard drink per capita) in April and May, as they were forced to close for in-person dining. In June and July, they rebounded to about half their 2019 amounts, when they were allowed to reopen. Still, the rise in off-premise consumption was much greater than the drop seen in bars and restaurants.

Researchers also did a week-to-week analysis factoring in phases of BC's Restart Plan. During Phase 1—which lasted from March 17 to May 18 and included strict lockdown measures—monthly alcohol sales rose from 42 to 45 standard drinks per month (per person aged 15 or older, including non-drinkers), over the same period in 2019.

"The spike was particularly high immediately after March's lockdown, where we saw sales jump 40 per cent the week after measures were introduced," says Stockwell. "The Phase 1 period saw the largest increase in consumption, with slight declines during Phase 2 and the beginning of Phase 3, which we suspect was partly due to fewer tourists in the province."

Increased drinking at home

In addition to the fact that alcohol is a carcinogen and responsible for over 18,000 deaths per year across Canada, the World Health Organization says that alcohol can weaken your immune system, and heavy use can increase the risk of acute respiratory distress system.

"Drinking alcohol also makes you less able to concentrate on social distancing and hand hygiene," points out Tim Naimi, CISUR's new director, "and it's impossible to wear a mask while drinking. It's become clear that alcohol and COVID are a pretty lethal combination, with each fueling the other. More drinking, including binge drinking in the home, contributes to domestic violence and child neglect."

Proposed policy changes

The researchers say that policy changes, both short- and long-term, could help curb alcohol consumption during the pandemic and afterwards.

"We would like to see availability and the incentive to buy large quantities decreased," Stockwell notes, "by stores instating a conservative daily maximum purchasing limit for alcohol, and/or removing minimum delivery requirements. This is also an excellent time to look at longer-term, evidence-based policy changes such as a minimum price per standard drink, given alcohol's huge burden on our healthcare system. Even pre-COVID-19, alcohol causes over 700,000 emergency department visits and over 105,000 hospital stays every year in Canada."

Researchers are currently building on this work in BC in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada, with a view to analyzing similar data across the country.

The analysis uses sales data from the BC Liquor Distribution Branch (which includes all sales to private and government liquor stores, as well as bars and restaurants) and population data from BC Stats to estimate per-capita consumption expressed as standard drinks.

Memorial bench now installed in Finnerty Gardens



A NEW BENCH IS NOW IN PLACE IN THE HEART OF FINNERTY GARDENS. It stands in remembrance of two of our students, Emma Machado of Winnipeg and John Geerdes of Iowa City, who passed away in September 2019 after a tragic bus accident on the road to Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

A place of remembrance and reflection

The tranquil spot will serve as a special place of quiet reflection for those who walk the trails and seek the solace of Finnerty Gardens. The natural setting is especially important. The families of John and Emma had asked that the other students on the bus the night of Sept. 13, 2019 be the ones to guide the decision on how to remember their two classmates. The choice of a physical memorial outdoors reflects John and Emma's appreciation of nature and their interest in learning about the natural environment.

"We will never forget Emma and John," says Jim Dunsdon, associate vice-president of student affairs. "What happened on Sept. 13 was heart-rending. We are deeply appreciative of the advice we received last year from some of their classmates on the best way to proceed with physically marking our remembrance of John and Emma on campus."

At the start of last term, UVic solemnly marked one year since the accident and shared information at the time on the university's progress with implementing recommendations on decisions surrounding future field trips.

UVic expects to share another update in the coming weeks.

Visiting the gardens

All visitors are asked to observe the guidelines for safe enjoyment of Finnerty Gardens during the pandemic. uvic.ca/finnerty/covid19

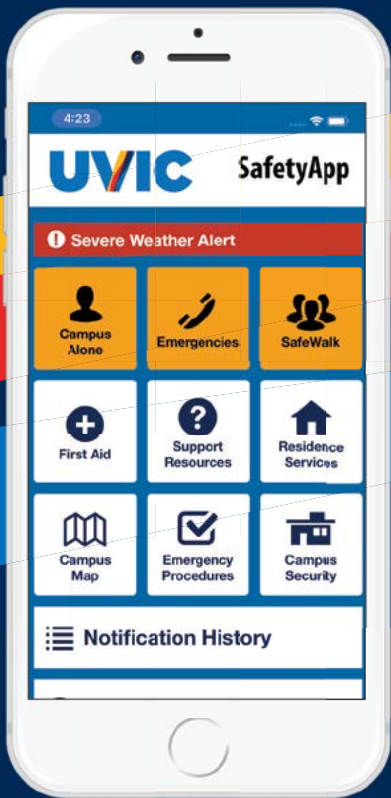


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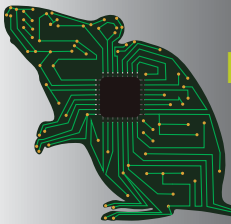


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Day in the Life: Michael Abe

BY TARA SHARPE

It sits in his home office at arm’s length from his desk.

The wooden side table was built by Michael Abe’s uncle. It is a small but treasured piece of Abe’s family history after being hidden for safekeeping nearly 80 years ago. And it perfectly captures the entire point of the project upon which he works.

Abe, project manager for Landscapes of Injustice, is a Nikkei Sansei (third generation Japanese Canadian) and past president of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society. He joined the UVic-led project shortly after it was launched in 2014. In a recent interview with CBC radio host Sheryl McKay, Abe described the work as “filling in the blanks of the silence.”

The Landscapes of Injustice project focuses on the history and importance of learning about the dispossession of 21,000 Japanese Canadians whose homes, businesses, fishing boats, cars and personal effects were sold without their consent after they were systemically uprooted during the 1940s. The lessons still resonate today with the echoes and ongoing legacies of systemic racism in Canada.

Having been involved with Japanese Canadian organizations and communities here and in Ontario for years, Abe was elated when he found out about the job opening at UVic: “It was a dream come true, one of those dream jobs.”

He manages the administrative aspects of the project—producing newsletters, coordinating meetings and events as well as the project’s annual institute and sessions and workshops throughout the year, and he’s also travelled to various locations across North America—from San Francisco and Calgary to Whitehorse

and Toronto.

Another key part of his work, at least in the first few years, was the electronic clean-up of case files from the project’s digital archive for Japanese Canadian community members. Abe says it was “a very gratifying process.” In fact, after uncovering family histories much like his own, he received many heartfelt messages from descendants of interned Japanese Canadians.

The files and what they reveal are “crucial to the families who lived these experiences and to their relatives. It’s the most valuable output for this project for our community and it is the part most dear to me,” adds Abe.

For his paternal grandmother, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 99, the historical hardships “didn’t matter. There is a saying in Japanese, *shikata ga nai*. It means, ‘It can’t be helped.’ For her generation, it was the stoic way to move on. And all that hardship was not for naught because it paved the way to a good life for her children, her grandchildren and great grandchildren. This is why I maintain my ‘Japanese-ness.’”

Abe holds a BSc in biology from McMaster University in Hamilton, where he was born.

He grew up playing hockey and other sports after the family moved to Burlington in suburban southern Ontario.

Abe says he “very much celebrates both my Canadian side and my Japanese heritage. I am just as Canadian as any of the guys in my golf four-some.” So he was “shocked” to learn about his parents’ internment after he interviewed his father for a grade eight project. His parents had never told him what had happened during the war.

His paternal grandparents moved

to Port Alberni and were interned in Lemon Creek in BC’s Interior. They were from southern Japan, as were his maternal grandparents who were also interned.

While at McMaster, Abe began studying the Yōshinkan style of Aikidō at the Hamilton Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and he continued his martial arts training while in Kōfu, in central Japan, where he met his wife.

In 1993, the couple and their young son moved to Victoria where Abe opened and ran an Aikidō dōjō for nearly 15 years.

Both their children are also part of our UVic community: their son is

a UVic alumnus and their daughter is currently finishing her undergraduate degree in history.

A third-degree black belt, Abe is “back on the mats” again, teaching Aikidō and also as a novice student of karate. He says there is “a lot to be learned in being a beginner.” He approaches it with *shoshin*, “a beginner’s mind.”

Aikidō is “very defensive. It takes the momentum and energy of the attacker. You go with it, you ‘neutralize’ it by redirecting out of harm’s way.”

And he reflects that perhaps the project can do the same for one of the darkest chapters in Canadian history.



Michael Abe outside his office at UVic. PHOTO: JON WOODS



Abe’s side table, built by his uncle and hidden during the era of dispossession and internment.



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