

# Welcome to the Fall 2021 academic year

SEPTEMBER IS A SPECIAL TIME AT A UNIVERSITY—a time filled with optimism, excitement and potential — and this is especially true this year!

After a challenging year and a half, we are coming back together with a renewed focus on community. I have enormous gratitude for all we have done to get ready for the return to campus and I am confident that we are ready


to face the challenge of COVID together. Please join me in welcoming each other and our students back to campus and in turning our focus to a safe and successful term.  
—PRESIDENT KEVIN HALL

THE RING

SEPTEMBER 2021

The University of Victoria's community newspaper

ring.uvic.ca



University of Victoria

SPEED READ

COVID-19 UPDATE

Return-to-campus health and safety measures

We are returning to campus with additional health and safety measures in place. The BC government has announced a mask mandate for all indoor public spaces, and has introduced the BC Vaccine Card. Along with other BC post-secondary institutions, UVic is also implementing a program of rapid testing and vaccine status self-declaration. As the details of these health and safety measures are worked out, visit [uvic.ca/return-to-campus](https://uvic.ca/return-to-campus) regularly to keep up-to-date with the most current guidance.

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

UVic continues its rise

Rankings released this month by Times Higher Education (THE) place UVic among the world's leading universities, as measured by teaching, research, citations and international outlook. The 2022 rankings place UVic at 301-350 globally—the second consecutive year it's risen in the THE rankings. Find out more about UVic's rankings and reputation at [uvic.ca/about-uvic/rankings-reputation](https://uvic.ca/about-uvic/rankings-reputation)



Ban. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

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## Royal Society of Canada elects six UVic researchers

CURRENT AND FORMER UVIC FACULTY MEMBERS ARE FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Six UVic researchers in the fields of science, social sciences, engineering and the humanities have been elected to the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), the council of distinguished scholars and leaders recognized with the country's highest academic honour.

Professor Hossein Nassaji (linguistics) is elected as a new fellow, while Nathalie Ban (environmental studies), John Burke (biochemistry), Heather Castleden (public administration), Alan McConnachie (physics and astronomy), and Stephanie Willerth (biomedical engineering) join as new members to the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. The society's peer-elected recipients are chosen for their academic excellence and their "remarkable contributions" to the arts, humanities and sciences, and Canadian public life.

**Natalie Ban, Environmental Studies**

Marine conservation scientist Natalie Ban is moving us toward a world where people and ecosystems not only coexist but flourish.

Her vision embraces diversity (of people, methods and perspectives) and balances the needs of human communities with the needs of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation. Her research focuses on coastal and marine systems on topics such as marine protected areas, coastal governance and climate change.

Much of Ban's research is done in partnership with First Nations and others. With guidance of partners, her approach uplifts Indigenous knowledge holders and weaves traditional knowledge into biodiversity conservation.

"Working with partners is so important

to me because it ensures that my research is relevant and can affect management decisions," explains Ban. "I'm honoured to have gained the trust of partners, and continually seek to do research to improve both biodiversity conservation and the well-being of coastal communities."

**John Burke, Biochemistry and Microbiology**

Being naturally curious opened doors in the international research community for John Burke. One of his main research interests is in how open science principles can be successfully implemented in novel drug discovery. His experience working with drug discovery teams in academia, industry and open science non-profits has led to

SEE ROYAL SOCIETY P.4

RETURN TO CAMPUS

# Welcome students back this fall



This year, as the university welcomes about 22,000 students after more than a year of mostly virtual programming, the scale of our usual September return to campus has increased dramatically. And the excitement is palpable!

"Students are both excited and nervous for the start of term," says Joel Lynn, executive director, Student Services. "We're proud of our in-person learning and co-curricular opportunities, which are key components of the UVic experience. Anticipation is high and it is great to see students starting to come back together on campus."

**A complex time for students**

Alongside this growing anticipation and enthusiasm are some of the more challeng-

ing realities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, has indicated many times, youth aged 18-24 are some of the most affected in terms of financial and social impacts of the pandemic—and overall issues of mental health and affordability remain key challenges for our students. Some members of our community are feeling anxious about the return, and some international students are navigating travel restrictions and delays in their study permit processing. Plus, there is a double cohort of new-to-campus first- and second- year students who will need more support in making connections and finding their way.

SEE WELCOMING STUDENTS P.3



around  
the ring

A world of opportunity

International Student Services is changing its name to better reflect its scope of services for the entire UVic community. Under its new name, the International Centre for Students (ICS) offers a place for Canadian and international students, staff and faculty to connect, build community, and learn how our diversity and similarities make us stronger. “We worried that our old name incorrectly implied that our services and resources were exclusively intended for international students,” says Tricia Best, Director of ICS. “We’ve renamed so that more students – both Canadian and international – can get involved in creating an inclusive and welcoming community at UVic and in the wide range of international opportunities available.” Along with the new name, ICS is relocating to the second floor of the Jamie Cassels Centre, B202d. More info: [bit.ly/21-ICS](http://bit.ly/21-ICS)

Health and safety top of mind for campus return

As the beginning of term kicks off with students, faculty and staff learning and working in person, people across campus have been working diligently to implement the most recent guidance of the Provincial Health Officer and provincial government on the layers of protection for our campus including mandatory masks, vaccination clinics and the BC Vaccine Card on campus.

Masks

Following the provincial re-introduction of a mask mandate in late August, masks are required in all indoor public spaces, including classrooms, labs, meeting rooms and shared office spaces, restaurants and pubs, fitness centres and indoor events. Students, faculty and staff can pick up a free UVic mask at the ONECard Office beginning next week (Sept. 15 for faculty and staff).

Vaccinations

BC has one of the highest vaccination rates in Canada. In a recent UVic survey to help with planning for vaccination clinics and rapid testing, 95.4 per cent of faculty, staff and students who

responded said they were either fully vaccinated or partially vaccinated. According to Island Health, unvaccinated people are ten times more likely to become ill with COVID-19.

Vaccination clinics are available on campus if you have not already received both doses.

More info: [bit.ly/21-clinic](http://bit.ly/21-clinic)

Self-declaration

UVic has partnered with Thrive Health to provide easy access to self-declaration forms and follow-up testing. The self-declaration system, launching this week, will allow students, staff and faculty to securely complete their vaccine status self-declaration and, if necessary, book on-campus rapid testing appointments (for asymptomatic people only). Students, staff and faculty with a NetLink ID can sign up for the Thrive Health platform with your UVic email address at [thrive.uvic.ca](http://thrive.uvic.ca).

BC Vaccine Card info is available at [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard](http://gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard).

Rapid testing

UVic, along with other BC post-secondary institutions, is introducing a rapid testing program for asymptomatic UVic community members who



have not yet been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or who choose not to disclose their vaccine status. You’re considered asymptomatic if you are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Please conduct a daily health check before coming to campus. Testing will be available by appointment at the on-campus clinic beginning Sept. 13. See [bit.ly/21-rapid](http://bit.ly/21-rapid)

Physical distancing is not required for educational activities (e.g. in classrooms, labs).

What to do if you are ill

If you are ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please stay home and self-isolate in accordance with guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). If you are asked to do a COVID-19 test, testing will take place at an Island Health community clinic.

Please continue to check the Return to Campus website at [uvic.ca/return-to-campus](http://uvic.ca/return-to-campus) for updates on campus health and safety measures. View the wealth of wellness resources at [bit.ly/21-well](http://bit.ly/21-well).

Engineering and Computer Science expansion supports students and climate solutions

With growing demand for engineering and computer science programs, UVic and BC government are building new state-of-the-art learning facilities and expanding programs. This enables more students to work toward high-impact solutions in fields such as environmental sustainability and health-care technologies.

“Engineers and computer scientists play a critical role as innovators on global challenges such as clean and affordable energy, health care and well-being, and sustainable infrastructure,” says UVic President Kevin Hall. “We aim to graduate enterprising people with a social conscience and global perspective, and these new spaces will provide the facilities to nurture highly skilled professionals who will be technological leaders and enrich the local and regional workforce and economy for decades to come.”

With BC’s support, UVic is expanding its Engineering and Computer Science building by adding a six-storey addition to provide new laboratory and teaching spaces. This will support 500 additional seats that are currently being added for students in computer science and six engineering programs (biomedical, civil, computer, electrical, mechanical and software), leading to 125 more graduates per year by 2023. Adjacent to that building, a new High Bay Research and Structures Lab will include a 12-metre-high (39-foot) area



for structural testing and large-scale experiments related to geotechnical, and materials and building-science research essential to the unique work of civil engineers.

Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training Anne Kang says, “I am so excited about this project. More seats for students to enrol in programs that lead to rewarding, in-demand science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers, one more top-notch facility for the post-secondary sector and a showcase for the kind of construction projects that incorporate the latest in modern sustainable building design and construction, all while providing family-supporting, good-paying jobs in skilled trades.”

Both structures are designed to achieve a net-zero carbon target and will combine Passive House design features and mass timber structure.

Other sustainability features include heat pumps and green and solar roofs, enabling students and researchers to experience high performance green buildings first-hand. The buildings will be at the forefront of green building design and will serve as a living lab for experiential learning, research and industry partnerships, and tackle climate change, clean energy and health-care solutions.

On a global scale, buildings generate almost 40 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. With this expansion, UVic is responding to the urgent need to aggressively reduce energy demands in the built environment and providing critical space and resources to support the development of high-impact climate solutions.

“Our government and UVic are responding to a clear demand for engineering and computer science

programs,” says Oak Bay-Gordon Head MLA Murray Rankin. “This expansion will make it easier for people to access the training they need to be successful in their fields and for our community and province to benefit.”

Construction is expected to begin in early 2022, with building occupancy set for 2024.

Intake for the 500 new seats at UVic began in 2018-19 and will be completed by the 2022-23 academic year. This is part of BC’s commitment to add 2,900 additional tech seats provincially by 2022-23.

The project supports BC’s economic recovery plan by creating more than 600 jobs, advancing CleanBC’s clean economy goals, while ensuring British Columbians have access to training for high opportunity jobs in the fastest growing tech fields across all sectors of the economy.



The University of Victoria's  
community newspaper  
[ring.uvic.ca](http://ring.uvic.ca)

Printed using vegetable-based inks on  
100% post-consumer recycled paper.

Next issue October 7, 2021

The Ring is published eight times a year by  
University Communications + Marketing.

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Printed in Canada by Black Press

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Canadian Publications Mail Agreement  
No. 40014024

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# Three days of programming for truth and reconciliation



BY BARBARA TODD HAGER

The recent discovery of hundreds of unreported graves at former residential schools has made this year’s Orange Shirt Day activities at UVic even more meaningful and significant. Canadians of all cultures and backgrounds have been shaken by the growing evidence of abuse, neglect and deaths of Indigenous children at the 139 government and church-run schools across the country that operated between 1880 and 1996.

The federal government has designated September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The new statutory holiday coincides with the grassroots movement that started in 2013 after Phyllis Webstad, from the Stswecem’c Xgat’tem First Nation, shared her story of having her orange shirt taken away on her first day at residential school. With UVic observing the stat holiday, this year’s Orange Shirt Day programming will take place from September 27-29.

UVic students, faculty and staff will have an opportunity to honour residential school survivors, learn about the history of residential schools through film and panel discussions, and hear how UVic is incorporating Indigenous education into its curriculum and campus life.

This year, UVic visual artist Carey Newman (Kwakwaka’wakw/Coast Salish), the designer of UVic’s Orange Shirt Day t-shirt, created a new design to honour the missing children after the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc announced finding 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

“Although it took me a few days to process the grief and weight of that moment, something that became very clear was that the graves of these Indigenous children were forcing Canadians to reckon with the humble exceptionalism that has anchored this country’s collective identity for too long,” he said. That is when I began to work on creating a new

design using hearts and hands along with the number 215+. Together they represent both heartache and hope, and in further acknowledging the truth of Canada’s foundations, another step along the journey towards reconciliation.”

The year’s program focuses on the themes of reconciliation—past, present and future—and will begin with the lighting of a sacred fire, territorial acknowledgement and a Lekwungen drum group at 9 a.m. in the quad on Wednesday, Sept. 29. At noon, Chancellor Shelagh Rogers and UVic faculty member Andrea Walsh will share their memories of being honorary witnesses for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. At 4:30 p.m., President Kevin Hall will talk about the future of Indigenous education followed by a cultural presentation to close the day’s events. Ry Moran, UVic’s Associate University Librarian–Reconciliation, will be the MC of the day’s live activities, which will also be streamed at [youtube.com/uvic](https://youtube.com/uvic).

The first of two screenings of residential school-focused films take place on Monday, Sept. 27, from 1–3 p.m. at Cinecenta: Christine Welsh’s film *Kuper Island: Return to the Healing Circle* will be followed by a panel discussion with Welsh, Robina Thomas, Steve Sxwithul’tuxw and Ry Moran.

On Tuesday, Sept. 28 from 7–9 p.m., two documentaries will screen at First Peoples House: Barb Cranmer’s *I’tustogalis: Rising Up Together—Our Voices, Our Stories*, and Barbara Hager’s *Truth Dance and Reconciliation*. Both screenings are open to the public. Admission is by donation, with proceeds going to the Elders Engagement Fund.

Orange Shirt Day T-shirts with Newman’s heart and hands design are available at the UVic Bookstore for \$25. Profits from the sales will go to the Elders Engagement Fund, Witness Blanket project and Orange Shirt Day Society.

[uvic.ca/event/orange-shirt-day](https://uvic.ca/event/orange-shirt-day)

## WELCOMING STUDENTS CONTINUED FROM P.1

“It’s a complex time for sure,” says Lynn. “Providing a welcoming campus environment will be more important than ever this September”

**Orientation & welcome events**

The Office of Student Life ramped up their offerings to help with the unprecedented return to campus this fall. They offered a mix of virtual and in-person programming to accommodate students who can’t be on campus for the start of term. In addition to their regular first-year programming, the team developed events, workshops and resources specifically for second-year students who may not be familiar with campus.

Events and programming this September include small-group campus tours and social activities for first- and second-year students. Faculties

hosted welcome events specific to each audience, and international and Indigenous virtual and in-person orientation programming was on offer too. For the broader audience, a campus-wide welcome from Indigenous communities, ThunderFest and UVSS’ Campus Kick-Off at the Student Union Building also take place this month.

**Supports throughout the year**

“We know that students thrive and succeed at UVic when they’re fully engaged in social, academic and co-curricular activities,” says Lynn. “We need to create opportunities for connection and support that extend beyond that first week of events too.”

That’s where the New Student Connect Program comes in. Launched in 2020 and redesigned for 2021, the program matches first-year students with

upper-year mentors who can answer questions, share resources and guide new students through their first year on campus. Students in the Connect program are also given access to a virtual community-building and campus resource-sharing channel hosted on Microsoft Teams. This fall, students entering their second year at UVic are offered a unique, transitional Connect channel curated specifically for their cohort as they navigate campus life in person. In addition to this virtual resource, the Connect team will be planning in-person social events for year two students in the first term.

There are a range of other opportunities to connect with peers throughout the year too, including the Global Community, student clubs and organizations, Vikes Recreation Sports Clubs, and so much more.

**How can faculty and staff help?**

In the classroom, remember that peer-to-peer connection is a core element of student success.

Instructors may choose to start their first class with an icebreaker activity or round of introductions. They can also provide students with services and resources available to them, such as the Student Wellness Centre.

“When you’re out on the campus, reach out to students looking lost or anxious, says Lynn.

“If you see a student with a campus map or looking lost, I encourage you to walk over and introduce yourself.”

“Gestures like this may seem simple, but they’re so important. It’s little interactions like this that can help to build community and make students feel like they belong.”

## around the ring

### Call it the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

UVic’s Faculty of Engineering has a new name—one that better reflects all the people who work, learn and research in it. Going forward, the fast-growing academic unit will be the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. The original name was established in 1983 when the faculty was comprised of a single engineering department. Since then, other engineering departments have been created, with computer science joining in 1988. Computer science now accounts for about 30 per cent of students graduating each year and plays an important role in the faculty’s overall success. More info: [bit.ly/21-ECS](https://bit.ly/21-ECS)

### Revised academic schedule and exam period

Senate has approved revisions for the Fall term 2021 to observe the Sept. 30, 2021 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The following adjustments are now reflected in the university’s published Academic Important Dates at [uvic.ca/calendar/dates](https://uvic.ca/calendar/dates): The Fall 2021 term course schedule has been extended by one day from Friday Dec. 3, 2021 to Monday Dec. 6, 2021. Monday, Dec. 6th will incorporate the Thursday course schedule and all classroom bookings will reflect this revision. The December final exam period will begin on Dec. 9, 2021 and run until Dec. 20, 2021.

### Board of Governors welcomes new members

Every year, the UVic Board of Governors—one of two primary governing bodies of the university—elects a new Chair and Vice-Chair, and new student representatives are elected from the undergraduate and graduate student bodies. This year, the Board also welcomes a new Order-in-Council appointee. In accordance with the University Act, the Board of Governors is responsible for the management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university. To learn more about the members and about what the Board does, visit the University Secretary website at [uvic.ca/usec](https://uvic.ca/usec).

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## Williams to share knowledge in new role

**Wanosts'a7 Lorna Williams named as a 2021 Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fellow**

BY AMANDA PROCTOR

An emerita professor whose work at UVic and with Indigenous communities helped shape powerful Indigenous educational collaborations and inclusive learning environments—on campus and off—has been named a 2021 Pierre Elliot Trudeau Fellow. The fellowship celebrates the role that Wanosts'a7 Lorna Williams, Lil'watul from Mount Currie, has played in Indigenous language revitalization and education in Canada—and the ways she continues to nourish its future by mentoring emerging scholars.

During her long career at UVic, Williams became the inaugural director of the Department of Indigenous Education, and led the development of the degree programs in Indigenous Language Revitalization and Counseling in Indigenous Communities. She also served as the Canada Research Chair in Education and Linguistics. Her work has been honoured with an Indspire Award in 2018 and the Order of Canada in 2020.

As a Trudeau Fellow, Williams will spend three years as a mentor to a group of doctoral scholars on the theme of language, culture and identity.

### Highlighting the importance of language, culture and identity

Williams says the focus on language, culture and identity is more pressing than ever. “The knowledge that’s housed in Indigenous languages is



Williams. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

really valuable because of what we as humans have done to the land. In order to be able to revitalize the land we’re going to need knowledge of how to do that. And I think that in Indigenous knowledge systems, within Indigenous languages, we will be able to find how to reverse what we’ve done.”

The connection between language, culture and identity is also important in the work of decolonization, Williams says. “What we’ve been highlighting recently is what happens to people when they become disconnected from their languages. And that’s what happened to us over several generations, because of residential school. That colonial history saw the power and the strength of language, so they sought to silence it. And we’re all trying to reverse that history,” she says. “That is the power of language.”

Another key aspect of the fellowship is taking on the role of a mentor. The Trudeau Foundation’s mission is to offer a gateway for doctoral scholars to become engaged leaders within their institutions and communities, supported by the fellows.

Full story: [bit.ly/21-lorna](https://bit.ly/21-lorna)

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### ROYAL SOCIETY CONTINUED FROM P.1

different types of collaborative work, as groups openly participate with multiple industrial and academic partners. To that end, Burke established extensive international collaborative networks to advance research towards novel therapeutics.

Burke’s research into lipid-signalling proteins and their role in human health are leading to novel therapeutics for cancer, malaria and viral infections.

Burke is excited about how his new role with the Royal Society of Canada can help people understand just how research affects their everyday lives.

“I strongly believe,” says Burke, “that fundamental basic science research provides clear benefits to society. I want to communicate the benefits of curiosity driven, basic science research because clear, accessible scientific communication is difficult but so worthwhile because it connects the lives of Canadians with research.”

### Heather Castleden, School of Public Administration)

Heather Castleden is a community-engaged human geographer who joined UVic in July as the inaugural UVic Impact Chair in Transformational Governance in Planetary Health. See article at top of page 5 on new Impact Chairs for more about her work.

### Alan McConnachie, NRC-Herzberg, Physics & Astronomy

Where to begin? Alan McConnachie is always answering this simple question, and it’s led him to not just observe new aspects of our universe but to develop technologies to expand our understanding of it.

As McConnachie became more aware of the limits of existing technology, his work took a turn. He pivoted

from the role of observer of the universe to a more active role and started designing and producing better tools and technology with which to observe. His work has enabled researchers to discover even more about galaxies.

He believes in the power of collaboration, of bringing together individuals who can complement each other’s skills to answer questions that might otherwise be out of their grasp as individuals.

His research has brought local dwarf galaxies into focus, recognizing how the very data he was sharing would be replaced with even better data as soon as the work was published. Distant galaxies, he says, are stepping-stones to even more discoveries.

“Victoria is a fantastic place to do astronomy research,” says McConnachie. “Unique opportunities exist because of the special relationship between the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, the University of Victoria and the Astronomy Research Centre. Developing new tools to increase our powers to observe has been an exciting direction for me. I take great satisfaction in helping others do great science!”

### Hossein Nassaji, Linguistics

Through decades of diverse and innovative research on second-language learning processes and techniques, Nassaji has made a lasting impact on our understanding of the ways a second language can be learned and taught.

His pioneering studies on the impacts of student-teacher interactions in the classroom and on the unique contributions of lower-level linguistic and cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of language have shaped teacher education programs and pedagogical approaches to language instruction across the globe.





Bates. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



Castleden. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

UVIC IMPACT CHAIRS

# Uniting knowledge to tackle climate change

## Impact Chairs foster and facilitate collaborative research and education across disciplines and academic units.

A recent United Nations report on climate change hit like a hurricane—not unexpected, but devastating nonetheless. The message was blunt: the climate crisis is here and caused by human actions, and it cannot be fought without human interventions. The doom and gloom, then, demand action and innovation. And impactful solutions.

The University of Victoria’s climate and sustainability planning guides the university’s activities. The goal is to contribute to creative solutions

including the appointment this summer of two inaugural UVic Impact Chairs—Amanda Bates (biology) and Heather Castleden (public administration)—to five-year research positions. Funded by UVic’s Strategic Framework initiative, they will create interdisciplinary research programs, which are vital to co-developing impactful solutions.

Bates, a marine biologist and Impact Chair in Ocean Ecosystem Change and Conservation, will research how climate changes affect marine organisms and ecosystems while Castleden, a human geographer and Impact Chair in Transformational Governance for Planetary Health, will look at environmental challenges through a decolonizing lens, amplifying Indigenous sovereignty and rights as well as the responsibilities to the land, water and air of both Indigenous

and non-Indigenous peoples.

“As we learn more about how climate-forced changes affect marine organisms and ecosystems, we need to focus on what adaptation and management approaches can best support ecosystem resilience,” says Bates of her research.

The global pandemic lockdown showed that society can change rapidly and responsively—“a positive message that transformative change is possible,” she adds, noting that presenting a message of empowerment is key to her work at UVic.

“My goal is to create an environment of inspirational training so that these incredibly amazing early-career researchers or students who are at UVic are going to be the next leaders,” says Bates. “To tackle the challenges that we all face, you cannot do it alone.”

**Focus on planetary health**

Castleden says she plans to focus her UVic research on planetary health, climate change and responses to it by individuals, groups and governments.

“Hand in hand with that, I will be applying an equity and diversity lens to analyze how people are affected by climate change differently based on things like socioeconomic status, race, age, ability and gender, working with folks to propose new governance structures that take these things into account,” she says, noting she’ll take a similar approach in researching a just and equitable energy transition.

“The harm we do to our planet is the harm we do to ourselves. It’s all connected. Indigenous Peoples have known this, through their own science, through their own observations, for millennia.”

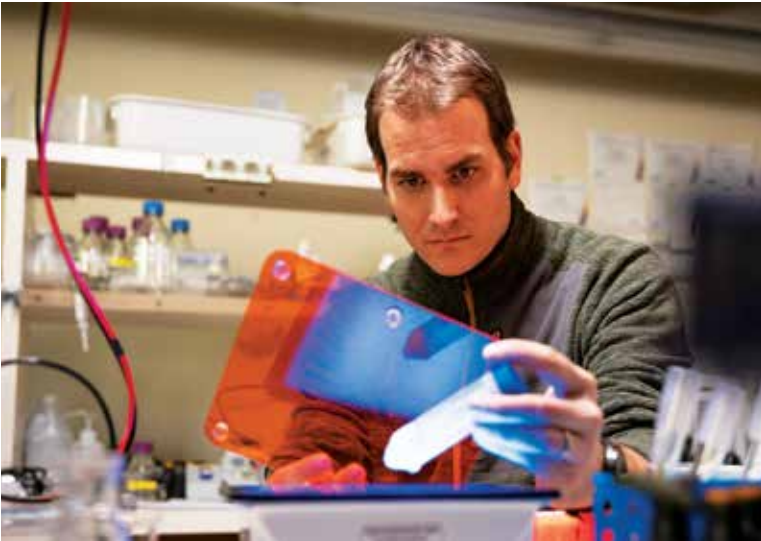
Castleden is enthusiastic about working across disciplines and knowledge systems at UVic, as the level, breadth and depth of Indigenous scholarship is tremendous. “That really excited me, too, that I could be in that kind of a learning environment and learn from these scholars.”

“I am very excited that Amanda Bates and Heather Castleden have joined our vibrant research community. As leaders in their fields they will facilitate collaborative research, dialogue and knowledge sharing that will help drive critical social, economic and environmental change in our world. Their remarkable research aligns perfectly with our university’s values and our deep commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,” says Kevin Hall, UVic’s president and vice-chancellor.

Nassaji’s research contributions include 14 books and volumes, 80 articles in leading academic journals, 38 book chapters and reviews, 80 refereed conference papers and 65 keynote and plenary addresses delivered at conferences in Canada, the US, England, Taiwan, China and Japan.

He is the co-editor of *Language Teaching Research*, a leading journal in language pedagogy, and the editor of the Grammar Teaching Volume of the TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching.

“My current research focuses on interactional feedback and how it assists language acquisition,” explains Nassaji. “My interest in this area has grown out of my earlier work in second language interaction, form-focused instruction and classroom discourse, and from my desire to better understand how languages are learned in instructional contexts. I am honoured my contributions have been recognized by the Royal Society of Canada.”



Burke. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



McConnachie. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

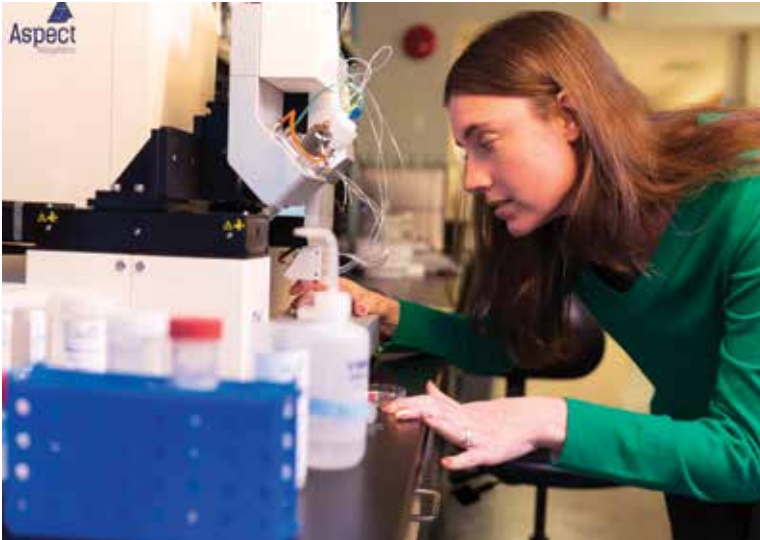
**Stephanie Willerth, Biomedical Engineering**

Stephanie Willerth is a highly accomplished and passionate leader in the rapidly growing and high-impact fields of tissue engineering and regenerative medicine.

Her acclaimed interdisciplinary Willerth Lab at UVic investigates innovative neural tissue engineering treatments for diseases and disorders of the brain and spinal cord, such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Multiple Sclerosis and spinal cord injury. Recently, her team used 3D bioprinting—a method of printing living tissue—using stem cells from patients suffering from these conditions to generate personalized tissue models in the lab. These



Nassaji. PHOTO SUBMITTED



Willerth. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

models can serve as tools to screen potential drugs for their efficacy.

Willerth, whose lab has trained more than 90 highly qualified people at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate levels, has published

numerous papers in the field of 3D bioprinting tissues, won many high-profile awards, and co-founded a spin-off a company called Axolotl Biosciences, which produces bioinks used in tissue engineering.

“I’m so excited by the potential of stem cells to regenerate or replicate damaged human tissue—especially the very complex neural tissues found in the human brain and spinal cord,” Willerth says. “In time, being able to

engineer neural tissue models in the lab will serve as valuable tools for drug screening that can predict the toxicity and efficacy of specific drugs for neurological diseases and disorders, such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s.”



# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

## Other news from around the Ring



### Mellon Professorship for humanities scholar

Brendan Burke (Greek and Roman studies) has been named to a three-year term as the new Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Classical Studies at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. “In many ways, this is the highest job to which a person in my field could aspire,” Burke says of the appointment, through which he will help train the next generation in classical studies. [bit.ly/21-burke](https://bit.ly/21-burke)



### BC support advances UVic research and innovation

From building better water resource management systems, to meeting the growing demand for solar energy technologies, to increasing our understanding of the aging process, UVic researchers’ vital impacts in their fields will be extended through funding announced in August by the Government of British Columbia through the BC Knowledge Development Fund. [bit.ly/21-BCKDF](https://bit.ly/21-BCKDF)



### Four new Banting Fellows

Four UVic researchers are recipients of new Banting fellowships, which help recruit top-tier international postdoctoral researchers. The new fellows will study fossil records to understand the human impact on ecosystems, evaluate safer-supply drug programs, investigate the centre of stars, and develop cross-cultural frameworks for understanding musical tuning. [bit.ly/21-banting](https://bit.ly/21-banting)

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Bikes can be parked in one of the many covered and uncovered short-term bike parking spaces around campus..

# Movement matters for the planet

## Working together to reduce UVic’s greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable transportation

BY SHELLY SELIVANOV

Whether it’s cycling, walking, carpooling or using transit, low-carbon and zero-emission transportation options can benefit our health and the health of our planet. UVic’s Sustainability Action Plan sets out a goal of increasing sustainable transportation methods to 70 per cent of the total trips to campus. To track the university’s progress towards this goal, comprehensive traffic surveys are conducted every other year. The last survey found that sustainable transportation methods made up 63 per cent of all trips to campus.

To increase the use of sustainable transportation to campus, two new separated cyclist and pedestrian pathways have been developed at the University Drive and Ring Road intersection, allowing for a smoother and safer transition to the heart of campus. There is also ongoing construction on new separated pedestrian and cyclist pathways between Midgard Avenue at Gordon Head Road and Ring Road. This new pathway is the western segment of the Campus Greenway.

### Cycling

The new cycling pathways at University Drive, Ring Road South and on the Greenway are part of the implementation of the 2019 Campus Cycling Plan. The Campus Cycling Plan promotes active transportation and provides a vision for creating an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling network on campus. Developed with extensive engagement and support from students, faculty, staff and visitors, the plan is a guide for future campus cycling infrastructure, including bicycle parking, cycling paths, showers and change rooms. It also provides policy direction on strategies to improve

levels of comfort and safety on shared paths and roads.

When biking on campus, you may see “SLOW” pavement markings as you transition from the separated cyclist pathways into the heart of campus. In shared space areas on campus, cyclists are asked to please slow to walking speed and yield to pedestrians.

Once you bring your bike to campus, make sure to keep it safe by locking it up by using a U-lock. If you forget your lock, you can visit the Loans Desk at either the McPherson Library or Fraser Law Library and they will loan you a free lock for three days. New locks are also available for sale at SubText in the SUB building and at the UVic Bookstore. You can also keep your bike safe by registering it with Project529 using the free Garage 529 app. Once registered, drop by Campus Security Services during regular office hours to receive a Project 529 decal for your bike.

Bikes can be parked in one of the many covered and uncovered short-term bike parking spaces around academic and administrative buildings or in the Campus Bike Centre located beneath the Jamie Cassels Centre. There are also nearly 150 bike lockers at UVic, in the Campus Bike Centre and across campus that provide space to store your bike and gear. To rent a bike locker, visit Campus Security or Residence Services (for students in student housing).

The Campus Bike Centre is also home to the SPOKES Bike Loan Program, which gives new life and use to old bikes. Since 2003, the program has been diverting waste from the landfill, improving community health and taking action on climate change. SPOKES will reopen this fall so stay tuned for information on the SPOKES website for details on bike loans, hours of operation, and how to get involved as a volunteer.

### Transit

Aside from cycling and walking, more than 26 per cent of campus commuters take transit to UVic. For students travelling to campus, the U-Pass provides four months of unlimited

access to BC Transit on Greater Victoria buses. All students enrolled in at least one on-campus course credit are automatically charged the U-Pass fee, and can activate the U-Pass using their UVic ONECard. For employees, the E-Pass program offers monthly Victoria Regional Transit passes at more than 50 per cent off the regular price. E-Passes are available for purchase at Campus Security during business hours. To give you flexibility on your commute, almost all BC Transit buses are also equipped with bike racks. Most bikes can be accommodated; however, e-bikes are only allowed on the rack if they weigh less than 25kg (55lbs).

### Car sharing

Sometimes it’s not possible to walk, cycle or take public transit to campus but there are great options to make driving to UVic more sustainable. EVO car share has now arrived at UVic and provides a 100 per cent hybrid fleet equipped with ski and bike racks, with room for your friends. Just pick up a car at UVic, go anywhere and for as long as you want. When you’re finished park the car anywhere within EVO’s home zone. Students are eligible for a free membership and 45 free driving minutes using the code “SCHOOLVIC” during registration. There are also 10 electric vehicle charging stations on campus for the campus community and guests to top up their electric car batteries 24/7 in metered parking spaces.

If you are planning to drive and park on campus, rather than buying an annual parking permit and driving to campus each day, try the Flex 25 bundle and commit to using alternative transportation options for some of your commutes. You can also purchase a Value parking permit, valid at Ian Stewart Complex, Velox and Lam Circle at a 35 per cent discount from a General permit. Just remember that when driving to campus, you can reduce your greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact by carpooling with friends rather than driving alone.

[uvic.ca/sustainability](https://uvic.ca/sustainability)

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# Making textbooks free

COVID-era teaching adaptations also accelerated the creation of affordable open education resources for teaching

BY LISA ABRAM

The cost of textbooks is a common complaint among students across North America, and UVic Libraries and faculty members are listening—and working to make things better.

With partnership and support from the University of Victoria Students’ Society (UVSS), the Division of Learning, Teaching, Support and Innovation (LTSI), University Systems and BCcampus, Libraries is spearheading the open education resources (OER) movement at the university by offering publishing assistance and OER start-up grants to faculty members on campus, and alleviating the financial pressure for students so they can focus on their studies.

Over the last 18 months, five UVic faculty were awarded OER grants to take teaching, learning and research resources in any medium—digital, print or otherwise—and transition them as open education resources, replacing commercial textbooks. Inba Kehoe, head of copyright and scholarly communication, emphasizes that it can take faculty up to four to eight months to create a draft of an OER textbook from scratch, incorporating feedback from their students in the design and content, and hiring graduate students to pull the material together.

## Student advocacy drives collaboration

In 2018, when UVic student Maxwell Nicholson was awarded a 3M National Student Fellowship, the academic world took notice. Nicholson launched a national campaign to bring awareness and action, advocating for open textbooks—books that are authored by professors for the intent of being used and taught without cost to students. His social media campaign using the hashtag #textbookbroke was supported by the UVSS, encouraging faculty to adopt open education resources.

“With the ever increasing prices of textbooks for post-secondary classes, students are having to decide between paying for textbooks, or groceries,” says UVSS Director of Outreach and University Relations Marran Dodd. “This is unacceptable. That’s why the UVSS has been in support of the adoption and funding of OERs for years. Not only do OERs increase affordability for students, they also increase accessibility in myriad ways.”

With the additional strain of living through a pandemic, Kehoe and her library colleagues’ raison d’être is to support students along with faculty in their collective quest to equalize access to education materials. In 2019, UVic first awarded the OER grants to faculty from mathematics and statistics, geography, educational psychology and leadership studies and anthropology.

## Faculty at the forefront

Recently, Kehoe has been working with English professors Sara Humphreys and Erin Kelly to develop and publish a new open textbook, *Why Write?: A Guide for Students in Canada*, that



Kehoe. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

will help first-year students become better academic writers. This open educational textbook is the result of collaborative work from members of the Academic and Technical Writing Program (ATWP), the Centre for Academic Communication and UVic Libraries. Support is strong for their effort. The Vice-President Academic and Provost made it possible to hire graduate assistants, and the Faculty of Humanities provided partial funding for a course release for Humphreys.

“Universities are communities that should welcome individuals who bring to their classes and research projects a wide range of interests, experiences, and knowledge,” says Kelly. “One barrier to access to university for some people is cost, including the high cost of textbooks, so we need to do all we can to create free educational

materials that help students meet their academic goals. But it’s also crucial that we send the message that all sorts of people belong in and have something important to contribute to scholarly conversations. *Why Write?* is a textbook that tells students they are writers and that the world needs their writing.” Kehoe adds that their textbook is proving to be so popular, even before it’s printed, that the Faculty of Social Sciences asked them for an open textbook too.

There are currently 1,160 students registered in ATWP 135 this fall, and in spring 2022 about 950 students—for a collective cost savings of at least \$52,750. Three other physics courses will be adopting parts of an open textbook for fall 2021 and spring 2022. The students registered in these courses will see a collective cost savings of

\$68,777 this upcoming academic year.

With support from BCcampus, UVic was able to not only award grants to instructors, but will also fund a new complementary Open Education Faculty Fellows program that aims to allow faculty participants to reduce student barriers to accessibility by increasing awareness around OER.

“We want to help make the decision to create affordable textbooks an easy one for faculty,” explains Kehoe. “One key criteria for faculty in applying for a grant is to determine how OERs may positively affect students and the number of students impacted. In addition, faculty with interest in online learning and teaching, adopting alternative assessment and exam strategies, and experiential learning online will be targeted for this program.”



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# UVic athletes excel on Olympic and Paralympic stages

BY KELLEY O’GRADY

A year ago, the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics seemed far from becoming a reality amidst a global pandemic. Despite an extended training block littered with obstacles leading up to Tokyo 2021, UVic Vikes-connected athletes and alumni kept going, and significantly contributed to Team Canada’s success on the world stage.

One highlight of the spectator-free event was rugby alumnus Nathan Hirayama, captain of the Canadian sevens team, co-carrying the country’s flag into the opening ceremony. Hirayama follows Vikes alumnus and triathlete Simon Whitfield (London 2012) with that honour, becoming the second Vikes athlete to do so.

### Winning medals

UVic’s storied history of winning Olympic medals continued with women’s rowing alumni Avalon Wasteneys and Caleigh Filmer returning home with gold and bronze.

Wasteneys won a gold medal in the women’s eight, a historic performance taking home the first gold medal in the Olympic women’s eight event since 1992.

Wasteneys, who grew up a competitive cross-country skier, entered the sport of rowing as a novice with the Vikes but with an athletic pedigree positioning her for greatness. Her mother, Heather Clarke, competed in the coxed four at Seoul 1988 and her aunt was a member of the women’s eight at Los Angeles 1984.

“I think in the back of my mind, the Olympics was always a goal of mine, but I didn’t want to say it out loud or put pressure on myself. UVic rowing was instrumental in my journey—the



Vikes rugby alumnus Nathan Hirayama and women’s basketball player Miranda Ayim carry the flag into Tokyo Olympic Stadium as Canada’s co-Olympic flag-bearers. PHOTO: LEAH HENNEL/COC

team environment pushed me when I needed it most and set me up for future success,” she says.

Filmer and partner Hillary Jansens of UBC brought home a bronze medal in the women’s pair event. For the Canadian duo, the road to Tokyo was anything but smooth, and clinching a podium spot made the last few years of training and adversity worth every second.

“It feels like winning gold to us. Finishing the race and leaving everything we had out there, knowing everything we’ve overcome—this year has been absolutely insane,” says Filmer, who has been open about her struggles with clinical depression,

sharing her journey on social media.

### Making UVic proud

Other highlights include Vikes men’s rowing alumnus Kai Langerfeld, who landed just shy of the podium with a heartbreaking fourth-place finish in the men’s pair. Current Vikes rower Patrick Keane rowed the B Final in the men’s lightweight double skulls, finishing 10th place overall.

Pamphinette Buisa and the women’s rugby sevens team had some hard-fought battles after a difficult couple of seasons. They finished with a third-place finish in pool B, leaving them ninth place overall.

Nathan Hirayama, Patrick Kay,



UVic student and Vikes rowing alumna Caleigh Filmer brings home a bronze medal alongside teammate Hillary Jansens of UBC. PHOTO: MERJIN SOETERS/COC

Mike Fuailefau and Lucas Hammond showed moments of greatness in a very tough men’s rugby sevens field. After battling back to make it there, Canada lost to New Zealand in the quarter-finals; Kay scored the match’s only try. They finished seventh place.

Canada’s men’s field hockey team, featuring Vikes alum James Kirkpatrick, Brenden Bisset, Matt Sarmento and Keegan Pereira, faced a difficult pool to kick things off. While battling hard every game, the team came up just short of making their top eight goal.

New mom and three-time Olympian Catharine Pendrel showed the

world what mothers are capable of. Returning to compete at the highest level just six months postpartum, Pendrel put forth an inspiring performance taking home 18th place in women’s cross country mountain biking.

Other UVic alumni making their Olympic debut included Celina Toth in diving and Matthew Sharpe in triathlon.

Representing UVic at the Paralympics were UVic computer science student Zachary Gringas, who won bronze in the T38 men’s 400m, and Vikes rower Kyle Fredrickson, who took eighth place overall in the PR3 mixed coxed four event.

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