SPEED READ

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
On top of the Maclean's 2022 national rankings

Maclean's magazine has released its annual university rankings, with UVic ranked in Canada's top comprehensive university, a distinction it shares with SFU this year.

After the consumerism of Black Friday, Giving Tuesday has become globally recognized as a day to focus on giving back. UVic's Giving Tuesday initiative brings together community members, alumni, faculty, staff and students to donate to their chosen causes, raising money for a variety of programs and projects across the university. Many of these programs benefit faculty, staff and students to donate to their chosen causes, raising money for a variety of programs and projects across the university.

Giving Tuesday

The sprinkles are back

The experience and knowledge Sprangers gained at UVic—through four co-op terms, classroom work and his involvement with a student team—have helped prepare him for a job that starts in November. He'll be returning to Hall Constructors, this time on Vancouver Island, as a project coordinator.

GIVING TUESDAY

1,557

NUMBER OF DEGREES, CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS TO BE AWARDED DURING FALL CONVOCA TION

Infrastructure and construction projects drive engineering grad

BY ANNE TOLSON

Growing up, Liam Sprangers spent long hours with friends constructing tree houses out of scrap lumber, building makeshift bike ramps and designing bridges to span nearby creeks.

Sprangers, who graduates this month with a Bachelor of Engineering, says he was drawn to civil engineering, in particular, by the prospect of being able to work in the construction industry.

“My co-ops were all memorable, but the one that sticks out most was working with Hall Constructors—it was like living out a childhood dream getting to work on a construction site and seeing engineering in action,” says Sprangers.

He spent his last co-op term on multiple Hall construction sites, coordinating day-to-day activities on complex excavation projects for the company, which is based in his hometown of Langley.

“Gaining an understanding of how a large-scale infrastructure project gets completed was like getting a recipe for your favourite dessert,” he says.

The experience and knowledge Sprangers gained at UVic—through four co-op terms, classroom work and his involvement with a student team—have helped prepare him for a job that starts in November. He’ll be returning to Hall Constructors, this time on Vancouver Island, as a project coordinator.

Sprangers spent his first two co-ops at Metro Vancouver, working on water transmission and dam operations initiatives, where he helped coordinate construction and maintenance projects and worked in water-supply modeling. For his third co-op, he assisted a UVic Civil Engineering researcher’s work in concrete repair by preparing samples, conducting tests and analyzing results.

During the last few years of his degree, Sprangers says he’s recognized as a day to focus on giving back. UVic’s Giving Tuesday initiative brings together community members, alumni, faculty, staff and students to donate to their chosen causes, raising money for a variety of programs and projects across the university.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Marion Buller named as next UVic Chancellor

Marion Buller—an influential Indigenous legal scholar and the former chief commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (sawcwi)—has been named as the University of Victoria’s 12th chancellor. She will begin a three-year term on Jan. 1, 2022.

Buller is a member of the Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, a Cree First Nation in Saskatchewan. A longtime advocate for Indigenous issues and rights, in 1994 Buller was the first Indigenous woman to be appointed as a judge in British Columbia. A little over a decade later she created and presided in the First Nations Courts of BC—now known as Indigenous Courts—and provided the foundation for the Aboriginal Family Healing Court conferences. In 2016, she was also appointed as chief commissioner for the sexswc national inquiry.

Q. You’ve had a long legal career and made many contributions to the area of Indigenous justice. Why did you agree to take on this role at UVic?

A. First, I’m honoured to be considered the next UVic chancellor and carry forward the great work of Shelagh Rogers. I’m a graduate—UVic—I earned my undergrad and law degrees here—so this institution has been extremely important in my life and my career. Education is a gift that should be shared generously and wisely. I want to give back.

SEE CHANCELLOR P.3
1. UVic uses a Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) system to help protect your account and your information from malicious attackers. MFA helps us protect against attempts to steal information extracted to our care, including financial data and student and employee records. For more information, visit uvic.ca/mfa

2. The university is intentionally thinking differently about planning process and design strategies to engage true and meaningful action on equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism throughout the campus community. This will be challenging and humbling work for UVic and for us all,” says Cassandra Davis, executive director of Equity and Human Rights (EHQ). “The aim is to create an overarching Equity Action Plan, which will set out universal goals to advance and embed equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism across the university and deepen our institutional commitment to finding and addressing systemic barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion.

3. The process to develop the campus equity action plan began this past spring, with a call for members of a new Reflection and Challenge Committee (RCC) and an ambitious one-year timeline. The goal is to launch the plan in spring 2023 and mobilize ongoing implementation across campus. The RCC committee is tasked with:

- Listening to diverse voices on campus
- Framing challenges and opportunities to address barriers and to achieving equity and justice
- Identifying solutions and actions to move UVic toward a desired future that has truly embedded equity, inclusion and justice for all

4. The RCC is “dreaming big,” says Tasli Goudar (she/her), Equity Action Plan lead. “The Equity Action Plan will be the lens through which the whole university can (re)imagine their work and presence on campus.” With 25 diverse members, the committee is working with leadership support from EHQ to develop the plan through an equity-centred design process. This innovative process acknowledges that systems of equity are products of design—meaning those systems can be re-designed. By putting equity as the foremost priority through involvement of the people and communities most affected, the process itself is grounded in understanding the root causes of inequity, identifying systemic barriers to equity and building action-oriented solutions.

5. “Equity-centred design allows us to break out of the traditional ways of developing a plan and makes sure the people most impacted are central in the planning and actions that result,” says Goudar. Over the next few weeks, more information about the equity action planning process and opportunities for community engagement will be shared widely. “Concrete actions—not words or hopes—will build trust in the process and ultimately make it successful,” says one RCC member. “We need to hold ourselves, each other and the administration accountable as we build this plan together.”

6. President Hall and I feel strongly about the importance of people and place to what UVic is and what we represent. We live and work on the traditional unceded territory of the lək̓ ʷəŋən peoples, and we are home to world-renowned Indigenous scholars. We want UVic to be a place where our Indigenous scholars feel valued and supported and where strong relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Nations, communities, collectives and organizations are essential to our identity as a university and to the contributions we can make to the world.

7. Aspiration 2030 is a landscape strategy that MFA adds will help protect your account and your information from malicious attackers. MFA helps us protect against attempts to steal information extracted to our care, including financial data and student and employee records. For more information, visit uvic.ca/mfa

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Climate finance and the race to net zero

Debunking myths around risk-retunds in sustainable finance

BY SASHA MILAM

Solutions to the climate crisis are being developed in laboratories and the halls of government. But they can also be found in boardrooms and the stock markets.

“Investing to avert climate disaster is everyone’s interest,” says Basma Majerbi, a climate finance and impact investing expert at the University of Victoria’s Peter B. Gustavson School of Business.

“What we are faced with today is both an enormous challenge and an opportunity: how to use financial markets to accelerate the transition to a green economy.”

Getting to net-zero carbon emissions demands radical shifts in how we invest. As disasters such as massive wildfires and heat domes driven by climate change turn up the pressure to find solutions quickly, research is making it increasingly clear what role investors of all types and sizes have to play.

“Governments have their targets as defined by the Paris Agreement and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, but most of them are not yet on track to meet such targets,” says Majerbi.

Majerbi’s sustainable finance research explores the range of investment types that can drive meaningful change in this area. One project examines the G20 COVID-19 green stimulus packages that could affect supply of and demand for energy. Another considers the institutional investor’s view on climate risks and opportunities.

A third study targeted impact investing in mutual funds. Co-authored with postdoctoral fellow Ali Shahrad, it suggests there’s much more individual investors can do to drive climate action and other sustainability goals—such as ending hunger and improving health outcomes. “Environment, social and governance (ESG) is a good first step that is essential to push companies to improve their management practices,” says Majerbi.

“But if you are passionate about concern about particular societal challenges, like climate change, rising inequalities or biodiversity loss, you are more likely to create real solutions to that issue through impact investment funds.”

The myth that ‘sustainable funds don’t perform’ has already largely been debunked,” says Majerbi, but there is still a lack of public awareness about impact funds. “Many advisers and investors still think that you have to sacrifice returns if you focus on achieving specific, measurable social and environmental impact because you are building a portfolio from a limited universe.”

Her forthcoming study of the global landscape of sustainable mutual funds offers additional perspective. “Do you give up returns with impact investing? Yes and no,” says Majerbi. “It’s possible to optimize your impact investing portfolio and have decent returns. But the most interesting thing we found was that impact funds are more resilient during times of crisis—such as the COVID-19 pandemic—than conventional or other types of sustainable funds.”

In an analysis of ESG, impact and conventional mutual funds, money flowing into impact-focused mutual funds stayed strong, even when mutual funds as a whole took a nosedive. Moreover, impact funds and non-diversified environmental mutual fund sectors are growing faster and have higher adjusted returns than ESG funds globally.

Her advice for individual investors looking to make a difference mirrors this observation. “Demand drives supply in financial products like anywhere else. Demand products that align with your values and causes you care about.”

Impact Investing is a type of sustainable investing that starts with the investor’s intention to contribute solutions to societal challenges while also seeing financial returns, allowing for targeted investing in specific areas such as climate solutions. Focusing on environment, social, governance, or ESG, means investors evaluate companies’ performance in financially material issues in these three areas. This COP26 UN climate conference, takes place in Glasgow from Oct. 31-Nov. 12. This year, one of the main themes is climate finance in the transition to net zero.

Majerbi is co-investigator of The Climate Finance Project, funded by UVic-led and hosted Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, in collaboration with British Columbia Investment Management Corporation. Alongside Gustavson’s Michael and postdoctoral fellow Kevin Andrew, the researchers will integrate the latest research on climate scenarios to help institutional investors assess climate risks and opportunities as they make portfolio investment decisions.

UVic’s Vancouver Island Impact Investing Hub, led by Majerbi, convenes academics, students, investors, industry, government and other community members to contribute to climate solutions by accelerating the flow of impact and sustainable finance in BC and beyond. UVic recently partnered with energy sector leaders to launch an impact accelerator, to support the growth of the cleantech ecosystem and the transition to net zero.

NEXT CHANCELLOR

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

Q. Did you always envision a career in law?

A. Other than one relative on my mom’s side, there were no lawyers in it. My grandparents had experiences that inspired me to look into law. I want to be part of that. With an awareness of Indigenous histories and rights in a way most of their predecessors have not. That is exciting and I want to be part of that.

Q. How do you feel about joining your alma mater in this role at a time when there’s so much attention on issues around Indigenous Peoples in Canada?

A. My predecessors have experiences with a residential or day school. They saw education as a way to move forward—the key to living both worlds, privileges and position to address systemic barriers and advance society and causes of justice. To be a leader now at such a time in Canada’s history and at an institution like UVic, we have a great responsibility to UVic’s students and will be mindful of that every day.

Q. How do you think your skills, your education and your varied professional background suit you for this role?

A. I bring many years of experience as a trial lawyer, courtroom judge and chief commissioner of a national inquiry. I’ve observed what does and what does not work in the deeply emotional work of Indigenous reconciliation. I can bring this to my new role.

As a lawyer I’ve strived to use my privilege and position to address systemic barriers and advance causes of justice. To be a leader now at such a time in Canada’s history and at an institution like UVic, that is the hard and rewarding work around decolonization, is an opportunity that I’m honoured to be given. I can’t wait to get started.

Campus life is busy!

Why go off campus to fill a prescription?

Save yourself some time and use our on-campus pharmacy, conveniently located in the SUB. Our professional staff are ready to listen and help you with all your health needs.

Drop by and experience our Heartfelt service.
Sea otters boost genetic diversity of eelgrass

A unique interaction between sea otters and the flowing plant known as eelgrass has researchers looking closer at the co-evolution of the species. In a paper published in October in the journal *Nature*, UVic geography PhD graduate Erin Foster’s research demonstrates the value of ecosystem diversity, highlighting “another way that a predator can hedge our bets against an uncertain future.”

Foster’s research a top ecology story

Identifying that mechanism made Foster’s research a top ecology story in October in both the *New York Times* and *National Geographic,* and it even appeared on CBC and in the *Times Colonizer* as well.

As UVic geographer Chris Darimont, who served as Foster’s PhD supervisor, told the *New York Times,* her research demonstrates the value of ecosystem diversity, highlighting “another way that a predator can hedge our bets against an uncertain future.”

Q. What is the significance of the interaction between sea otters and eelgrass?

A. Eelgrass growing on the ocean bottom inadvertently blocks the sea otter’s access to clams and other food buried below the plants. Sea otter digging disturbs the eelgrass roots and promotes conditions that favor sexual (over asexual) reproduction, enhancing genetic diversity. With asexual reproduction, new plants are genetically identical to the parent, but with sexual reproduction, almost every single seed will be genetically different, since the genes of the two parent plants mix.

In areas where sea otters have been present from 20 to 30 years, eelgrass genetic diversity was up to 30 per cent greater than in areas without sea otters, or in areas where otters had arrived within the past 10 years. The genetic diversity of eelgrass is important to its survival in a rapidly changing environment.

Q. Why is eelgrass important to the environment?

A. The more variety there is in the genetic composition of each individual, the more likely that some individuals will be able to sustain environmental stressors—just by chance. Some individuals, for example, might be very tolerant to heat waves, others to disease, and yet others may tolerate heavy grazing or ocean acidification.

Q. What is your research process?

A. The most important part of my research process has been to think carefully about what others have shared with me over the years. Mentor and co-author, Jane Watson, first had the idea about sea otters enhancing genetic diversity of eelgrass decades ago. Watson thought there must be some mechanism allowing eelgrass beds to thrive despite the digging efforts of the sea otter. We worked together to come up with a study design to evaluate the idea that digging favored sexual production in eelgrass leading to greater genetic diversity.

Q. What do you want people to take away from this research?

A. I hope our discovery will help people think more broadly about the effects that large animals have on ecosystems and understand how the return of a once-absent predator is an important part of future recovery initiatives—for both plants and animals.

Foster’s co-authors include UVic geographers Lauren Henson and Chris Darimont, along with colleagues at the Hakai Institute, UBC, Vancouver Island University, SFU, U-Cal Santa Cruz and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The research was supported by the Tula Foundation and NSERC.

The University of Victoria is reinforcing its resolve to fight climate change and build a sustainable future by signing on to the Race to Zero climate campaign. The UVic executive council earlier this month supported signing, and submitting the Race to Zero pledge, joining 53 other Canadian universities and colleges, and more than 1,000 public education institutions worldwide.

The university is already a strong proponent of climate action as well as the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Significant action is needed to address the global crisis of climate change, and this is one way to hold ourselves accountable and rally support as part of a global movement,” says President Kevin Hall. “Joining the Race to Zero is an important way to demonstrate our leadership in developing and contributing to climate solutions for a healthy and resilient planet.”

Since 2010, UVic has been net zero and achieved a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The RZ pledge commits to set an interim target to achieve in the next decade to reflect maximum effort toward or beyond a fair share of the 30 per cent global reduction in CO2 by 2030. An additional 20 per cent reduction in emissions will be required over the next eight years, as well as a major shift in measuring and reporting emissions.

UVic achieves net zero by following the processes set out under BC’s Carbon Neutral Government program, and legislation requiring that all provincial public sector organizations follow a regulated process to measure, reduce, offset, report and verify their greenhouse gas emissions.

“The RZ Targets support the planning currently underway in the development of our new Climate and Sustainability Action Plan,” says Mike Wilson, director of campus planning and sustainability. “The campus community will be invited to provide input on the draft goals, strategies and actions for the plan in the new year.”

The bulk of UVic’s emissions—91 per cent—result from providing heat and hot water for 35 buildings on campus, and the university is planning for the transition of its energy plant to low-carbon energy. A separate planning process is underway to determine the appropriate technical pathway to support this transition, which will protect the university against the increasing costs of carbon-pricing policy at the provincial and federal level. New technology—some of which is being researched and developed at UVic—will also present opportunities to increase the climate resiliency of campus buildings and infrastructure.

The university has adopted a responsible investment policy to lower carbon emissions across its investments by 65 per cent by 2030 and to invest in thematic impact opportunities that measure renewable power generated and GHG emissions avoided.

The Race to Zero pledge is a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-supported global campaign to rally international leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors and universities to reach a zero-carbon recovery that prevents future threats and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth.

The campaign is building momentum ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Scotland (COP26) this fall, driving commitments to shift away from a carbon economy to more sustainable options.
HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS (DLitt)

Timothy James Brook

Writer and scholar Timothy James Brook is at the forefront of innovative research on China’s historical legacy. He currently holds the Republic of China Chair at the University of British Columbia, following academic appointments at the University of Alberta, University of Toronto, Stanford University, and the University of Oxford, where he served as the Shaw Professor of Chinese.

Brook, who lives on Salt Spring Island, has published 13 books. The widely-read Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global Age was awarded the Mark Lynton Prize from the Columbia School of Journalism. He’s also received the Guggenheim and Getty fellowships, the Wallace K. Ferguson Prize from the Canadian Historical Association and an honorary doctorate from the University of Warwick.

HONORARY DOCTORS OF EDUCATION (DEd)

Arran and Ratana Stephens

Arran and Ratana Stephens are partners in life and business as highly successful and socially conscious entrepreneurs. In 1971, they founded the organic supermarket LifeStream in Vancouver. In 1985, they started up Nature's Path, which became the first-ever certified organic food manufacturer in North America and one of the continent's largest organic cereal, granola and snack producers.

The world-class company now employs more than 700 people and distributes in more than 50 countries worldwide. The organic sector has grown exponentially over the years. Still, Nature's Path remains family-run and committed to being environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, and financially viable. The business has frequently been named one of Canada’s best employers.

Their corporate ideals embrace a model that is good for the planet and for human health—including promoting plant-based and non-GMO products. Nature’s Path has donated more than $40 million to various community and environmental causes, including the Jane Goodall Institute, Vancouver General Hospital and St. Paul’s Hospital. The two have won many awards, together and as individuals, including most recently the Order of British Columbia, which honour their business excellence, inspirational leadership and philanthropy.

Inspiring trio to receive university’s highest honour

Two socially conscious life and business partners and an award-winning scholar of China’s history are the recipients of honorary doctorates awarded during the University of Victoria’s fall 2021 convocation ceremonies. An Honorary Doctor of Letters will be conferred on Timothy James Brook during the morning ceremony on November 10, followed that afternoon by Honorary Doctors of Education for both Arran and Ratana Stephens.

Over six convocation ceremonies—held on Nov. 10, 12 and 13—1,557 degrees, diplomas and certificates will be awarded to graduands, many of whom completed programs during a global pandemic. The events will be the first in-person convocation ceremonies to take place at UVic for two years. While they are also the first at the Farquhar Auditorium to be attended by President Kevin Hall, they will also be the last ones presided over by Chancellor Shelagh Rogers, whose term ends later this year.
I remember being nervous to stand out and do something different. It can feel embarrassing to put yourself out there, but I am so glad I did," says Cey. "From my very first episode, I received so much support from my friends and classmates and have been able to reach so many founders and women in business that I admire."

Her work has won her listeners, and a lot of praise. Earlier this year Cey won the Rising Star category in BC Business Women’s of the Year awards, all due to her work on the podcast. Being selected as a BC Business Women of the Year recipient was an absolute honour. It feels really incredible to see your hard work be recognized by other people. Anyone who has a podcast will tell you it often feels like talking into an echo chamber, so it was extremely validating and gratifying to have my podcast be so supported."

The podcast was a learning experience for Cey, and it also helped open new career doors she would have never expected. "I interviewed Girlboss’ new CEO, Lulu Liang, for an early episode of the podcast. I ended up keeping tabs on the company and when I saw they were hiring I referred a friend I thought would be great for the role. Soon enough Lulu reached out and asked what I was up to post-grad. She essentially built a role for me based on my experience and interests when I said I’d love to join the company. It was a huge reminder to me of how important it is to build and nurture your network," adds Cey.

"It was a fantastic experience. I now works as the marketing and content coordinator for Girlboss, a media company whose goal is to advance the role of women in the workplace and nurture entrepreneurs. "Working for Girlboss has been an absolute dream," says Cey. "I have been a fan of founder Sophia Amoruso and the Girlboss brand for a long, long time."

The icing on the cake? Cey will now be taking on a role producing Girlboss Radio, the show that had originally inspired her to get started with podcasting. "It does feel different… there are big conversations to be had with people you often don’t know," she says. "The political and conversational climate is changing, especially in areas like social justice and reconciliation… in some ways for the better, I hope. It’s an interesting world to adapt to."

With her IndigNews beat covering Vancouver Island, Klukas gets to remain Victoria-based for now—and an other plus to an already ideal position. IndigNews has been on my radar for a while, as they’re a really great outlet," she says.

Better still, when she applied, it turned out she was already on their radar. They had already been reading my pieces at The Tyee. "None of this surprises writing professor Deborah Campbell. "Jenessa Joy’s engagement with challenging issues from an Indigenous perspective makes her an invaluable member of any news team," she says.

Despite the obvious challenges facing our world, Klukas is excited about her future. "I came into writing and journalism at a good time for the issues I want to speak on," she concludes. "Canada is becoming more receptive and craving more Indigenous voices in media, which is wonderful—and a step in the right direction."

Although the online path was sometimes difficult, Cey is now in a unique position of taking her work remotely. Over the last few months she’s been stationed in Europe, helping keep Girlboss running and catching up with some of the international experience she had missed for the last two years. As for the future: "I hope to one day start my own business, whether or not that’s a side-gig or a rebirth of Pick Her Brain, so stay tuned for that."
Matthew Creswick, who graduated from UVic this November with a Master of Public Administration, has walked the long hallways and worked in many of the ornate chambers of Victoria’s Parliament buildings during his three years of employment with BC’s Legislative Assembly—and has made a surprising contribution to our understanding about how democracy works in BC.

Upending the perception that the bare-knuckle partisan politics which drive Question Period also prevents BC’s opposition parties from influencing the government’s policies, Creswick’s careful research—conducted as part of his UVic studies—shows that the collaborative work done by MLAs from both the government and opposition parties nevertheless helps to shape the annual budgets and public spending priorities of government.

That insight stands as confirmation, in a sense, of both Creswick’s own non-partisan values of service and the nature of his work at the legislature.

As a parliamentary education researcher, people depend on Creswick’s writing, depth of understanding and non-partisan values. “Those skills,” he explains, “are immensely valuable and I apply them in my work every day.”

“What I do is just one of many niche roles where you can work and learn about the role of government in our communities,” adding, “which is not to be confused with the role of politics.”

He interacts with politicians, learns about the many challenges facing British Columbians, rubs shoulders with reporters and journalists, supports new interns, develops new educational outreach initiatives and answers questions the public might have about the assembly.

And while he’s been doing that, he’s been completing his master’s degree—joining study and practice with solid research.

“Matthew was a strong graduate student,” says assistant professor and graduate supervisor Tamara Krawchenko. “He wrote a fantastic master’s project on parliamentary committees that was linked to his work with the Legislative Assembly.”

His research explored the impact of parliamentary committee recommendations on real-life provincial government policy. In BC, government is not obligated to provide any follow-up to committee recommendations. His work explored the impact of these committees—a relatively untested element of parliament’s functioning, whose impacts remained largely unquantified, until now.

He created a test case to see if recommendations from the Legisla- tive Assembly’s Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, for example, were reflected in the annual budget of the provincial government.

“The major contribution of this research,” says Krawchenko, “was to highlight the role of parliamentary committees to better understand their work and potential impact.”

A guiding value to serve

There was no single experience that drove Creswick, now 27, to return to UVic to pursue his master’s. “I just saw how valuable my earlier learning was to the work I was doing,” he says. “And I applauded UVic for supporting those skills.”

Born and raised on rural Salt Spring Island, Creswick was inspired by his parents—a home-care nurse and a middle school teacher—and witnessed their good work. “They showed me their amazing capacity as public servants to improve and change their communities. This was a constant in my life.”

That drive to serve guided Creswick to the public sector in a broader sense, wanting to be involved in how this province is governed, yet he’s no hurry to commit to any partisan cause.

Sprangers was a member of the UVic Concrete Canoe team, a civil-engineering-based student team that designs, constructs and paddles a concrete canoe as part of a national project.

His trajectory was, in a sense, foreshadowed when he moved to BC’s capital at 17 to attend UVic. Keen to prepare for his future career, Creswick confides that his first year was not his strongest.

Nevertheless, he graduated with a BA plus honours in 2017 and was accepted into the BC Legislative Internship Program—putting him to work with MLAs, political staff and public servants from across BC. “It was my first office job and an amazing opportunity that really helped me decide where I wanted to go next.”

Drafting legislative proposals in the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and working alongside the Official Opposition’s research office to support house and committee debates were just a few highlights of his internship.

“Everyone knows you’re an intern, that you’re there to learn, so the support is genuine and non-partisan,” he explains. “Developing very high non-partisan values is vital to succeed during the internship.”

After six months, that work had primed him for something new and different.

As of this month, Creswick was offered a rare opportunity to work with the BC Legislative Assembly—often referred to as the heart of government—as an administrative assistant, which led him to his current role.

“The nature of this work and the mix of relationships compelled him to return to UVic and complete his master’s. “I realized I had a chance to really learn about what it takes to be a civil servant from both the academic side and from my own firsthand experiences on the job.”

Creswick also received a scholarship in 2020 from the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia, another positive sign he was on the right track.

The take-away? Political progress isn’t always about adversarial posturing. Working on legislation, analyzing governmental and parliamentary procedures, delving into intense policy issues this is also the heart of politics, says Matthew. “These are invaluable experiences that inspire me and make me want to learn more.”

He’s now considering law school while staying close to the core of this career he has forged for himself.

Sprangers found the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic difficult, including the transition to online learning, the curtailment of social activities, and the added stresses of day-to-day life.

Fortunately, whether in Victoria or back home on the mainland, Sprangers has been able to find a good measure of relief through fishing.

There are a few lakes around Victoria I could go fly fishing at or, when there was a break from school, I’d go home to the Fraser River and some of its tributaries to fish for salmon and sturgeon,” he says. “I don’t know what it is about fishing that feels so therapeutic—could be the outdoors, the strategizing involved, or maybe just that most of the activity involves doing nothing for a while.”

Growing up fishing with his dad, he’s noticed the steady decline in salmon runs over the years and is concerned about the impact to the area environmentally and economically. Now, similar to the way his early enthusiasm for construction helped guide his educational path, he hopes to eventually find a way to incorporate his passion for salmon and fisheries conservation into his future work.

“Over the long term, I hope to get more involved in construction projects that involve land rehabilitation, particularly involving wetlands and streams,” he says. “Hopefully I can work on projects involving salmon habitat restoration. I want to create infrastructure that is more sustainable and works for both people and the environment.”
Paula Raimondi Cantú is a storyteller with purpose

BY LISA ABRAM

Paula Raimondi Cantú, who graduates this November with a UVic PhD, was born in Calgary, Mellor first tackled learning new software and created a help guide for UVic’s Wellness Week—Indigenous Approaches to Holistic Wellness—complete with digital and print resources for all UVic students, in support of Associate University Librarian - Reconciliation in UVic's Libraries. Having flown home to visit family in Mexico for winter break, travel restrictions meant she had to fly home to the full story about Indigenous studies and a work-study placement at the UVic Libraries. Having flown home to visit family in Mexico for winter break, travel restrictions meant she had to fly home to the full story about Indigenous studies and a work-study placement at the UVic Libraries.

Unfamiliar with the communications tools used by librarians, Cantú embarked on learning new software and published the guide with Paula on the UVic Vogue publication, which is to honor and elevate Indigenous voices and to advance decolonization within the library.

From her perspective as a student, Cantú began to take notice of faculty and instructors’ efforts to decolonize language, used in the curriculum, classroom and lecture hall settings—heightening her awareness of Moran’s efforts to examine the “big picture” of decolonization and reconciliation across the university.

UVIC LIBRARIES
Building the skills of a screenwriter

BY ANNE MACLAURIN

Andrea Mellor, who graduates this November with a UVic PhD, was drawn to the interdisciplinary social dimensions of health program because she saw a missing link between her earlier work as a hydrogeologist and the health-related issues occurring in Indigenous communities. Mellor wanted to explore the disconnect she felt in her scientific work by understanding the factors outside of our health care systems that influence health.

Now that her graduate studies are complete, Mellor says, “I tell people I’m interested in the importance of cultural teachings, teachers and communities during adolescence, and that connecting to that legacy is key to supporting Indigenous youth community.”

Born in Calgary, Mellor first tackled learning new software and hydrogeology—drawn to them in part because she’d grown up near the mountains, closely connected to nature. It wasn’t until she was working on an environmental groundwater assessment in Northern BC that she realized her studies up until then hadn’t given her the full story about Indigenous water issues.

“I went back to school because I needed a better understanding of how the work I was doing was connected to much more than water coming from a tap,” says Mellor. Mellor was already working in BC, but a move to southern Vancouver Island fulfilled a childhood dream of attending the University of Victoria.

“My supervisors were also interested in a community-led project that I felt would bring together so many wonderful people who were open to sharing their knowledge and teachings with me.”

Some key milestones included the lessons of exploring self-location and privilege, something Mellor learned during Public Health and Social Policy professor Charlotte Loppie’s Indigenous Leadership and Engagement course. She was also present when Cindy Blackstock and Spirit Bear received their respective honorary doctorate and Pawlowski—a “thrill in retrospect,” says Mellor, “considering how much Dr. Blackstock has influenced my own.”

During her graduate work, Mellor was also introduced to Elder May Sam at First Peoples House, and discovered they had a mutual love of working with wool.

“I have always worked with textiles as a hobby—processing sheep fleeces, knitting, weaving—and it was through this handwork that I wound up meeting a lot of the people in my community on the Peninsula,” says Mellor. “It was a true honor to work with Grandma May—she was a wonderful person to chat with about our project, sharing her knowledge about coming-of-age teachings,” adds Mellor.

In her PhD research, Mellor supported a community-led project that worked to understand what urban Indigenous youth living in foster care felt was important about a culturally centered coming of age. Alongside a team of community partners, community members and Island Health, the project hosted two youth workshops and a dinner to hear directly from the youth community and develop knowledge-sharing resources.

“My supervisors were also incredible mentors along the way—in particular, health geographer Denise Cloutier. Her presence at our workshops, during all our community meetings, co-authoring our papers, it’s long list,” says Mellor.

The future includes working with Cecilia Benoit at UVic’s Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) as a research affiliate. Part of Mellor’s post-doctoral work will involve understanding the supports that young people who age out of government care need to thrive into adulthood.

PhD grad collaborates with Indigenous youth

Paula Raimondi Cantú is a storyteller with purpose

BY LIISA ABRAM

Paula Raimondi Cantú, who graduates this November with a UVic PhD, was born in Calgary, Mellor first tackled learning new software and created a help guide for UVic’s Wellness Week—Indigenous Approaches to Holistic Wellness—complete with digital and print resources for all UVic students, in support of Associate University Librarian - Reconciliation in UVic's Libraries. Having flown home to visit family in Mexico for winter break, travel restrictions meant she had to fly home to the full story about Indigenous studies and a work-study placement at the UVic Libraries. Having flown home to visit family in Mexico for winter break, travel restrictions meant she had to fly home to the full story about Indigenous studies and a work-study placement at the UVic Libraries.

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Rehearsal for success

BY JOHN THRELFALL

When fourth-year School of Music saxophone player Baylee Adams wanted to make a community impact during last February’s Black History Month, she looked to her own instrument for inspiration. “We were only hearing about Black composers and performers—rehearsals on Black composers to find a more diversified repertoire,” she explains. “I’d never even thought about the forms of classical music.”

Adams’ research led her to American classical composer William Grant Still—the first African-American to conduct an orchestra in the US and, in 1944, the first to have his Afro-American Symphony performed by a mainstream American orchestra.

In addition to engaging people to learn about this specific Black composer, the rehersal raised over $1,500 for the Blue Maritists of Aleppo—a benefit fund directly supporting those affected by the ongoing war in Syria. Organizing a fundraising event also helped Adams feel like she was contributing to various Black Lives Matter actions unfolding at the time. “Putting work into an event like this made me feel better about all of the injustices,” she says.

“Undertaking such an event in the midst of her final year of studies is one thing, but it’s even more remarkable when you consider it happened during the COVID lockdowns, which were particularly challenging for orchestral musicians.”

“It’s hard to play a recital when there’s no one in the crowd,” she explains. “It’s difficult to feel proud about your performance when there’s no audience; when you’re sitting in your room playing your instrument to people online.”

Yet, as Adams notes, that “show must go on” mentality ended up being one of the biggest takeaways of her Bachelor of Music program. “That was a hard thing I learned at UVic, but it was a good thing. I think doing online rehearsals really made my degree special—I’m never going to forget that experience… even if I sometimes did involve my professor saying, in a nice way, that I have to work harder. It changed the way I conducted myself in rehearsals and did make me work harder. Because of that, I became a better player overall.”

Proof of that is her current enrollment in UBC’s Master of Music program, where she daily draws on the lessons learned here. “I constantly reference my professors at UVic because I want people here at UBC to know what they taught me,” she says. “But I also find myself messaging students who are still at UVic, sharing what I’m learning here now. Working with other people has helped me learn how to better listen to others’ opinions of others, and be more comfortable sharing my own thoughts.”

While she was part of both the School of Music’s Sonic Lab contemporary ensemble and Wind Symphony while at UVic, Adams didn’t limit her academic experiences solely to music. In addition to a work-study position with Alumni Relations, she also enjoyed working for Multi-faith Services, where her tech support position helped her to develop the temporary loneliness of being a long-distance musician.

“I invited my friends to join the weekly online sessions—meditation, yoga—so we got to see each other there,” she recalls. “That was a really great experience. Meditating with other people, whether in-person or online, was new for me.”

Adams is also excited to return to campus to graduate this time, in person. “It feels a bit like a dream,” she laughs. “Human presence is getting more familiar again, but still seems a bit nostalgic.”

How to make fragile global supply chains stronger and more sustainable

By Adel Guitouni, Cynthia Waltho and Mohammadreza Nematiollahi, Gustavson School of Business

In 2019, global supply chains moved more than 18 billion tons of goods in an estimated $18 trillion production and sale of many items we need and use—including toys, clothes, food, electronics and home furniture—dependent on global supply chains. For most of us, supply chains are no longer an abstract concept. The COVID-19 pandemic raised awareness about the interdependence of our economic systems. We now understand the many ways these chains directly shape our lives.

The pandemic has also revealed the fragility of global supply chains as US President Joe Biden and others warn of the impact on the world economy of continuing supply-chain bottlenecks. A supply chain is a set of organizations—like manufacturers, marketers, resellers and retailers—that work together to provide end customers with a specific product or service. The supply chain becomes global when the product or service crosses multiple international boundaries. Global supply chains are directly shaped by how we trade and interact with each other.

Supply chain problems cascade

Global supply chains have conventionally been focused on achieving financial efficiency above all else. The result is messy and fragile global supply chains—many with limited redundancies, contingencies and safeguards. Fragile global supply chains are exacerbated by the fragmentation of decision-making processes, limited collaboration between buyers and suppliers, and lack of coordination in the supply chain. There is no obvious centralized business or authority commanding and controlling these global supply chains. Instead, companies work together and compete for the value created.

Global supply chains also account for large carbon footprints and compete for scarce resources. They have an impact on land, water and biodiversity and geological resources. A typical company’s supply chain is responsible for 80 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions and more than 90 per cent of its contribution to air pollution generated in the production and distribution of goods.

One billion metric tonnes of emissions could be saved if key suppliers to 125 of the world’s biggest purchasers increased their renewable energy output by 20 per cent.

The impact of supply chains extends to society. For example, the problem of forced labour is well-documented in today’s global supply chains, resulting in several controversies about modern slavery. More than 24.9 million people are documented to be working in slavery conditions in these chains. Businesses in global supply chains are facing increased pressure from different stakeholders to adopt sustainability and disclose their impacts. A Dutch court recently ordered a retail giant to reduce its carbon emissions by 45 per cent from its 2019 levels. In the future, supply chain disclosure and transparency will become the norm of good governance.

Robust supply chains in demand

The world needs robust supply chains that are sustainable, resilient and efficient. Demand for supply chains that can help global supply chains adapt to the climate crisis and the circular economy is growing. Robust supply chains will be less vulnerable to future disruptions. Building effective collaboration means rewarding long-term collaboration and discourage short-term gains. Global supply chains should promote sharing the gains and the pains among buyers and suppliers.

Incentives need to be created to encourage this collaboration. Digitization of the economy will also contribute to better transparency and traceability in global supply chains. Nonetheless, moving towards robust global supply chains isn’t straightforward because historically, they’ve been focused on short-term rewards. For decades, we’ve justified the development of fragile and fragmented global supply chains in the name of economic growth and financial efficiency. This may have provided short-term benefits, but it has created our current supply chain crisis. Will that crisis reveal a way forward?

Adel Guitouni is a professor at the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at UVic. Cynthia Waltho and Mohammadreza Nematiollahi are both postdoctoral researchers at the school.

This column appears as part of The Conversation Canada, a not-for-profit collaboration between UVic and other universities that delivers analysis and research from the academic community directly to the public. More info: bit.ly/conversation21

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The Ring November-December 2021 Page 9
An undying interest in vampires

A master class in vampirology feeds our thirst for myths of the undead

May 15-19: Global Days and Five Days of Action

By Phillip Cox

Although Halloween comes but once per year, the thirst for stories about vampires never seems to die. This has helped humanitarians professor Peter Golz pursue his own passion for the study of these stories in film and literature for more than 20 years. In doing so, he’s made Victoria home to one of North America’s most popular university courses on vampires.

“The figure of the vampire allows students to delve into the desires and fears of particular cultures in particular historical moments,” says Humanities Associate Dean Academical Lisa Surridge. “Peter Golz has created a master class in cultural studies that has stood the test of time.”

For anyone who has spoken with Golz, it’s not surprising that his office is well adorned with a wide range of vampire-related paraphernalia—action figures from popular TV shows like Twilight and Buffy; the Vampire Slayer; a vampire-themed magnetic poetry kit; a Dracula lunch box; along with film posters, DVDs and endless rows of books, books, books.

The briefest of conversations with this humble professor about his passion for the subject feels like an immersive symposium in vampirology. And no wonder: Golz has been teaching one of North America’s most popular courses on vampires for 20 years this fall.

Golz laughs, “When people ask me ‘what do you teach?’ and I answer ‘vampire studies,’ they always reply with either ‘oh, that’s so cool!’ or ‘nope, seriously, what do you teach?’

A curriculum of vampires

Golz often meets with UVic’s Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies in 2001, when he taught his first class. It had helped course enrolment swell from 75 students in its first year to over 400 at its peak. When offered online for the first time last year as a result of the pandemic, the course attracted students from across Asia and Europe, as well as North and South America. Despite the extreme time differences, some passions never seem to sleep.

A vampire for every generation

In addition to the media attention and buzz generated on campus by word of mouth, Golz attributes the success of his course in part to the subject matter itself. “Vampires have become a lot more interesting in the last 20 years, because they are not deemed as the things of the ‘bad old days’ anymore,” he says. In line with their famed shapeshifting powers, vampires have learned to adapt—and fit in. “Now vampires are more likely to live among us, like in the TV series True Blood, the Twilight Films or Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” and we are more likely to hear them tell their own story, like in the TV series Like the Strain.

Although this trend clearly speaks to a certain zeitgeist, it has a long history. In the classic 1922 German Expressionist silent film Nosferatu, Count Orlok (Max Schreck) is a vampire whose death helps the vampire protagonist Count Orlok indiscriminately when he moves from Transylvania to Germany. “I think the film’s director was trying to say that being a vampire was really appropriate for its time, which is a concern we often see reflected in vampire storylines.”

Read more: bit.ly/21-vampire

Day in the life: Kim Fawthorpe

By Mitch Wright

If you’ve taken a seat anywhere on the University of Victoria campus, you’ve been benefitted from the work of Kim Fawthorpe and her team. Fawthorpe is the manager of Interior Modification Services in Facilities Management, where she and her team of five interior designers look after all the furniture and interior design needs on campus—from outfitting a new space to remodelling and updating a previously used facility. Her team also includes two drafting technicians who look after wayfinding signage on campus and maintain accurate space records for every building and room on campus.

The team also ensures specific ergonomic and functional needs are accommodated, provides desks and chairs for classrooms and exam set-ups, and works to ensure a barrier-free experience across campus.

At any one time, the team might be working on 200 to 300 projects, ranging in scope from a few dollars to multi-millions. And every piece of furniture they bring on campus is of the highest quality—commercial grade and sustainably created.

“We’re a very busy, very active group,” Fawthorpe says, adding that beyond general day-to-day furniture requests, her team’s work is widely varied with everything from active involvement in decommissioning and recommissioning Level 2 laboratories, to more recently establishing covid-safe testing clinics.

“Covid us quite hard—everyone on the front lines of facilities,” Fawthorpe says, highlighting that establishing clinic spaces required an immediate response with very little lead time. While many university staff were able to shift to a work-from-home situation during the height of the pandemic, the interior team continued with a hybrid model while working on campus. And all those people working from home presented new challenges, as many now required furniture to outfit their home workspaces.

“That was a very unique experience for me,” says Fawthorpe. “I’ve never encountered anything quite so challenging, with the amount of work we had to do and then and all very quickly. The last year and a half, I’ve been much more like an air traffic controller than a manager.”

Fawthorpe also has to ensure campus is barrier-free. That encompasses things like ramps or chair lifts, handrails, signage and lighting, but may also include designing specific spaces for students with disabilities, creating respite rooms for students and caregivers, and ensuring people can find their way around as well as in and out of facilities.

“It’s about feeling safe and comfortable and welcome,” says Fawthorpe. “That’s what a lot of my team does every day. We find when we focus on what students need, everything else falls into place.

Her own favourite place on campus is on the third floor of the McPherson Library, where her team designed a new study space with natural daylighting and comfortable furniture.

“People are most special is it’s just a really beautiful space. Every time I go there I take a few minutes to enjoy it,” says Fawthorpe, who also spends a sizable portion of her time at home revamping spaces. She’s currently amidst her seventh home restoration, for which she does much of the work herself.

Whispers of Other: she describes as exceptional, Fawthorpe has twice received special recognition—the 2009 President’s Distinguished Service Award (for the William C. Mearns Centre for Learning team) and the 2019 President’s Extraordinary Service Award (for the Surplus Furniture Program). That surplus furniture program was started by Kim Fawthorpe in 2001, when she saw an opportunity to warehouseague assets as they became available, sell them at a discount and reinvest the proceeds into both maintaining the student team and refurbishing spaces. Those funds have brought five refurbishments to life so far.

The surplus program processed about 100 items in its first year, and now takes in thousands of items annually. The direct impacts of not purchasing new furniture due to the program include avoiding 65 tons of CO2 emissions from transport and warehouse manufacturing, and saving the institution an estimated $2.5 million in value.
STAGING EQUALITY, REPRESENTING CHANGE

BY JOHN THRELFALL

If you’ve ever attended a play in the Phoenix Building, odds are you’ve been inside the Chief Dan George Theatre. Named for the actor and chief of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation whose talent took him beyond North Vancouver to become an Oscar-nominated actor, the theatre also features a striking Coast Salish-inspired wooden-inlay wall panel—both signs of Indigenous respect literally built into the building when it opened in 1981.

Yet, as professor Yasmine Kandil asked when she hosted the President’s Town Hall in the Chief Dan George Theatre in October, has the department done enough to live up to those respectful intentions? Especially when taking into account who has historically contacted—and been represented in—that space?

Enter Staging Equality: a vision of how theatre can address issues of race, diversity and inclusion by building relationships based on trust and respect.

A collaborative and creative research project

Created out of the Strategic Framew ork Impact Fund, Staging Equality is a three-year collaborative and creative research project devised by Kandil and fellow theatre professor Sasha Kovacs.

“Theatre is a tricky space to be welcoming through building relationships,” says Kovacs. “These are really challenging things to do.”

Currently working with an interdisciplinary team of students, faculty and community partners on a series of workshops and staged readings, Kandil and Kovacs hope Staging Equality will cultivate an environment that respects the legacy of Chief Dan George.

“It’s welcoming through building relationships,” explains Kovacs. “What context or work do we need to do before our new partners and audiences enter this space?”

Now in the second of a three-year framework, Staging Equality is built on a year-long foundation of consulting, questioning, listening and planning alongside their community and campus partners. One early—but essential—shift involved abandoning the standard model of working with out-of-town guests and professionals, and instead focusing on Indigenous and racialized artists who are already doing the work right here in Victoria.

That led Kandil and Kovacs to local playwright Lina de Guevara, who founded Puente Theatre back in 1988 to showcase the experiences of immigrants and diverse minorities. In September, Staging Equality presented a staged reading of de Guevara’s play Kamloopa in the Chief Dan George Theatre, which featured a 15-person cast of almost entirely people of colour.

Staging Kamloopa

Staging Equality’s next project is similarly local: a staged reading of the Governor General’s Literary Award-winning play Kamloopa: An Indigenous Matriarch Story, written by Kim Senklip Harvey of the Syilx and Tsilhqot’in Nations. Harvey became the first Indigenous woman to ever win that award, announced the same week she graduated with her MFA from the UVic Department of Writing.

Now a PhD candidate with UVic Law, Harvey will be directing the Nov. 20 Staging Equality reading of Kamloopa’s play journey to Maps Kamloopa in the Chief Dan George Theatre, which featured a 15-person cast of almost entirely people of colour.

“We're doing on this project can be of value and of use for other departments across Canada,” she says. “And, as a department that has a theatre company operating within it, the hope is that the work we're doing on this project can be of value and of use for other departments across Canada.”

For her part, Kandil is pleased that Staging Equality has become a sign of positive change in Victoria’s theatre community.

“It’s already starting to create a buzz and cultivate the kinds of relationships that will lead to projects beyond this,” she says. “If you show trust and you show respect, people come willingly and want to stay and build more relationships through the arts. That’s what’s been moving me.”

The free public performance of Kamloopa is at 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 20, in the Chief Dan George Theatre (reservations required).

uvic.ca/event/global-days

Join us for a free, week-long series of inspiring talks, engaging presentations and thought-provoking film screenings that celebrate UVic’s global impact, connections and opportunities. Global Days 2021 will focus on the UN’s Global Goals of creating a better tomorrow.

uvic.ca/event/global-days
A Hyper-Connected World will be in Victoria Nov. J. Kelly Hoey makes a case for networking expert connects the dots

Lawyer-turned-author J. Kelly Hoey makes a case for showing up every day

Unlike fellow New Yorkers Simon and Garfunkel, Lawyer-turned-author J. Kelly Hoey (BA ’87) is not a rock or an island. The UVic grad, writer and in-demand public speaker is a firm believer in the importance of making connections, not just in your career but everyday life. The problem is, we’re often not good at it or, at least, comfortable with putting ourselves out there. Which is where Hoey comes in. The lawyer-turned-author of Build Your Dream Network: Forging Powerful Relationships In A Hyper-Connected World will be in Victoria Nov. 16 to share her networking knowhow with UVic alumni and students as part of the UVic Alumni Signature Speaker Series. But before that, she found time in her busy schedule to discuss what networking mistake to correct and one that adds strength to relationships, too.

Q. Has the pandemic changed networking? JKH: We’ve all experienced network shrinkage (that’s the bad news). It’s simply a fact that there have been fewer opportunities to connect with people we don’t know well, or only see on occasion—and this segment of our networks has shrunk. The good news out of this is we’ve realized how much those casual-acquaintance relationships add meaning to our lives. A greasing from the bus driver on your regular commute or chatting with the barista where you grab your morning coffee, those light exchanges are important. Then there are the colleagues who perhaps you only saw at bi-monthly department meetings or during intermural softball season. Those relationships can also be a critical source of information and opportunity.

Q. Is it easier or more difficult to network in the era of Zoom and working from home? JKH: Depends on who you ask. For some, it has been easier as conversations combined with technology has democratized the opportunities to connect. Some interactions have improved because of technology (in one Zoom interview I listened to, a college professor recounted how much more he enjoyed thesis-review meetings on Zoom, rather than the old way of gathering around a boardroom table). Networking has become more difficult too, as now we really need to think about this human activity, rather than working the room on auto-pilot, fleetingly resorting to ice-breaker questions that worked in the past. For better or worse, networking will continue to occur on Zoom (and online generally).

Q. What are your thoughts on Zoom backdrops? Book shelf, blurred background, vacation photos, a blank void? Does it even matter? JKH: Do what works for you—and make sure the backdrop isn’t going to be a distraction for the people you’re connecting with. During one Zoom panel, I recall being unable to listen to a panelist’s remarks as her arms kept disappearing because of the backdrop.

Q. Much has been made about the strong personality of New Yorkers. What have you observed in the way they interact and communicate? JKH: New Yorkers are very direct, get-to-the-point types. It’s equally efficient and amusing. New Yorkers don’t like their time wasted but, in the right circumstances, they will give you all the time in the world. As for my communication style, after 21-plus years of living in New York, I’m a rather odd combination: the polite Canadian (who can happily wait their turn in line) and the brash New Yorker (who shouts when someone butts in). When someone I don’t know reaches out, I have a strong networking preference for being asked direct, specific career questions rather than vague ones. If I can direct someone to an answer, I want to be able to do so (quickly) and no, we do not necessarily need to discuss it over coffee or a Zoom!

Q. What’s the most common mistake people make when networking? JKH: Failure to follow-up. Number one networking mistake and a shockingly widespread one, too. By follow-up, I mean both extending thanks when someone gives you their time, advice or both, and updating them as to what you’ve done with their guidance. For example, if someone writes a recommendation letter for you, they want to hear from you if landed the position (they don’t want to hear it from a third party). Followup is such a simple, considerate networking mistake to correct and one that adds strength to relationships, too.

Q. Is teaching people how to network more effectively a form of networking for you? JKH: It sure is. Over the years, people I’ve met from speaking at conferences and events have become friends, business acquaintances, refer-ral sources etc. In many instances, those people have reached out years later—another reason to take a long view on networking. Tweeting, posting and blogging have also proven to be valuable networking tools. For me, it’s why I’ve spoken at the P&G Championship (multiple times), call bestselling author Tom Peters a friend and mentor and ended up on a British Airways hackathon (flight from SF to London) alongside tech luminaries that included Craig Newmark (founder of Craig’s List).

Q. For a lot of people, university can be a bit of a safety blanket, and the thought of “putting yourself out there” once you’ve graduated can be terrifying. What’s one piece of advice you have for those people? JKH: Don’t wait until you graduate to put yourself out there. Your networking building starts in university. Get involved on campus where you can. Talk to your professors, classmates, TAs and university staff about what you’re hoping to do after graduation, and remember be of service to them as well. The relationships you build in university have the potential to open a lot of career doors for you.

To attend the UVic Alumni Signature Speaker Series with J. Kelly Hoey on Nov. 16, visit uvic.ca/alumnisignaturespeaker.

Alumni SpotLight Event


Just down the hill from UVic — with lots of parking!