Truth before reconciliation

New podcast creates space for Indigenous histories and perspectives—exploring the power of truth-telling in advancing human rights.

BY LISA ABRAM

Canada’s genocide is getting harder to deny. So too is the growing recognition that human rights and the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples offer solutions to ending the systemic violence in Canada. From the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the introduction of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, human rights-based solutions are starting to take greater shape in society.

There remains a long road ahead, and truth-telling efforts remain essential. Yet, if truth must come before reconciliation, why are Indigenous truths so often suppressed?

A new podcast series—Taapwaywin: Talking about what we know and what we believe—from UVic Libraries aims to give voice to Indigenous perspectives on this question, harnessing the power of podcasting as an important and vital way of sharing knowledge beyond the classroom, or the campus.

Hosted by Associate University Librarian—Reconciliation By Moran, Taapwaywin features conversations with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Survivors, academics, activists and community leaders about the role truth-telling can play in societal healing.

"This podcast explores how power, memory, human rights and truth-telling intersect," says Moran. "The podcast is in many ways a deeper response to the questions I’ve been asked regarding our collective responsibilities towards truth and reconciliation and acknowledgment of processes of violent colonization."

Listening to the hard truths

Moran’s path to produce this podcast builds on decades of work. From his recent role as the founding director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation prior to his arrival at UVic to statement-gathering work with the TRC, Moran has listened to thousands of hours of residential school Survivor statements as part of the effort to honour and remember the children who never returned from the residential schools. These hard and often devastating truths—and the
The Ring

The University of Victoria’s community newspaper

Equity Action Plan provides springboard for creating and inclusive place to be

By PALOMA PONTI

After 18 months of consultation and development, and in support of the 11th and only the university community, the university’s Equity Action Plan (EAP) will be ready this October. The EAP will be the first of its kind at UVic.

“The Equity Action Plan is an important piece of truth-telling,” says UVic President Kevin Hall. Through the incredible work of the dedicated group who led this project, we now have a clear picture of the barriers faced by members of our community and strong guidance on how to productively address them. The EAP will help us all work toward a campus community that is inclusive, welcoming, equitable and supportive.

In a shift from previous UVic-wide equity plans focused on employment equity, this plan provides five overarching goals to advance equity, diversity and inclusion throughout all areas of the university. “Through this work, we will work and support students, staff and senior leaders, worked with conditions where everyone feels a sense of belonging, as connected and welcomed parts of the university community,” says Equity and Human Rights (ehr) Executive Director Carolyn Dewis.

While the committed actions outlined throughout the plan focus on bold changes to current university systems and structures, true cultural change also requires individual reflection and commitment to action.

Background

In order to ensure UVic community members were meaningfully involved in writing the EAP, the Reflection and Challenge Committee (RCC) was formed in April 2021. This committee, made up of 25 students, faculty, staff and campus leaders, worked with ehr for a year to design and champion community engagement.

Four phases of engagement took place from January to May 2022, during which the UVic community shared stories, experiences, advice and recommendations for building a more equitable university. In addition to hearing about peoples’ dreams of what equity, diversity and belonging could mean to come and look like at UVic, we heard from UVic community members about the barriers they are experiencing and witnessing in their everyday interactions at work or school.

“The Equity Action Plan is ambitious and thoughtful in its interpretation of the barriers that were brought forward during community engagement,” says Dowis.

As a suggested starting place for university community members, ehr along with a drafting commit-tee of students, staff and faculty have created Resources and Action Guides. These easy-to-use guides include reflection questions as well as suggested resources and actions to support students, educators, researchers and campus leaders to advance the goals of the EAP. We invite you to share these guides far and wide with your students and colleagues.

Being able to report on the gen-
der composition of students and employees can be useful in campus planning and policy decisions, and in advocating for our community. It can help to identify where non-binary students are under-represented in academic programs or identify ar-eas with few transgender applicants. Having expanded data will be useful in developing priorities where UVic needs to better integrate gender and diversity inclusive approaches to programs and services.

The collection of this information responds to new guidelines set by the BC government with the intention to increase inclusivity and gender equity for non-binary and transgender people. This change will also support Gender-Based Analysis Plus research led by the Government of Canada to collect disaggregated data to look at how intersecting identities (gender alongside other social identities) may impact the effectiveness of govern-

Uvic’s next steps are to update systems beyond Banner to include expanded gender declaration options. Currently, non-binary and transgender people are asked to update their gender information in multiple spaces. In the future it is hoped that when a person updates their gender declara-
tion through one system, it will signal for changes to be made to other UVic campus community members can follow along as actions are completed.

UVic earns global gold star for campus sustainability planning

UVic has been recognized once again as a top performer by the 2022 Sustainable Campus Index, with a 100% score and gold rating.

UVic tied for third place in the coordination and planning category, with five other top-performing Canadian universities and several international institutions.

The Sustainable Campus Index recognizes top-performing universities and colleges that participate in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (stars) and is released annually. UVic has continuously improved its stars submissions, which are assessed every three years, and earned gold-level ratings beginning in 2016: 76.70% in 2017; and 80.17% in 2020.

Coordination and planning

UVic received a grade of 100% in sustainability coordination and planning, showing that success starts with a great plan. This category includes initiatives and governance practices that foster sustainability at an institutional level through strategic planning for sustainable futures.

Examples include the work of the Sustainability Advisory Council, Staff Sustainability Network and Office of Campus Planning and Sustain-
ability, which works with students, faculty and staff in empowering UVic community members to take the goals and actions set out in the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP).

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stars is a voluntary framework used by colleges and universities to measure, report and strengthen their contributions to global sustainability. It is used by over 1,500 institutions internationally and is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The next stars reporting cycle takes place in 2023.

uvic.ca/sustainability
And you can't have reparation without Unearthing students' passions for experiential learning who has led the institute for the last work at
visited one of her classes, encouraging Jisgang Nika Collison, executive director of the Prairie Studies Professor Brendan Burke, emphasizes that donor support
putting field schools on hold—and students to take part in a Semester in Greece, “It is clear that we will require at least a tripling of support funds to be able to meet student demand.”
Even with carried-over travel funds accumulated when field schools were not operating during the pandemic, we're still deluged with requests for financial support from our students,” says Lisa Surridge, hancicipants associate dean academic. “It is clear that we will require at least a tripling of support funds to be able to meet student demand.”

In one episode, Moran examines the mobilization skills to support media creator, bringing his climate urgency of battling climate change, Mauro says. “Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Survivors are giving us a gift in sharing their stories—it is a privilege to listen to them.”

Mauro hopes this podcast will meaningfully contribute to the important work of helping Canadians better understand both the lived experiences and solutions being put forward by Indigenous Peoples. While the topics covered in the podcasts deal with difficult material, the importance of truth takes centre stage in this podcast. “Truth-telling—and especially the truths of Indigenous Peoples—no matter how difficult, is a necessary prerequisite to reconciliation,” Moran adds.

The series is available on major podcast platforms and on the web-site Taapwayin.ca, and was made possible by the University of Victoria Strategic Framework Impact Fund, with support from UVic Radio. A national Indigenous Residential School Survivors Society Crisis Line is set up to provide support for former students and those affected. People can access emotional and crisis re- ferral services by calling the 24-hour national crisis line: 1-866-925-4419. Taapwayin.ca

We need to be driving that solution narrative,” he says. “And it’s not just a narrative switch; it’s narrative followed by concrete action. It shows people that investments in climate solutions are the only way to get us out of this mess.”

Mauro focuses devoutly on the leadership role he has earned from the University of Victoria’s support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal’s (SDGs). The university recently placed second in the world among universities for climate action as ranked against the SDGs by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

Mauro says he appreciates the lived view of climate solutions at UVic and UVU: “British Columbia is a real leader in climate research and it’s humbling to contribute to this work. We recognize it’s a gift that we have in providing this service to the community.”
Climate action on land, air and water

To address the world’s most challenging problems, you need strong partnerships. UVic researchers are working with governments, communities and industry to make our world better in remarkable ways—and across countless fields. That’s how UVic came to be ranked earlier this year as the world’s #2 university for climate action and for sustaining life on land, and #5 for life below water—three key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

Protecting BC’s rockfish

Rockfish are homebodies. The 37 species that swim in the waters off British Columbia’s coast never stray far from the underwater rock piles or reefs that give them their name. They also live long lives, with some, like the yelloweye rockfish, lasting upwards of 120 years and others living 200 years or more.

While these characteristics might be common among animals, they cause the rockfish—the quillback, copper, chin and tiger rockfishes are other species that swim in BC waters—to be more susceptible to overfishing, usually by hook and line gear.

But Natalie Ban, a University of Victoria researcher and professor of environmental studies, is working on an almost decade-long project involving the rockfish in a protected area off Galiano Island that may provide lessons to help safeguard the world’s threatened fish species in diverse coastal areas.

Working with non-profit and business partners as well as Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ban and her UVic colleagues and colleagues have been examining the issue since 2013. Their research has included studying footage from remote trail cameras, deploying the world’s first in the Canadian Arctic and interviewing recreational fishers to learn their perspectives on rockfish conservation and the rules associated with Rockfish Conservation Areas (where “inshore rockfish are protected from all mortality associated with recreational and commercial fisheries”).

As well, they partnered with the Galiano Conservancy Association, which hosted educational booths at community events on Galiano and other islands.

“One of the key problems with any area that’s protected or has specific regulations associated with it is that there’s a level of compliance with the intention of that area,” says Ban. “So, if you have something like a Rockfish Conservation Area, if people don’t know about it, it’s not going to be effective. The lines on the map are not effective unless people know about them.”

The flip side is that lack of education, even temporarily, has demonstrable effects on the rockfish population. During the last two years of the pandemic, as festivals and community events were canceled, says the Galiano Conservancy Association had to shovel most of its outreach. “The result? Our lovely-good-news story has turned into alarm bells. Non-compliance is way up.”

But a private-sector research partner is helping. Angler’s Atlas, an online resource for recreational fishers, incorporated the boundaries of Rockfish Conservation Areas into its MyCatch smartphone app so that its users get an alert when they’re within Rockfish areas.

“It’s making it much easier for people to abide by the rules. That really was badly needed,” Ban says, noting, “It’s easy to fish out a rock pile, or to fish out a rock if there’s enough people. People taking one or two [fish] each, it doesn’t take much pressure to be able to fish it out.”

Ban says, “It was game over before rockfish and Galiano Island, though, while directly addressing the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals numbers 13 to 15 (Climate Action, Life Below Water and Life on Land) as well as, crucially, number 17—Partnerships for the Goals.

“We’re showcasing how academia and, in this case, not-for-profit organization and private-sector organizations can partner to work together effectively and monitor some of the effects of those outreach programs.”

Cooperation and co-creation are key aspects of Ban’s research. “That’s really what drives me… and the same with my students. We really want to see real change and to make an impact. We need to do this on a large scale.”

A rock-solid solution for carbon dioxide

What if atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2)—a key and non-negligible driver of climate change—could be removed from the atmosphere and permanently stored as rock? It’s possible—and possible on an enormous scale—thanks to a quirk in Earth’s chemistry that makes CO2 react with ocean basalt to mineralize or take on solid form.

UVic’s Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) initiative is at the forefront of developing technologies to do just that with its Solid Carbon project.

The Solid Carbon team, comprising Canadi-

an, American and German researchers, experts and industry partners, aims to permanently sequester CO2 as solid rock deep beneath the ocean floor. It will capture CO2 from the atmosphere and sequester CO2 as solid rock deep beneath the ocean floor. It will capture CO2 from the atmosphere and use its potential for durably sequestering up to 20 gigatons of atmospheric CO2 per year—a huge bite out of annual emissions, as well as the potential for creation of a new sustainable industry for Canada.

“Because we already have real-time monitoring and we have sites in a wide range of ocean environments, our platforms can be used to move these technologies from early stage to the laboratory into higher technology readiness and, ultimately, to commercialization,” Moran says.

The real-time and long-term data ONC collects and shares with more than 20,000 scientists, governments and citizens around the world also helps with maritime safety as well as tsunami and earthquake early warnings. Additionally, ONC collaborates with coastal First Nations in BC, engaging with those counties and sharing its information while drawing on their traditional and current knowledge as environmental stewards.

Tracking change in the Arctic

Temperature increases that are four times faster than the global average are rapidly transforming Arctic ecosystems.

Accelerated warming is increasing permafrost melting and shifting the ranges of many species, which creates significant challenges for northern communities by impacting travel routes, subsistence harvesting, and the stability of roads and buildings.

UVic ecologist Trevor Lantz is working with communities in the western Arctic to better understand environmental change and its impacts. Lantz’s research team uses a combination of field studies, remote sensing and collaboration with Greenlandic and Inuitual experts to determine where and why ecosystems are changing, and to understand how these transformations are impacting northern livelihoods.

“Landscapes are shifting so quickly that using conventional monitoring approaches to track change across large geographic areas is often insufficient,” says Lantz. “In my research group we have been fortunate to collaborate with hunters, fishers, and trappers who are often the first to observe new changes.”

Lantz’s research is particularly relevant to northern decision-making and climate change adaptation because it identifies where ecosystem change is happening, but also explores the factors that control landscape sensitivity to climate change.

“Predicting what Arctic landscapes will look like in 50-100 years requires that we understand why we are seeing changes in some areas and not others,” adds Lantz, who was elected to the Royal Society of Canada earlier this year for his research.

Lantz’s research group contributes to northern decision-making by creating maps that show sensitivity to permafrost thaw and coastal flooding exposure, as well as the development of methods to evaluate the cumulative impacts of environmental change on cultural landscapes. Their work over the last two decades clearly shows that prioritizing environmental monitoring programs that are developed and sustained by Indigenous knowledge holders is critical to understand and the future of these landscapes,” says Lantz.

UVic has an emergent strength in Arctic re-

search, with scholars making important contributions to our understanding of environmental change in the north and the significant impact these changes have on the global climate system.

Learn more about UVic’s commitment to the UN SDGs at uvic.ca/impact

PHOTO: JORDAN SEIDER

PHOTO: SHANE GROSS
New scholar to focus on Indigenous mental health

BY ANNE MACLAURIN

Emily Haigh, born in Toronto, is Anishinaabe-Métis from the Robinson District (Thessalon First Nation) in Northern Ontario, came from a long line of fishermen,” says Haigh. “He grew up with his parents and four siblings in a two-bedroom house with an outhouse.”

Haigh describes her grandmother as a person who placed a high value on education—often at family gatherings—reminding all the grandchildren of the importance of learning.

In July, Haigh arrived at the University of Victoria to begin a five-year term as the inaugural Chief Mungo Martin Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health.

“I am so honoured and humbled by the Mungo Martin family for their willingness to permit the university to use the name of their respected relative for the role at UVic and for having this vision as part of a legacy,” says Haigh. She has already travelled to Fort Rupert to meet with Chief Knox and looks forward to building a strong relationship.

The late Chief Mungo Martin was a world-renowned Kwakwaka’wakw artist and revered figure in Pacific Northwest Coast and contemporary Indigenous art. He contributed greatly to the creative arts, which play an integral role in shifting cultural perceptions of mental health.

Honoured and humbled by family’s generosity

On Sept. 22, an Indigenous naming ceremony was held at Wawadit’la, also known as Mungo Martin House, the ceremonial big house built seven decades ago by Chief Mungo Martin.

“I was struck by what I read about the role of the chair also supports students who are interested in pursuing a career in psychology with a focus on collaborating with Indigenous communities. “I am teaching a new course this fall called Introduction to Indigenous Mental Health and Healing,” says Haigh. “It is full of wonderful students interested in this critical topic.”

For Haigh, success will be helping to educate, mentor and teach the next generation of psychologists who will bridge the gap between Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing with western approaches to psychology. Haigh will use a community-based approach in her research that includes listening to the needs of Indigenous communities and collaboratively moving toward better mental health.

“The Chief Mungo Martin Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health is a commitment to decolonizing psychological approaches in a culturally safe environment,” says Haigh. The research chair is funded by a $1.5-million gift, announced in December, from UVic political science alumnus Bruce McKean. He says he hopes the research chair will create knowledge and leadership consistent with Indigenous values—rein forcing and advancing those values for the benefit of all Canadians.

McKean originally suggested the name of the research chair to reflect an important memory from his childhood when he would visit Thunderbird Park with his mother, standing amidst the scent of cedar sharings and watching Mungo Martin work on his carvings.

The role of the chair also supports UVic’s commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), in particular SDG Goal 3, which focuses on good health and well-being.
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October marks the 10-year anniversary of the community-led Cambridge Bay Ocean Observatory, a pioneering partnership between Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) and the people of Cambridge Bay. This observatory has had a significant impact on the region, demonstrating the benefits of community-led ocean science.

"Cambridge Bay has proven to be a trailblazer for community-led ocean science," says Kate Moran, ONC president and CEO. "ONC is proud to now support 10 community observatories along Canada’s Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic coastlines."

The observatory, which consists of an onshore meteorological station and a shallow undersea cabled sensor system, was designed to empower communities to conduct year-round instrument deployment and data collection in support of local environmental monitoring and research. Members of the Cambridge Bay community were integral to the observatory’s design and implementation, and continued to be involved in the ongoing operation and maintenance of the observatory.

The Cambridge Bay observatory has proved to be a critical tool for understanding the rapidly changing Arctic, which is critical for food and cultural resilience. In three years’ time, Bourque Bearskin envisions that 24 to 30 nursing students will enrol in the Cambridge Bay Observatory program with another 30 Indigenous nurses, non-Indigenous nurses, and non-Indigenous nurses with the lived experience and its ice cover. But half of the Arctic ocean is shallow continental shelf, where Indigenous communities are located and increased industrial development and ship traffic is expected, and thus there is a pressing need for coastal observatories like that of Cambridge Bay.

"Our Elders used to be able to tell us: On this day the ice is going to freeze. On this day, it’s not going to be safe enough to walk on," says Otokiak. "And now they can’t do that anymore because it’s just so very unpredictable. You never know when it’s going to freeze, when it’s going to melt."

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Piers: new Legacy Gallery exhibit focused on fostering of creative influence and expression

BY JOHN THRELFALL

Walk onto any pier and you’ll find yourself supported over a fluid environment. Work alongside a peer in teaching, learning and mentorship. It’s also how the practices of artists working within the visual arts department extend beyond campus in relation to teaching and learning.

“Artists who work in the visual arts department—whether as faculty, sessional instructors or staff—were invited to place their practice in dialogue with that of a past student or mentor,” explains exhibit curator Kim Dhillon, a former instructor in the department. “Nine artists selected an artist to work alongside, someone whose work influenced their own through the course of teaching and learning.”

The exhibit features contemporary painting, sculpture, video and photography by visual arts professors Cedric Bomford, Megan Dickie, Lauren Dutton, Daniel Laskarin, Jennifer Stillwell, Beth Stuart and Paul Walde; instructor Danielle Proteau; staff member Hollis Roberts, and alumni Katie Bethune-Leamen, Christopher Lindsay, Evan Lucke and Lauren Brimson. Other participating artists include Yan Wen Chang, Annika Erikson, James Legaspi, Arlene Stamp and Grace Tramurama.

The selection was left up to the individual: professors Paul Walde and Cedric Bomford, for example, chose to showcase their own former teachers (Arlene Stamp and Annika Erikson), while professors Megan Dickie and Daniel Laskarin are paired with alumni who now work for the department (faculty and production manager Hollis Roberts and sessional instructor Danielle Proteau, respectively).

In a pier, a dialogue occurs between the artworks by Laskarin and Proteau to connect ideas about art “as ghosts”—something that is both there and not there— as the process of removal as a way of uncovering. As Proteau notes, while there is a material connection in their practices—both work in sculpture and photography—there is also a philosophical similarity in how they explore presence and absence through a process of reconstruction. “Both of our practices crack open ways of working through our grief Hollis created her weaving while her Dad was sick and I created my butterfly sculpture soon after my partner passed away. I can’t speak for Hollis, but I feel like both of us needed the repetitive work as a purpose to keep going, keep moving and feel like there was something in our control.”

Roberts agrees. “I found that the repetition of weaving was a way to make the chaos I was experiencing surrounding my dad’s illness tangible.”

She says, “It was cathartic, rhythmic and it made space for my thoughts to ruminate both before and after dad’s passing.”

“It’s also no coincidence that the genesis for Piers came out of the crimin era, when campuses and shared spaces like studios and classrooms were temporarily closed. As curator Dhillon notes, while some benefits arose from the shift to online learning—specifically in the areas of accessibility and flexibility—many artists and students also felt a loss of connection.”

“Making this exhibition has been a process of exchange and dialogue for artists to connect again with students and faculty, and the experience has been invaluable. We examined students who have influenced their own practices over the course of their careers,” she says.

Uvic music stars now in orbit

BY JOHN THRELFALL

While they’ve long been considered stars in the world of classical music, UVic’s Lafayette String Quartet (LSQ) are now officially astronomical, thanks to the newly named asteroid (613419) Lafayettequartet.

Longtime LSQ follower James Hessler—director emeritus of Victoria’s Dominion Astrophysical Observatory—wanted to mark the recent announcement of the quartet’s formation with a unique approach: to name a small asteroid in the orbit of Mars, where (613419) is located. The LSQ is made up of five Canadian and one British—five original members. “It’s also no coincidence that the genesis for Piers came out of the crimin era, when campuses and shared spaces like studios and classrooms were temporarily closed. As curator Dhillon notes, while some benefits arose from the shift to online learning—specifically in the areas of accessibility and flexibility—many artists and students also felt a loss of connection.”

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Longtime LSQ follower James Hessler—director emeritus of Victoria’s Dominion Astrophysical Observatory—wanted to mark the recent announcement of the quartet’s formation with a unique approach: to name a small asteroid in the orbit of Mars, where (613419) is located. The LSQ is made up of five Canadian and one British—five original members. “It’s also no coincidence that the genesis for Piers came out of the crimin era, when campuses and shared spaces like studios and classrooms were temporarily closed. As curator Dhillon notes, while some benefits arose from the shift to online learning—specifically in the areas of accessibility and flexibility—many artists and students also felt a loss of connection.”

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