Čeqwänin and Snejə

Iəkʷənən place names given to UVic’s new student housing and dining buildings.

The names of local villages and the Peoples from the land on which UVic now sits were reclaimed and lifted up on April 5 as the names for the university’s two new student housing and dining buildings.

In a ceremony and celebration at UVic, university and community members gathered to reveal the names for the territory that now sits were reclaimed and lifted up on April 5 as the names for the university’s two new student housing and dining buildings.

In a ceremony and celebration at UVic, university and community members gathered to reveal the names and to thank and honour the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations for permission to use Iəkʷənən names. The first of the new student housing and dining buildings, started in 2019 and completed in 2022, is called Čeqwänin ʔéʔləŋ (Cheko’nien House), after a village in what is now known as Cadboro Bay. It was used for camas harvesting, trading and cultural and spiritual practices. It means “snow patches.”

“The second of these new buildings, to be completed by September 2023, is called Sŋéqə ʔéʔləŋ (Snegro House), after a village in what is now known as Oak Bay, and the Peoples who lived there.

“The building names will be a constant reminder of the history of these lands and will hopefully inspire critical reflections and educational opportunities for the campus community. The work we’ve undertaken together represents a milestone in acknowledging the true history of where we are located—on Iəkʷənən territory—and a way forward in continuing to build respectful relationships with local Nations.”

To ensure this work was done in a respectful way, UVic asked Chiefs and Councils, Elders and community members for guidance and direction on the building naming. Collaboration and meaningful consultations were at the centre of this work.

“One vision for working together on this over the last five years was driven by a strong commitment to honour and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and being into our work in a respectful manner,” noted Joel Lynn, executive director of student services at UVic.

“We set out to create a meaningful opportunity to share the history of this land with our students and the campus community. The work we’ve undertaken together represents a milestone in acknowledging the true history of where we are located—on Iəkʷənən territory—and a way forward in continuing to build respectful relationships with local Nations.”

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Harnessing BC's tidal energy for a clean energy future

BY RYAN WATSON

West Thrulander, 35 kilometres of the coast of Campbell River, boats, wind turbines, and other infrastructure suggest a potential to support a bounty of tidal energy reserves—completely untapped until a unique UVic-led community partnership started working on proving the viability of tidal energy in small BC coastal communities.

The RDCK, a coastal First Nation, acknowledges and respects the abundant tidal power resource that can be harnessed for a clean energy future, says Paul MacNeil, Chief of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and co-director of UVic’s Institute for Ocean Design Solutions. “Working collaboratively with support from UVic, the RDCK and the local sector, our role at UVic is to design, develop and deliver a tidal energy system that will lead us to achieving this vision, with many existing organizations, environmental and social benefits for remote, rural, and coastal communities throughout our province.”

Since receiving a $5 million announcement through the BC government’s Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) Fund, the RDCK and several other renewable energy leaders and researchers have been working on what they call “low carbon hydrogen,” a clean fuel with the potential to reduce emissions and significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

Initial testing has shown promising results, with Matt Fargey, BC’s director of business development and operations with the Blind Channel official tidal power demonstration project. “It’s shown that it was possible to harness tidal current using an off-grid community and I’m excited to support the UVic rural team as they work to transform Blind Channel into a model for Canada’s remote communities looking to use tidal power and other forms of renewables to reduce their use of diesel fuel,” says Fargey.

With public support, tidal energy has the potential to become a viable, clean energy solution for small communities and significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

“We’re excited for the opportunity to help facilitate tidal energy technology and research in the RDCK,” said Blushin. “We’re excited for the opportunity to help facilitate tidal energy technology and research in the RDCK.”

The RDCK, in partnership with BC’s off-grid community transition to clean energy future, assists researchers with UVic’s new research efforts in the RDCK.

“The RDCK is committed to advancing BC’s tidal energy programme,” said Blushin. “We’re working with UVic to help develop the RDCK’s tidal energy programme and assist in the RDCK’s efforts towards reducing our reliance on diesel fuel.”

The RDCK has committed to using tidal energy to power the RDCK’s future energy needs, reducing our reliance on diesel fuel and significantly reducing our carbon footprint.

Innovative renewable energy projects in the RDCK and beyond are the key to making this happen.”

For more information, please contact Ryan Watson, UVic’s Director of Business Development and Operations, or Matt Fargey, BC’s Director of Business Development and Operations, at 250-721-5432 or email rin@uvic.ca.

For more information about UVic’s commitment to climate action at actonuvic.com.
Local variations in marine heatwaves show some hope for corals

Marine heatwaves triggered by climate change are causing serious concern as they threaten the world's coral reefs. But new research shows that some undamaged reefs may be able to survive if the right conditions are met.

The study, led by UVic professor Anna Parmar, found that some coral mortality as a result of the 2016 and 2017 heatwaves on the Great Barrier Reef was less. Some coral reefs in the northern part of the reef, which experienced the worst heatwave, showed more recovery than other parts.

The team studied the coral reefs in the Whitsunday Islands in the Great Barrier Reef and found that some reefs were able to recover even after experiencing extreme heat events.

Anna Parmar is an experienced trainer on the impacts of climate change on coral reefs and is known for her work on the development of training programs for coral reef managers and conservationists.

Parmar's team collected coral samples from various locations in the Whitsunday Islands and analyzed them for signs of heat stress and recovery.

They found that some reefs were able to recover even after experiencing extreme heat events. This suggests that some reefs may be able to survive if the right conditions are met.

Parmar is an expert in the field of coral reef conservation and has worked extensively on the development of training programs for coral reef managers and conservationists. Her work has been widely recognized and she has received numerous awards for her contributions to the field.

Parmar's research emphasizes the need for targeted and sustainable management strategies to protect and restore coral reefs in the face of ongoing climate change.
**CIFAL Victoria turns one**

In a single year since its inception, CIFAL Victoria, the UN’s first training centre in the region, has established a strong community presence and network, attracting more than 1,000 participants. Under President Kevin Vall, CIFAL Victoria has set the stage for a training environment that is inclusive, innovative, and responsive to the needs of the local community.

**Co-op students recognized for their contributions**

Over the past year, UVic’s co-op students have made significant contributions to workplaces and communities across the world. Their experiences have been diverse, ranging from legal research and policy analysis to software development and community consultation. Their impact has been recognized through various awards and recognition by their employers.

**Annual BFA exhibition showcases professional practice**

The annual BFA exhibition at Visual Arts Victoria is a celebration of the professional practice of UVic’s visual arts students. The exhibition features a diverse range of works, including painting, drawing, sculpture, and digital media, showcasing the creativity and technical skill of the students. The event is open to the public, providing a platform for students to showcase their work and receive feedback from the community.

**BY KATY DECOUST**

From organizing lunch-and-learns about environmental issues at the workplace to participating in community craft nights and youth dinners and stepping up to contribute to social justice initiatives, UVic’s co-op students are making an impact in their local communities and beyond.

**BY JOHN THRELFALL**

While April was more focused on final exams, graduating visual arts students are getting more final touches to their projects and planning their future careers. The UVic Visual Arts Building, which has been a hub for local and international artists, is now the stage for the annual exhibition, showcasing the work of some of the most talented and diverse artists in the region.

**Indigenous tech founder named 2023 Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year**

Bobbi Racette, the founder of Virtual Gurus and Gurus and AskBetty, is the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business 2023 Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year. As an entrepreneur, Racette is committed to diversity and inclusion, and her company’s mission is to provide access to Indigenous language revitalization. Her success and contributions have been recognized through various awards, including UVic’s 2022 Co-op Student of the Year—Optional and the Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year award.
It was the first time in my life where I actually felt like I belonged. I found my people. I found my true self. That’s what I found in physics and astronomy at UVic. That recognition is what helped guide me to the space sector, and working at the Canadian Space Agency.

Josh Lovell

Barred in his 30s, Josh Lovell, BMus ‘15, is already a major player in the international classical music scene, performing at such prestigious venues as Teatro alla Scala Milan and Vienna opera house Wiener Staatsoper, where he is an ensemble member. The UVic music grad and recipient of an Emerging Alumni Award says the life of a professional opera singer is a lot of hustle and bustle, but his university experiences laid the foundation for his burgeoning career.

‘There is no exact moment of ‘making it,’” says Lovell. “All one can hope for is that they develop their voice as an Indigenous academic so that they can reach a high level since finishing my education. This entire journey goes back to UVic. None of this would have been possible without my teacher at UVic, Benjamin Butterfield.”

Alumni at forefront of creating positive change for Indigenous people

Whether it’s amplifying voices, empowering communities through technology or reconnecting cultural traditions and plant-based knowledge, three UVic alumni are at the forefront of creating positive change for Indigenous people. They are all among the recipients of the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards.

Lawrence Lewis

A member of the Wei Wai Kai Nation (Cape Mudge Indian Band) on Quadra Island, Lawrence Lewis is an Indigenous Engagement and Training Lead at UVic in ethnobotany and aims to contribute by providing luxury skincare and wellness products that draw from the ceremonial aspects of plants. She is currently completing her PhD at UVic in ethnobotany and aims to contribute her voice as an Indigenous academic so that other Indigenous authors and students will feel themselves represented and reflected in ethnobotany literature.

Leigh Joseph

As an ethnobotanist, researcher and entrepreneur from the Squamish First Nation, Leigh Joseph (ancestral name Styawat) is the founder of beauty brand 69walwen Botanicals, which brings together Indigenous science and self-care by providing luxury skincare and wellness products that draw from the ceremonial aspects of plants. She is currently completing her PhD at UVic in ethnobotany and aims to contribute her voice as an Indigenous academic so that other Indigenous authors and students will feel themselves represented and reflected in ethnobotany literature.

Leigh Joseph, BSc ’09

She credits the support of her professors and the community she found at UVic with providing the fuel to propel her skyward.

Kear Porttris

Although a civil engineer by training, Kear Porttris considers himself an Indigenous community engagement specialist. In his current roles as Indigenous Engagement and Training Lead with BC Hydro and owner of Porttris Consulting Group, he helps guide and connect Indigenous communities, governments and contractors to raise the level of inclusion and understanding across projects, procurement and programming.

‘There’s a lot of work going on to increase inclusion in STEM for Indigenous people, as Indigenous representation in STEM professionals is extremely low,’ says Porttris, a recipient of the University of Victoria’s 2023 Emerging Alumni Award. “Demand for Indigenous professionals is growing exponentially, across all fields. Supporting these professionals is really important.”

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Joseph says, “my experiences laid the foundation for me to reconnect to community and culture in such profound ways. Throughout my experiences at UVic, I had cultural teachers and people helping guide me on how to bridge being a researcher within my own community and other Indigenous communities. And I feel really grateful for that.”

This year’s awards recognize 16 outstanding graduates across three categories:

The Presidents’ Alumni Awards recognize the outstanding lifetime accomplishments of alumni. The Emerging Alumni Awards recognize the outstanding professional achievements and/or contributions of recent alumni to the community. The Indigenous Community Alumni Awards recognize contributions of alumni to Indigenous communities which have improved outcomes for Indigenous people, and contribute to truth and reconciliation.

2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards

From the far reaches of outer space, to the opera houses of Europe, to the intersection of Indigenous science and self-care, the recipients of the 2023 University of Victoria Distinguished Alumni Awards span the globe with their remarkable achievements.

This year, UVic and the UVic Alumni Association recognize 16 individuals in three categories: the Presidents’ Alumni Awards (presented by UVic’s President and the President of the UVic Alumni Association), the Indigenous Community Alumni Awards and the Emerging Alumni Awards.

Julie Claveau

For Julie Claveau, BSc ‘99, recipient of the Presidents’ Distinguished Alumni Award, the journey from UVic science grad to astrophysicist at the Canadian Space Agency where she recently worked on the James Webb Space Telescope mission, has been anything but a straight line.

She credits the support of her professors and the community she found at UVic with providing the fuel to propel her skyward.

‘I ended up finding like-minded people that had the same passions as me,” recalls Claveau. “It was the first time in my life where I actually felt like I belonged. I found my people. I found my true self. That’s what I found in physics and astronomy at UVic. That recognition is what helped guide me to the space sector, and working at the Canadian Space Agency.”

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Presidents’ Alumni Awards

Julie Claveau, BSc ‘99
Michael Dunn, BA ’74
Gargee Ghosh, BA ’97
Maureen Gruben, BSc ’90, MSc ’92
Lisa Helps, BA ’02, MA ’05
Leena Yousefi, BA ’06, JD ’10

Emerging Alumni Awards

Taiwo Afolabi, PhD ’20
Debra Dano, JD ’13
Sarah Jim, BFA ’19
Josh Lovell, BMus ’15
Moussa Magassa, GCert ’17, PhD ’20
Kear Porttris, BEng ’17, MAsc ’21

Indigenous Community Alumni Awards

Denise Augustine, BEd ’90
Leigh Joseph, BSc ‘10, MSc ’12
Lawrence Lewis, BA ’93, Dipl ’98
Art Napoleon, GCert ’13, MA ’15

Learn more about each of these individuals at tiny.cc/23-daa