



University
of Victoria

Learning and Teaching
Support and Innovation

Annual Report

September 2022
to August 2023

Last updated: November 14, 2023





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Data and stories were developed by contributions from the LTSI team.

A message from the executive director

As I reflect on the past year within the Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation, it has been nothing short of transformative. It marks the first full year of my leadership within the division, and together with our dedicated team, we have navigated a period of immense transition. We started the year on the heels of an announcement of budget reductions throughout the University, which forced us to take a closer look at everything we do and how we can continue to deliver exceptional value while adapting to changing circumstances.

Our purpose throughout the year remained constant —to prioritize students' learning journeys and growth by fostering a culture of exceptional teaching and innovation that promotes academic success and personal development. Reviewing the new strategic plan, [Distinctly UVic](#), as well as the new Indigenous plan, [Xwkwənəŋ istəl W̱ ǾENENISTEL Helping to move each other forward](#), we are reminded of our mission to support learning and teaching excellence. We aim to operate with excellence, contribute to societal progress, support lifelong learning, uphold Indigenous ways of knowing, create an inclusive, accessible, equitable and supportive space and embrace risk-taking through trust, respect and accountability. We carry these principles in all that we do.

I am proud of all that we have accomplished in this past academic year. Our achievements are also a testament to our resilience and adaptability amid many external changes. We've created invaluable learning guides and courses, redesigned workshops, created a podcast and engaged in meaningful storytelling to showcase instructors' experiences. We continue to provide robust academic support for students through academic coaching, academic communication and math and stats assistance opportunities. This report outlines some of our key areas of development and milestones.

Continued >



“We aim to operate with excellence, contribute to societal progress, support lifelong learning, uphold Indigenous ways of knowing, create an inclusive, accessible, equitable and supportive space and embrace risk-taking through trust, respect and accountability.”

We also engaged in an external review process this past spring, which provided us with thoughtful insights and recommendations. This was the first time our division underwent a review in over twenty years. Thank you to our reviewers: Elizabeth Elle, Simon Fraser University; Nancy Turner, University of Saskatchewan; and Reuben Rose-Redwood, University of Victoria, for providing us with this valuable reflective exercise. We have taken these recommendations to heart and are already working diligently to address them. The reviewers repeatedly encouraged us to clarify our purpose and define a clear mandate to guide our activities and priorities. With this in mind, we will be revisiting our mission and values accordingly.

In the coming year, we will continue to concentrate efforts to support our two audiences: instructors and students.

As we embark on this exciting journey, I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated team and the entire UVic community for your unwavering support. Together, we will continue to foster a culture of exceptional teaching and innovation, ensuring that our students' learning journeys are both enriching and transformative.

Best,



Shailoo Bedi, Executive Director,
Division of Learning and Teaching
Support and Innovation

Highlights of our external review

Our division underwent an external review in May 2023. Although the reviewers noted strong teaching and student facing supports through LTSI, they highlighted missed potential opportunities to be a key partner in multiple strategic initiatives at the university. Resulting from this, recommendations were as follows:

- 1 Clarify the division mandate, including mission and values
- 2 Create an organizational structure that supports campus priorities and curricular issues
- 3 Ensure we are meeting the needs of faculty and instructors by conducting needs assessments

We have already started making changes in our division to address these recommendations and have explored this further in our [Going forward section](#) of the report.



LTSI **by** NUMBERS

Our instructors

TECHNOLOGY

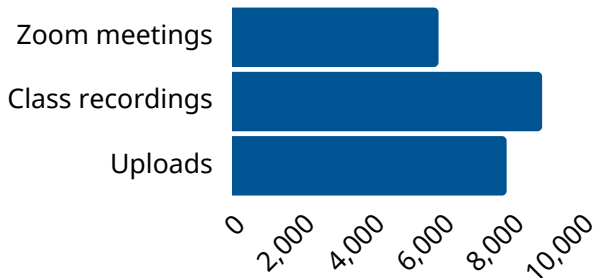
12,495

Brightspace
Courses

1,323

Crowdmark
Assessments

24,553 Echo360
Recordings



3 NEW

tech adoptions

PrairieLearn | Revel | Leganto

WORKSHOPS

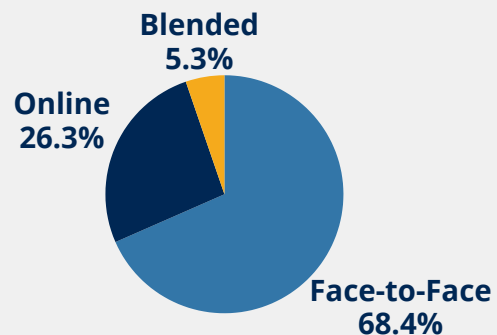
222

Registered including
38 instructor workshops and
12 TA workshops

Courses and conferences



- Doing TA work online
- Instructional Skills Workshop
- Let's Talk About Teaching
- TA Conference (Fall and Spring)



WAYS WE HELP



4971

support
tickets



510

live support
hours



50

curriculum &
project consults



90

CEL instructor
consults

WAYS WE FUND

27 funded teaching grants | \$169,767

19 Teaching-Stream Faculty Pro-D | \$23,337

10 Continuing Sessional Lecturer Pro-D | \$9,492

15 Term Sessional Lecturer Pro-D | \$23,575

6 Teaching Award winners

LTSI **by** NUMBERS

WORKSHOPS

434

Registered including
51 workshops and
12 guest lectures on CEL

Our students

WAYS WE HELP student appointments



12,585

math &
stats



2,158

written
feedback



1,191

academic
communication



575

learning
strategies



185

community-
engaged learning



WAYS WE FUND grants and awards

Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards (JCURA)

\$168,000 | 112 Scholars | 41 units

Valerie Kuehne Undergraduate Research Awards (VKURA)

\$332,500 | 45 Scholars | 7
faculties

Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada)

\$388,200



New blog posts/videos

- Eating the elephant: how to stay motivated and plan time effectively
- Top 3 time-management tips to reduce your stress
- How to ace the exam period in three simple steps



Our five priorities

Our division has made great impact in the learning and teaching space this past academic year. Although there has been work done beyond these priorities, below are a few highlights.

1 Universal design and access

Universal design and access focuses on creating an inclusive learning environment that accommodates the diverse needs of all students, ensuring equal access to educational resources and opportunities. This priority involved (re)designing courses, materials, and spaces to be accessible to everyone, regardless of abilities.

2 Innovative teaching practices

This priority centers on enhancement of teaching and learning methodologies used by instructors, faculty members and teaching assistants. Work included a focus on peer review of teaching processes, adoption of learning technologies and the creation of supportive communities of practice.

3 Recognition of skill development & achievement

We are dedicated to the development and recognition of all that work at the university, including both our learning and teaching staff, instructors, students and campus collaborators. This priority included redesigning programs and introducing performance metrics that empowered growth opportunities for career advancement. This extended to highlighting those who go above and beyond in learning and teaching, including the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

4 Academic ethics and integrity in the age of technology

Even as technology and generative artificial intelligence increasingly influence post-secondary education, we continue to prioritize and uphold academic ethics and integrity. This priority encompassed not just traditional academic integrity concerns of plagiarism and contract cheating, but also explored responsible and ethical use of technological tools and innovations, providing guidance and implications to the campus community.

5 Student-centred learning and achievement

We are dedicated to enhancing student engagement and success and encompass a range of initiatives. This priority included enhancing our portfolios in community-engaged learning, student research awards, peer programming and evaluating student access to empower students, creating meaningful learning experiences and supporting their academic journey.

NEW Web resources

- [Universal Design for Learning learning guide](#)
- [Peer Review of Teaching learning guide](#)
- [Frequently asked Brightspace questions](#)
- [Digital literacy TA guide](#)
- [Supporting accessible assessments](#)
- [Accessible meetings and events](#)
- [Accessibility in higher education TA guide](#)
- [Peer-based teaching programs](#)

Priority 1: Universal design and access

Accessibility plan committee

Over the past year, in line with [The Accessible British Columbia Act](#), the university embarked on a comprehensive project to enhance accessibility across the institution. Led by the Vice-President Academic and Provost (VPAC), the aim was to create an [Accessibility Plan](#), that instructors and students alike could use. To incorporate a holistic perspective, various stakeholders were consulted including LTSI. This digital tool will aid in the creation of targeted resources, empowering our instructors to cultivate an accessible and inclusive learning environment for students.



Learn more about the accessibility plan:
uvic.ca/accessibility-plan

Universal Design for Learning - a learning guide

To ensure that instructors and teaching assistants are well-equipped with the basic principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#), we designed a comprehensive online learning guide. The guide's objective is to help instructors understand principles and benefits of UDL, apply principles to course design and personal teaching contexts and to evaluate and enhance instructional practices. It includes reflection exercises as well as further resources. We will continue to build out this guide and have started to tailor workshops to particular groups wanting further training.



Learn more about the learning guide:
teachanywhere.uvic.ca/udl

Curriculum initiatives

We provided strategic guidance for the School of Business, through a guideline of UDL focused assessments, which we plan to broaden to a wider audience in the coming year. We have also done work with several academic departments in Human and Social Development to support issues related to grading and assessment through rubric design and aligning learning outcomes with assignments. Furthermore, regular consultations with academic units have not only fostered enhanced awareness but also highlighted the diverse ways LTSI continues to bolster academic programs.

Priority 1: Universal design and access

The *un*workshop initiative

In response to evolving needs of our community, we have been proactive in designing alternative resources to traditional synchronous workshops. For example: we initiated a [podcast series](#) and created a resource that showcases various polling options available to instructors (public version available soon). Lastly, our online learning guides will provide an asynchronous alternative for instructors wanting to gain further understanding of learning and teaching initiatives.



Explore our learning guides:
[teachanywhere.uvic.ca/
learning-guide](https://teachanywhere.uvic.ca/learning-guide)

Teach Anywhere podcast

We implemented the [Teach Anywhere podcast](#) to better connect with our academic community: each of the six episodes featured a different instructor. The conversations focused on how they selected and used educational technologies in the course(s) they teach at UVic, the steps they took to select the tool(s), how things played out in the classroom, and what they learned from the experience.



Listen to the podcast:
[teachanywhere.uvic.ca/
podcast](https://teachanywhere.uvic.ca/podcast)

UDL training and knowledge translation

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, three of our staff members underwent comprehensive [UDL professional development training through CAST](#) this past summer. Their experiences and insights will be instrumental in enhancing our collective understanding of UDL principles. The team members are eager to share their findings and knowledge with the rest of our team.

“

"By having the video available for them, they were able to take part in that course. And by embracing that type of student, I was able to reach someone who ended up really enjoying the course, learning a lot, finding it a very valuable experience.

...So I want to continue this process of finding ways to reach students in ways that work well for them."

- Dr. Travis Martin

”



PRIORITY FEATURE

Let's Talk About Teaching

teachanywhere.uvic.ca/ltat

Every year, we facilitate a teaching conference [Let's Talk About Teaching \(LTAT\)](#). Historically, it took place over three days and invited instructors and faculty to gather to network and discuss teaching approaches. Decreasing attendance prompted us to survey all faculty/instructors to see what would contribute to attendance and what topics and format of sessions they preferred. We are grateful for the data we received and have adapted our conference based on these results.

This year's theme was "accessibility, relationality, and belonging," to intersect with the launch of [UVic's accessibility plan](#), [equity action plan](#), and [Indigenous plan](#). The format of the conference was re-imagined using principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) as a guideline.

Flexibility & Accessibility

The event was condensed to one day and participants had the option to attend face-to-face or online with some multi-access sessions. Additionally, presenters were asked to record their sessions for review afterwards. We also adapted the schedule to provide fewer concurrent talks over a shorter period of time. This allowed participants to choose what interested them and take breaks when needed. Participants were also given clear directions prior to the event on how to get to each room for the event, and what accessible measures each room had for those who needed them. Lastly, recorded presentations had transcription turned on and the keynote had an ASL interpreter and captionist.

Engagement

Another goal was to create more dialogue and engagement. We created more opportunities for dialogue during presentations, achieved through a lightning talk format. During these sessions, four presenters would gather in one room and take ten minutes to share their ideas. Additionally, a virtual gallery was created including short papers and presentations so that people may still engage with their ideas, even after the event was over.

“ I love how a community is created over the course of a day ”

While the addition of all these elements to this year's conference was a major undertaking, it proved successful, as the event received an array of positive feedback. To build off the event's success, future LTAT events will use a hybrid modality, with the goal of having a room at the venue designated for participants attending the virtual sessions. We also plan to offer more workshops and conferences with this format during the year.

Priority 2: Innovative teaching practices

Peer review of teaching - a learning guide

To support good practice with peer review of teaching, we created a [self-paced learning guide](#) that explores principles in conducting a peer review of teaching, formative versus summative assessment, criteria and includes a template. We have since provided discipline-specific workshops and faculty-based training to support peer review of teaching and are able to offer training to other groups. This also includes training for those interested in becoming peer reviewers.



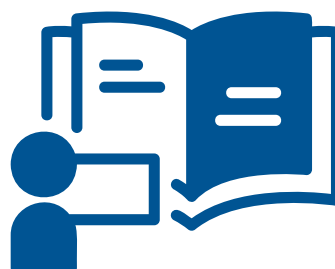
Learn more about the learning guide:
teachanywhere.uvic.ca/peer-review-teaching

Course and program review

Throughout the year, we continued to consult with various groups in curriculum renewal and redesign. Departments and programs such as Computer Science, Music, Child and Youth Care, Clinical Psychology, Art History and Visual Studies and English have benefitted from our division's support with learning outcomes development, redesign considerations, retreat planning and survey design through consultations, materials, and targeted referrals.

A [community engagement \(CE\) option](#) in the Faculty of Social Sciences was proposed and approved for existing majors in each department, with a benefit of formally recognizing students who integrate community-engaged learning opportunities and to raise the profile of community-engaged experiences across campus. Students have to complete two core CE courses as well as two additional related courses as electives to receive the option.

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive academic environment was supported through Anti-Racism and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) initiatives. Last year, we supported four [Anti-Racism Initiative \(ARI\) grantees](#) and two [Strategic Initiative-Indigenization \(SI-I\) grantees](#), cementing our dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion. Our team offered consultation and feedback to diverse faculties, including the French and Francophone Studies department, Faculty of Science, EPLS and Curriculum and Instruction. We also participated in the [5 Days of Action initiative](#) by EQHR, providing a presentation on EDIB, with a further presentation at [Let's Talk about Teaching](#).





PRIORITY FEATURE

Technology adoption

teachanywhere.uvic.ca/tech-adoption

At UVic, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that is both innovative and inclusive, which isn't simply about embracing the new but also ensuring that advancements serve our community holistically.

While we look to integrate new [learning technology tools](#) for their potential to enhance learning, it is important that they undergo rigorous testing to ensure alignment with UVic's pedagogical and security standards, as well as a privacy impact assessment. We ensure this balance through our technology adoption process.

The process includes the following components:



initial review
Assessed by our division



functionality check
user-friendliness
support availability
user capacity



accessibility assessment
compliance check W3C
WCAG 2.0 standards and
potential costs to learners



technical compatibility
common equipment,
browsers,UVic platforms
addressed



privacy safeguards
review of data handling
account requirements
student material ownership



learner-centred evaluation
learning-centred teaching
potential and classroom
alignment

LTSI offers adoption recommendations and, if needed, deeper security reviews.

We integrated three new tools this year. Revel by Pearson was integrated into Brightspace: which reimagines the traditional textbook, offering students an interactive and immersive experience. Leganto course reserves system was also integrated with Brightspace, to streamline course materials and readings into one virtual space. Lastly, PrairieLearn was piloted and adopted as a tool to deliver adaptive in-the-moment feedback and enabling students to master learning concepts.

As we continue to incorporate new ways of learning and teaching, we invite instructors to recommend new tools for exploration.

Priority 3: Recognition of skill development and achievement

Professional development for teaching assistants

In our ongoing effort to optimize engagement, we transitioned from our extensive TA conference to a concise, focused "Welcome Day" at the start of the term. Though a recent development, this restructuring aims to provide immediate orientation and support to our new TAs in a more streamlined manner. We crafted [two learning guides for TAs on Teach Anywhere](#) this year on digital literacy and accessibility in higher education.



Explore our TA learning guides:
teachanywhere.uvic.ca/ta/ta-guides

Internal learning and teaching development

Recognizing the importance of investing in our people, we adopted the [HR Performance and Development Cycle \(PDC\)](#) for all PEA staff. This showed a commitment to growth and also to align our operational processes.

Furthermore, to bolster our emerging leaders, we launched a leadership retreat/lab, integrating sessions with Human Resources and an external facilitator to offer training. Finally, as a commitment to our thriving training environment, two of our co-op students transitioned to full-time staff roles.

Team-based learning workshop series

In a collaborative effort between Camosun (LTSI), Camosun and Royal Roads University, a team-based learning (TBL) workshop series was organized to better support team and group assignments. Spanning three days, the workshop comprehensively explored principles, provided practical demonstrations and created pilot lesson plans intended for fall courses. It also included a peer review session where participants exchanged feedback on their respective lesson plans. An insight emerged to incorporate elements of TBL into faculty professional development. Moreover, future interactions with business and communications instructors experimenting with TBL could furnish invaluable insights, helping decide whether to introduce TBL on a more targeted scale across other departments.

Priority 3: Recognition of skill development and achievement

Privacy training

We collaborated with the General Counsel's Office and University Archives to develop **new privacy training** for this year. Feedback thus far indicates the training is more relevant and more informative on the connections between workplace behaviour and privacy and security success. The design team used Rise, a new software application that allows for better accessibility and a more enhanced user experience. For example, multiple formats were supplied for most material, and there was also an option to take the course completely offline if necessary.



Take the privacy training:
uvic.ca/general-counsel/privacy-access/annual-staff



Priority 3: Recognition of skill development and achievement

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Research

In our ongoing exploration into educational practices, we participated in a few Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research projects this year. The study titled "Manuscripts in the Flesh: Collections-Based Learning with Medieval Manuscripts at the University of Victoria," led by Dr. Shailoo Bedi, Heather Dean and Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin, delved into the transformative experience of students interacting with primary sources. Findings of the study revealed the invaluable impact of hands-on learning with rare materials, accentuating the significance of pedagogies rooted in collaboration, care and active engagement.

In another research study led by Dr. Jane Butterfield, a correlation was discovered between students who consistently engaged with the Math and Statistics Assistance Centre (MSAC) and improved performance in Calculus 1 courses, especially in MATH 109. This insight has paved the way for further investigations into student visit timings, retention rates, and their calculus confidence levels.

Lastly, the transition to emergency online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges and opportunities. Drs. Mariel Miller and Shailoo Bedi, as co-principal investigators, along with Hayley Hewson and Alex Warrington, embarked on an ethics-approved study to grasp how this shift affected teaching methodologies in a post-pandemic context. Their research aims to uncover which teaching strategies and instructional approaches educators found most beneficial during emergency pandemic teaching that they are now retaining in the post-pandemic era. The study is currently in the data analysis stage.





PRIORITY FEATURE

REACH teaching awards

teachanywhere.uvic.ca/
REACH

The [REACH awards at the University of Victoria](#) have been a consistent symbol of excellence, celebrating the best in teaching and research. Last year, we undertook significant revisions to better reflect UVic's evolving goals and to cater more adeptly to the academic community.

Understanding the need for a simplified nomination process, we moved to a new online submission portal, making it more user-friendly and efficient. We pared down the required materials for nominees and introduced an optional segment, allowing nominees to upload diverse supporting evidence, from websites and media clips to course syllabi, embodying a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach.

We were thrilled to launch two new teaching awards: the [Award for Inclusive and Innovative Course Design](#) and the [Nə́cəmaat kwəns če?i ʔaý šqweləqwən | ČĀNEUEL OL ÍY, ŠKÁLEČEN | Work Together with a Good Heart and Mind \(Award for Decolonization and Anti-Indigenous Racism\)](#). These awards were carefully selected in alignment with the University's strategic visions and initiatives.

To better harmonize with the academic year and schedules of our dedicated researchers and instructors, we updated the awards' timeline, opening nominations in August for two and a half months, with adjudication wrapping up by the end of fall, and the award ceremony slated for May. Lastly, we streamlined the adjudication process. Instead of individual committees for each award, we formed a consolidated committee responsible for reviewing three of the six teaching awards. This made the evaluation process more efficient and cohesive.



2022 award winners

Harry Hickman Alumni Award for
Excellence in Teaching and
Educational Leadership
Rebecca Gagan, English

Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award for
Excellence in Teaching
**Dr. Michael Reed,
Medieval Studies**

Award for Excellence in Graduate
Student Supervision and Mentorship
Dr. Fraser Hof, Chemistry

Andy Farquharson Teaching Excellence
Awards for Graduate Students
**Claude Beaupre, Political Science
Hannah Brown, Anthropology
Shervin Shameli, Civil Engineering**

Priority 4: Academic ethics and integrity in the age of technology

Artificial intelligence working group

The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education has become a topic of discussion in the post-secondary education sector. GenAI is a form of machine learning with the capabilities to produce text, images, video, music, code, etc. Concerns have emerged relating to impacts on teaching and assessment practices, academic integrity issues, and the learning environment more broadly. Although there are potential opportunities with the use of GenAI in the higher education context, there are also ethical concerns regarding the use of these tools that must be addressed.

LTSI led a working group with the purpose of carefully reviewing and evaluating strengths and limitations of GenAI tools, which included LTSI members, faculty, librarian representatives and a graduate research assistant.

New resources related to GenAI including a positioning statement available soon!

Deliverables included:

1 Literature review

Analyzed a total of 150 publications from 34 peer-reviewed journals and blog posts, short articles and commentaries, published between 2013 and 2023, focused on GenAI tools and their use in learning and teaching in higher education.

2 Environmental scan

Examined websites from 24 research intensive universities and a review of the policies and guidelines housed in the Observatory on AI Policies in Canadian Post-Secondary Education created by Higher Education Strategy Associates

3 Consultation process

Using a set of guiding questions, provided a total of 13 consultations in person and virtually with students, faculty/librarians, and campus stakeholders between March and June, 2023, cumulating in a summative report which included 7 recommendations and a draft UVic GenAI position statement.

Grading practices

In response to the concerns about grade inflation, we have taken proactive steps in collaboration with various schools, including the School of Nursing and Public Administration. Through specialized workshops, we've imparted practices grounded in academic literature and extended support in rubric development and application, ensuring fairness and clarity in assessments. We also are working to streamline the grading process for instructors by promoting one of our learning technologies: [Crowdmark](#). Seamlessly integrated into Brightspace, this tool offers an efficient and consistent approach to assessment.



PRIORITY FEATURE

Integrity in Practice

learnanywhere.uvic.ca/integrity-in-practice

Contract cheating in post-secondary institutions is a sixteen-billion-dollar industry, with more and more companies finding ways to target students every day.

We created a new learning module on Brightspace, [Integrity in Practice](#), to educate undergraduate students on the pitfalls of contract cheating. We wanted an engaging way to create a dialogue with students.

The module consisted of four sections:

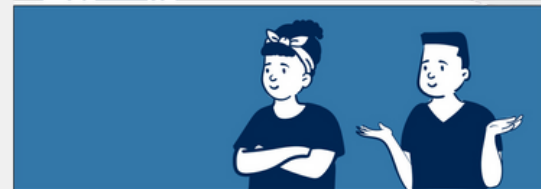
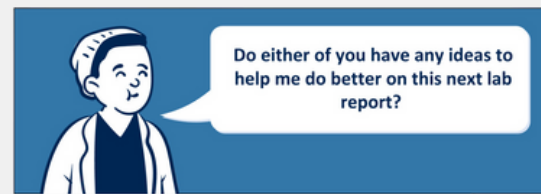
- What is contract cheating
- How does it work
- How could it impact my life
- How do I set myself up for success

To provide multiple avenues for engagement and interaction, modules were broken down into three sections that included stories in graphic comic strips with alternative text, quizzes, and videos from a mentor. It was important to showcase diverse characters and provide accessible features such as closed captioning on the videos and alternative text on the comics.

The group also plans to work on a version that is not digital for students who have issues accessing a computer at home.

Initial uptake has been high and is well received.

The module is now live and open for students to self-register in Brightspace. Students can get a certificate of completion after successfully completing all sections.



Is this contract cheating? 1 / 1

Using an editor.

☐ Yes

☐ No

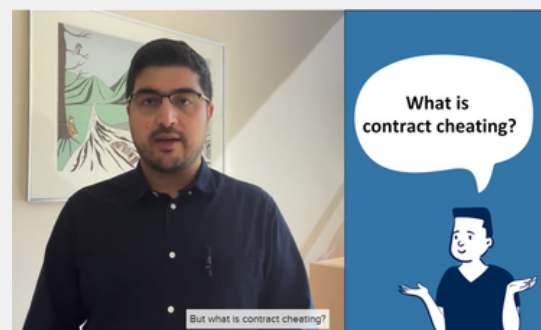
[Check](#)

Submitting work that you paid someone to prepare.

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Check](#)



Priority 5: Student-centred learning and achievement

Collaborative learning initiatives

Spring 2023 marked the debut of [Students in Community: Engaging Meaningfully](#), a collaborative program between the Community Engaged-Learning Office and Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization. Forty-two students, hailing from 16 disciplines, engaged in invaluable workshops and meaningful projects, from storytelling within Victoria's Community Food Support to participatory food mapping in Vancouver.

Our Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) team also collaborated with the Map Shop to provide opportunities for 60 geography field school students to use ESRI's [StoryMaps](#) as part of their field school experience. This included blending interactive maps, videos and other multimedia to share experiences and insights from courses like Sustainable Cities and Community Mapping.



Highlighted student research

The Centre for Academic Communication (CAC) released an inaugural summer issue of [The Arbutus Review](#), marking 13 years of publication. The new issue featured visual artwork by seven UVic undergraduate students. The journal has published 126 scholarly articles and creative works by undergraduate authors since its inception in 2010. At the time of writing, students' articles have been cited 397 times, with 299 of those citations occurring in the last five years. The Arbutus Review will also launch a creative pilot featuring multimodal work in close collaboration with the on the Verge writing competition.

The most memorable part of my VKURA experience was:

"Talking to my mentor every day. It was encouraging to have someone that could keep me on track and that was always available to answer my questions."

- Dave Jung,
Engineering and
Computer Science

Priority 5: Student-centred learning and achievement

Empowering academic achievement

The CAC collaborated with UVic Libraries, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Counselling to revamp the [Thesis Writers' Intensive](#), previously the Thesis Boot Camp. An introductory session introduced attendees to the various opportunities available such as workshops, consultations and collaborative writing sessions. Of the 54 participants registered, there was an impressive 80% retention rate, with many citing the dedicated writing time as particularly advantageous. Plans for the subsequent year include extending the event by a day and launching supported writing groups throughout the fall term, with a special focus on integrating goal setting and counselling components.

Apart from the CAC's other robust programs, including the rebranded academic coaching program, [online writing support](#) continues to be a pivotal resource for students, as evidenced by the substantial 2158 appointments booked for written feedback in the previous year. Emphasizing self-improvement, the service provides comprehensive feedback, covering aspects such as organizational flow, recurrent grammatical issues, stylistic concerns, and overall clarity. Rather than just correcting errors, tutors equip students with the tools to self-edit, enhancing their communication skills in the process.

Student designed learning spaces

In our ongoing commitment to foster inclusivity, creating inviting learning spaces was a focus for our [student academic support portfolio](#).

The [Betty & Gilbert Kennedy Math & Stats Assistance Centre](#), with the support of the Faculty of Science, enhanced their infrastructure by including additional blackboards, whiteboards and bulletin boards. These additions were used to create displays highlighting mathematics from various cultures, addressing math anxiety through humor and showcasing student research posters.

The surrounding space now displays math and stats groups, professional affiliations, and a variety of academic support initiatives. We've also refined our tutor training sessions and manuals to ensure wheelchair accessibility and provide guidance on taking necessary breaks after challenging interactions with students.

The [CAC launched two virtual tours](#) which aim to foster student engagement, retain returning students and widen the overall recognition of the CAC, particularly amongst graduate, Indigenous, international and first-year cohorts.

Priority 5: Student-centred learning and achievement



Learn Anywhere redesign project

The [Learn Anywhere website](#) is part of the Online Academic Community, which was developed in Fall 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as an online portal for current students to share and help navigate essential resources, services, learning tools and strategies. We decided to look at how and if the online portal has helped students navigate resources in an effective and engaging way. A working group was established to understand its current use, provide an environmental scan and provide recommendations for a redesign.

Through both internal and external feedback, 4 themes were uncovered:

- 1 There is low awareness of the website existence
- 2 There was a lack of clarity around the purpose and scope of the site
- 3 There was repetition of existing content on [uvic.ca](#)
- 4 The website's user experience and accessibility could be enhanced

The group is now in phase 2 of the redesign project, which will include refining the scope, removing duplicate content, enhance the user interface and increase the use of high-quality and engaging content. The project is hoping to complete by Fall 2024.



PRIORITY FEATURE

Pre-departure orientation

uvic.ca/offcampus-safety

The Field School Forum identified a desire and need for more pre-departure support for field schools associated with the University of Victoria. Our Community Engaged Learning (CEL) office piloted a Brightspace module: [Pre-Departure Orientation](#). Students can either take independently, or instructors can copy elements of into their courses. This course prepares students, both practically and emotionally, for their departure.

The course contains two units, that work in tandem to help students adjust to both the emotions and responsibilities that come with the change of moving. The first unit, Prepare Your Body, guides students through the steps they need to take regarding health, safety, and legalities pre-departure. The second unit, Prepare Your Heart & Mind, prepares students for the potential cultural, emotional, and political changes they may experience once they depart on their trips.

Not only does Pre-Departure Orientation provide students with vital information and resources regarding leaving the country, but it is also designed to be an engaging course that students will remember. The course comes with a workbook, and each unit is supplemented with activities to maximize student engagement.

The Pre-Departure Orientation course may be altered in the future in response to student feedback during the pilot phase. Currently, the course is expected to take students under two hours, and contains all the essential information one needs to plan travel, as well as activities and support resources to help students fight the stress induced by travel.

Analogies for culture

Look at the following pictures and think about how they represent ways culture can be thought about or viewed.



Like the water to the fish in the fishbowl, the influence of our own culture is often invisible to us.

[Turn](#)

Strategies

While it may be difficult to avoid feeling uncomfortable, tense, or confused when encountering a new culture, you can take some pro-active steps to cope and ease the adjustment transition.

- ▼ [Be patient](#)
Feeling like "a fish out of water" is normal and common to people who undergoes this type of experience. The unpleasant feelings are likely to go away, so give yourself time to work through the process.
- > [Be flexible](#)
- > [Focus on the positive](#)
- > [Analyze your situations and reactions](#)

Going forward

As learning and teaching at UVic evolves and faces new challenges, our commitment to academic excellence and innovation remains constant. Reflecting upon this past year, we have several areas we wish to focus on in the year and years to come to support the university.

Implementing a clarified mandate and scope

Our external reviewers emphasized that a well-defined mandate rooted in student academic success and teaching innovation was imperative. In response, we are working towards aligning our strategic and operational plan with UVic's overarching goals. We will strengthen our educational and curriculum development efforts, consolidate our instructor-facing groups and devise a clear plan aligned with our new mandate. Additionally, we will conduct needs surveys, foster collaboration with departments and enhance our communication strategies to better serve our stakeholders.

Rethinking assessment for a universal approach

Recognizing the need for inclusive and accessible learning environments, our focus has shifted towards supporting departments in reimagining assessments. With UDL at the core, our aim is to support ways to reduce on timed exams and offer alternative approaches to assessment through support with course and assessment redesign strategies. By promoting other assessment methods, we intend to create a more equitable environment that acknowledges diverse learning needs and cultivates a holistic learning ecosystem.

Redefining academic integrity

With the dynamic changes with the new and emerging field of generative artificial intelligence, we are driven to fortify academic integrity. This involves being attuned to the evolving needs of the academic community and ensuring our services are timely, relevant, and uphold UDL principles. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with other partners at the university and highlight those who are already championing these efforts.

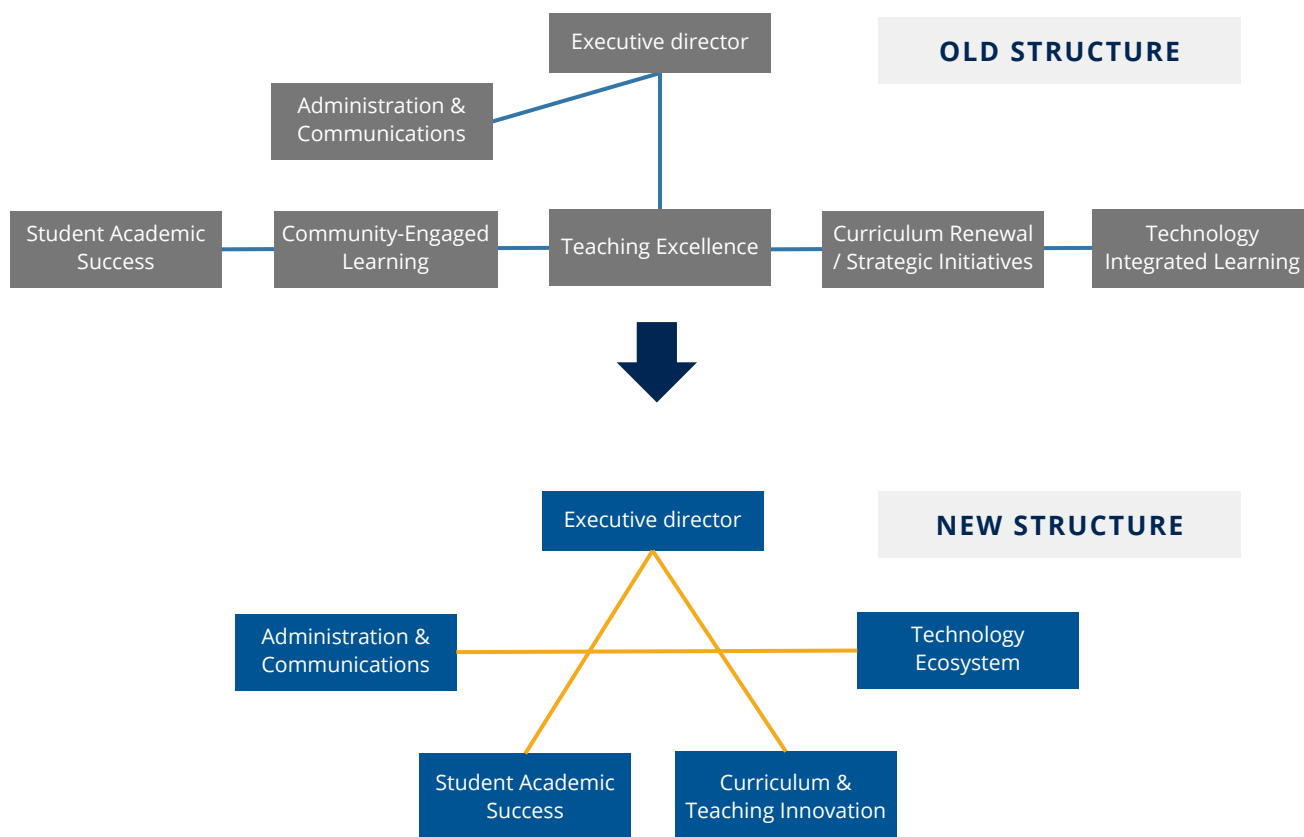
Renewing our programming and offerings

The launch of our new model of support has shown initial positive feedback, clarifying our need to renew our learning and teaching offerings towards a post-pandemic educational landscape. In the coming years, we will be reviewing some other major LTSI programs, including: the Faculty Institute of Teaching (FIT) and the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LATHE) graduate certificate with Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies.

Restructuring our portfolios

Two major initiatives have necessitated a recalibration of our organizational structure: the recent budgetary restrictions and the feedback from our external review. Our path forward involves a streamlined, more focused approach to better serve the UVic community.

The new restructure will see the division consolidating from five to two core portfolios: Student Academic Success (SAS) and Curriculum & Teaching Innovation (CTI). Each will be led by a director to champion specific initiatives.



The SAS portfolio will enrich student experiences through the Centre for Academic Communication, Math and Stats Assistance Centre, and our student awards: JCURA and VKURA. The CTI portfolio will support faculty, instructors and TAs in curriculum development, teaching excellence, grants and more. A new portfolio within CTI: Curriculum and Development, will be developed that includes curriculum designers dedicated to STEM and universal design for learning. Lastly, the Community-Engaged Learning office will be moving to Co-op and Career Services in November 2023, to better align with UVic's experiential learning mandate.

In conclusion, these changes, aligned with UVic's strategic directions and external recommendations, ensure we remain at the forefront of academic innovation, catering holistically to our students, faculty and community.

Appendix: Notable collaborations

LTSI collaborates extensively with different faculties, departments and support units. It is impossible to capture all of our collaborations, however a few notable ones are described below.

Group	Project
Continuing Studies	• Introduction to CAC services • Academic Integrity session (UAP)
Academic and Technical Writing Program	• Research consultations • Professional training for course instructors
Centre for Accessible Learning	• LAP and CAC meet and greet • Academic integrity session
International Centre for Students	• THRIVE • Discover your campus • International Student Engagement, Retention, and Success Team Report • Specialized workshops
Libraries	• Academic Integrity Week • Artificial Intelligence working group • Working group on citations • Thesis Writers Intensive • Library Learning Commons • On the Verge • Leganto Integration • Specialized workshops
Office of Student Life	• Student Support Program
Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement	• CAC Indigenous Cultural Acumen Training
University Systems & Privacy Office	• Privacy Training • Brightspace updates and maintenance
Equity & Human Rights	• 5 Days of Action: Advancing Inclusivity, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Anti-racism in the Curriculum and Teaching Practices
Global Engagement	• International Pre-departure orientation
Camosun College & Royal Roads University	• Team-based Learning Institute