



Department of Biology

Dec 19, 2022

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

'What's up' in the Department of Biology UVic

Know the Biology Graduate Student Representatives

Every academic year, one graduate student volunteers to be the graduate student representative (or 'grad student rep') for the Biology department. The purpose of the grad student rep is to act as a conduit for information between graduate students and the Department. This includes attending monthly faculty meetings and distributing any relevant information to students, while also collating and presenting student feedback to faculty members.

Who's the rep this year and what are they doing?

The student representative this year is Talen Rimmer (he/him), a MSc student in the Juanes Lab. Talen is excited for the opportunity to connect and communicate grad student ideas, opinions and values with the department. So far, this has included actions like:

- Creating **standardized ways for students to connect with the dept grad rep role** across multiple years, including an anonymous feedback form and role-based email address.
- **Discussing and compiling the top concerns currently facing graduate students**, based on conversations with students, staff and faculty.
- Helping to **coordinate the first annual 'student's choice seminar speaker'** voting process. Students had the chance to nominate and vote on a researcher they'd like invited to present as part of the department's Friday seminars. A big thanks to Dr. Greg Owens and the department for making this possible.
- **Promoting events and opportunities** for students, such as a recent GSS STEM social night. This event was led by a variety of STEM grad students, including Sarah Lane - the GSS co-rep for Biology and a PhD student in the Ehling Lab.

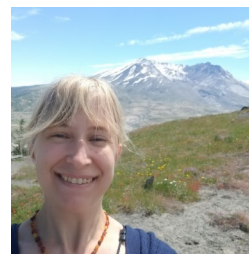


Talen Rimmer, Biology Graduate Student Rep for Biology and PhD Student for the Juanes lab

the Graduate Student Society welcomed Biol grad students and other STEM departments at a recent holiday social event

I have a question, comment or concern I'd like to raise with the department! How do I get in touch?

Reach out to biology.deptgradrep@uvic.ca, submit your feedback anonymously [here](#), or pop by Petch 114 (Juanes lab) for a chat.



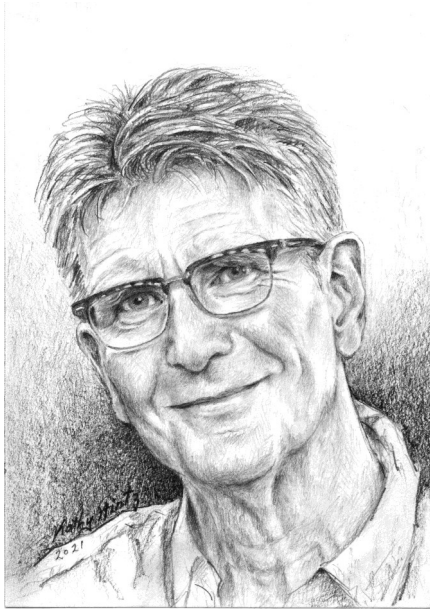
Sarah Lane, Biology Graduate Student co-rep for Biology and PhD Student for the Ehling lab

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In memoriam: Will Hintz



Portrait by Kathy Hintz

Will Hintz

Our friend and colleague, Professor Will Hintz passed away November 27th, 2022. Will had been feeling unwell the previous week, and was admitted to hospital on the Friday. By Sunday night, the infection claimed him. We are all shocked at this sad and sudden news. Will was very much looking forward to many more years of activity. He had been planning his teaching for the spring. He was very proud that he'd submitted his NSERC Discovery grant on time and was excited about his proposed research. Will may be one of the very few people in the history of UVic to have come back from long-term disability. No doubt, this was due to his positive outlook.

Hired in 1993 as a mycologist to replace Dr. Bill Paden, Will moved from Toronto to Victoria with Kathy. They were newly married. Both settled in quickly. Within a few years he became a member of the Centre for Forest Biology. Will was a productive and inventive researcher and was at the forefront of the developing field of fungal molecular genetics. His special expertise was Dutch elm disease. However, Will was also very flexible and loved to tackle other diseases. Will sometimes worked on pathogens in fish and amphibians, and sometimes on tree seed diseases. Just a few years back, his work

on the planet's great frog die-off resulted in a paper in Science.

Will published widely with collaborators from many countries. More locally, he developed and patented a fungal biocontrol treatment for weedy deciduous trees. This was part of long research collaboration and friendship with Paul de la Bastide. Will loved teaching students how to do scientific experiments. He trained quite a few graduate students over the years.

Will embraced his administrative responsibilities at UVic. He was Chair of Biology for five years. These things take it out of you, but as he once said to me, "In what other line of work can you be assured that when you stop being an administrator you can go back to what you love the most, that is, research?"

Will was a very private person. How many of us knew he loved dance? How many of us knew that a major outlet for his creativity was photography? He was artistically sophisticated as a photographer. Will loved thinking about images and how to make them speak to the viewer. Kathy is an accomplished artist and together with Will, they made a very creative and interesting couple.

It's not possible to talk about Will's career without mentioning that it nearly came to a complete halt after his freak accident the night before his 60th birthday in 2016. That accident left him essentially fully paralysed from the neck down and confined him to institutions for the rest of his life. Those of us who visited him in Vancouver, or in the Royal Aberdeen, where he spent the better part of his remaining years, met a man who was always pleased to see us, who wanted to talk about our families, his colleagues and his friends. Sometimes he would have something scientific that he wanted to discuss in very close detail. His mind did not stop, but was always puzzling out questions. Visiting Will, you would always run into Kathy and their son, Max. They were a tight-knit and loving family.

Will was heroic in his determination and philosophical by necessity. He read, he listened, but did not resign himself to his fate. Instead, he fought to get back into working life, which was not easy given that he was never likely to be able to return physically to UVic. So it is all the more extraordinary when COVID provided him the opportunity to teach online. He loved it. In some ways it was a very important lifeline. Will also stayed very interested in research projects in the lab, and continued to hatch new ideas and plans.

He will be missed by his fellow troglodytes in the Petch basement, as well as by his close friends in the Department and in the Centre. Our thoughts are with Kathy, Max and Amy.

Patrick von Aderkas & Barbara Hawkins

Calendar

Important Dates:

Wed, December 21st, 2022

Sun, December 25th –Mon January 2nd, 2023

Monday, January 9th, 2023

First term examinations end for all faculties

University closed

Second Term Classes Begin for all faculties



Biology News

Publications

Awatramani Lab

Prerna Srivastava (Postdoc) and *Geoff de Rosenroll* (PhD student).

<https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.81533>

Editor's evaluation: This is an important paper that addresses a key mechanism that underlies the canonical computation of direction selectivity in the retina. By using fluorescence imaging of glutamate release from excitatory interneurons combined with a computational model of dendritic integration, the authors make a convincing case that the kinetics of glutamate release contributes to the direction-selectivity of individual neural processes in retinal neurons. This work will appeal to visual neuroscientists as well as cellular physiologists interested in dendritic computations.

Gawryluk Lab

"Microbial predators form a new supergroup of eukaryotes". The team reports on ten previously undescribed strains of microbial predators isolated through culture that collectively form a diverse new supergroup of eukaryotes, termed Provora.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-022-05511-5>.

Congratulations to Dr. Bob Chow and Post-doc Bridget Ryan

Dr. Chow and post-doctoral fellow Bridget Ryan are this year's winners of Fighting Blindness Canada's \$50,000 Research to Watch Award. Congratulations!

See full article [here](#).

Congratulations to Biology Graduate Students who successfully defended in December 2022



Rhonda Reidy PhD

"Fine-scale Prey and Foraging Behaviour of Humpback Whales in Southern British Columbia"

Supervisors: Drs. Francis Juanes and Laura Cowen



Harley Gordon PhD

"Unexpected Connections: Salicinoid biosynthesis in Poplar"

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Constabel

Biology Deck-the-Door Contest



Perlman Lab
Photo: Julie Radford and
Jameson Clarke

Winners of the
Deck-the-Door
Contest Dec. 2022



Awatramani Lab



Owens Lab
Photo: Nathan Sykes, Kaede Hira-
bayashi and Dr. Jordan Bemmels



All participants



Baum Lab



Ehlting Lab



Constabel Lab



Lewis Lab



El-Sabaawi Lab
Photo: Ashley Mickens



Grad Space Cun 113



Hawkins Lab



Hintz Lab



von Aderkas Lab



El-Sabaawi Lab

Happy Holidays and Happy 2023!



The Department of Biology Wishes all
a wonderful and safe Holiday Season,
and all the best in the new year!



Happy Holidays!



Happy 2023!

Biology Department Hall-iday party 2022



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