



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR—DR. ULRICH MUELLER



Dear Students, Colleagues, Alumni, and Friends,

In the last months of my term as Chair, I am pleased to present you the Departmental Newsletter. The newsletter showcases some research activities in our Department, new faculty, and initiatives by undergraduate and graduate students. I am pleased to say that faculty and students have done remarkably well adjusting to the unprecedented challenges we are facing. I am particularly proud to be part of a Department that has shown an incredible amount of collegiality during these difficult times.

Our Department has changed considerably over the last years. Our faculty has become younger and more diverse, and we have grown in size and student enrolment. Many challenges lie ahead, but I am sure that our incoming Chair, Dr. Steve Lindsay, will manage them well. I would like to express my gratitude to our extremely competent and helpful staff who has done such a wonderful job and made my life easy, as well as to the Social Sciences Deans (particularly Dr. Graham Voss, who has done a superb job in all respects) for their support. My special thanks go to Dr. Mike Masson, who always lent his ear and provided sound advice. I look forward to seeing you all face-to-face again soon.

RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT: IN CONVERSATION WITH DR. SARAH MACOUN

Dr. Sarah Macoun (bottom, right) is a pediatric neuropsychologist and clinician-researcher at the Child Development Lab at UVic. Wanting to understand the brain better and how differences in children with neurodevelopmental disabilities develop, her research focuses on cognitive rehabilitation and intervention approaches. We recently interviewed Dr. Macoun to ask a few questions.

Who makes up the Child Development Lab?

The Child Development lab is shared between myself and Dr. Mueller. My component of the lab is an active lab that consists of myself, undergrads, and graduates pursuing their MSc's and doctoral studies. At any given time, we have 8-15 active students who are integral to all the research we do.

What research are you currently working on?

Currently, there are four focus areas:

1. Fluctuations in brain and behavioral performance to see how executive function overlaps with motor system control in children with attention

deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

2. The benefits and challenges of providing a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) diagnosis in adult women who are parenting
3. The impact COVID-19 has had on children and their families accessing supports and how this affects their mental wellbeing
4. A new therapeutic cognitive intervention video game called Dino Island—our largest focus right now

Tell us more about Dino Island!

The Dino Island research program is a unique three-year study through the Kids Brain Health Network. We developed the video game to help improve cognitive function in children with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

We're currently in the first year of this health-tech project and are looking at the clinical validity of the intervention from a behavioural, neural, and cognitive standpoint. We are also very focused on implementation science and identifying ways to reduce barriers to improve the uptake of neuroscience-based interventions like this in the

home, at schools and in various community settings—so that those who need them can access and benefit from the intervention. Learn more at uvicdinoisland.cogtrain.ca

What do you most enjoy about being faculty?

I am focused on applied research, which is rewarding but time-intensive. I most enjoy supporting students to develop their clinical and research skills, and working alongside our engaged and collegial faculty.

I also love teaching and have been fortunate to teach various level courses in my specialty areas and work with fantastic students over the years. Currently the majority of my students are working on the Dino Island project, either as their primary research focus or to gain research experience in the area. I am grateful for all my students and their contributions and hard work.



Follow the Child Development Lab at facebook.com/cdluvic/ to learn about studies and ways to get involved.



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST FACULTY!



Dr. Natasha Wawrykow joined the psychology department in 2020 and is looking forward to connecting with students and teaching her new graduate-level courses: Promoting Reconciliation Between the Field of Psychology and Indigenous Peoples and Narrative Therapy. Though her role as Indigenization Advisor to the Department of Psychology and Clinical Psychology Program Indigenization Supervisor, she is excited to dialogue and advise on Indigenous topics, and provide or point students, faculty, and staff to relevant resources.

Through her clinical work, Dr. Wawrykow enjoys listening to people's stories and helping them to uncover their own resources of managing challenges, dilemmas, and struggles in their life through practices such as narrative therapy. **"I believe that each individual possesses the internal resources to enact meaningful change in their life. The fun part of my job is accompanying them on that journey,"** shared Dr. Wawrykow.

Dr. Wawrykow acknowledges the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ Peoples traditional territory that the university resides on and expresses her gratitude for enabling her to teach on their land.

You can connect with Dr. Wawrykow during her Indigenous Advising office hours between 10:00 am–11:30 am on Fridays. Email wawrykow@uvic.ca to book a meeting.



From a young age, **Dr. Megan Ames** has wanted to work with children and youth with various challenges to help improve their quality of life. As a clinician-researcher, she is excited to continue connecting with clients and their families, collaborating with fellow researchers on an interdisciplinary level and learning from the many esteemed faculty and students to promote and improve young people's overall health and wellbeing.

Dr. Ames's research program focuses on learning and measuring how engagement in health behaviours such as physical activity during adolescence influences mood and vice versa. Tying to her favourite psychological theory of developmental psychopathology, she shared **"while this can happen at any stage, there are sensitive and critical periods in life where risk and protective factors can interact to shape an individual's life."**

Currently, in partnership with Big Brothers, Big Sisters Canada, Dr. Ames is co-leading the Teens @ Home During COVID-19 project. The study is looking at the impact of COVID-19 on teen mental health and aims to address the urgent need to understand and support vulnerable Canadian adolescents. Using an online survey, the team will collect data from youth aged 12–18 four times over the course of 2021. To learn more, visit teensathomeduringcovid.com

PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL (PGSC)

Hello! We are delighted to be a part of this newsletter. Currently a team of 12 representatives, the PGSC was established in February 2020 and provides a venue for students to participate in matters affecting their graduate program experience. Drawing on the creativity and passion of our capable team and the whole grad student community, we have been very busy in our first year! Some highlights include:

Governance

- Formalizing our mandate, constitution, position descriptions and election protocols
- Creating and maintaining a website and communication channels

Consultation and Advocacy

- +17 students as well as faculty contacted their MLAs and helped to successfully re-establish the BC Graduate Scholarship Fund. Over

the next two years, 42 UVic grad students will receive scholarships of \$15,000 from this fund. Read the release [here](#) (Spring 2021)

- Providing feedback for the Department Review
- Consulting with faculty on the Graduate Student Handbook (policy)
- Organizing a community check-in survey (Fall 2020)
- Hosting focus groups and feedback sessions regarding TA roles
- More formally establishing the Ombuddy role within our department

Events and Community Building

- New Grad Student Meet and Greet | Campus Tour
- Takeout Picnic
- Grad Buddy Trivia Night | Werewolf game | Chat Roulette gathering
- Zoom workspaces

We look forward to welcoming new council members at our upcoming elections! Stay tuned and don't hesitate to connect with us! Our website is oac.uvic.ca/pgsc

Liz Williams, Co-President, PGSC



FROM OUR STUDENTS

Throughout COVID-19, students across the board have had to adapt to new ways of teaching and learning. More so, physical distancing guidelines, travel restrictions and health concerns for ourselves and loved ones has affected our social, emotional and psychological wellbeing. Despite the challenges the pandemic has brought, many have found ways to keep in touch, connect with local supports and somewhat conquer the work-from-home lifestyle.

Andy, a second-year psychology student, shared his experience.

How has COVID-19 impacted your student experience?

Until COVID, I had never taken long-term online classes. These were hugely different from my classes in my first year and I had to get used to staying at home almost all day, every day. I've really missed walking around the UVic campus and seeing people. As an international student, I also haven't been able to go back to my hometown to visit family.

What has helped you get through the pandemic?

One of my strategies to deal with online classes has been to make a daily to-do list so when I start my day, I have an idea of what needs to be accomplished.

In coping with isolation and loneliness in general, a big thing that has helped me has been communicating with friends, keeping in touch with family and talking to them regularly. Another thing that has helped me is writing. If I'm feeling down, I'll try to make note of this, which helps me calm down and process the feelings I am experiencing.



Any tips for fellow students?

Engage in hobbies and activities you like to do. And set aside a separate time to do this.

Signing up for clubs and seeking out university resources has also been helpful. I recently signed up to the Psych. O.S. email list and follow UVic on Instagram—they hosted a workshop on meditation and yoga that was helpful.

I also enjoy being a part of UVic's Friendship and Support (F & S) club. Meetings usually are a group call where we talk about all sorts of things. It's a social space where you can come and go but there is always someone to chat with. Learn more at uvicfands.netlify.app



Myles Maillet, a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate, shared information about his research that is currently focusing on the **motivation and challenges of working from home**.

Although people pursue different goals, they share the experience of facing challenges and obstacles in some form or another (e.g., poor weather, time pressure, fatigue). The focus of my research is on the role of motivation when people face difficulties in their goal pursuit. Most recently, this has led to a series of studies on the difficulties that students and employees face when trying to work from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the benefits of working remotely, the home environment can introduce a range of temptations (e.g., video games) and obligations (e.g., cleaning) that can impact a person's work. Yet, we know that some people have adapted well to this shift to online work, while others have had more difficulty doing so. Thus, part of my dissertation involves examining inter and intra-individual differences in motivation as they relate to the challenges of working remotely.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED!

Psi Chi

Web: web.uvic.ca/~psichi/?q=join

Email: psichi@uvic.ca

Facebook: Uvic Psi Chi

Link: facebook.com/uvicpsichi/

IG: @uvicphichi

Psychology Organization of Students (Psych. O.S.)

Web: oac.uvic.ca/psychstudents

Email: psychos.uvic@gmail.com

Facebook: @uvicpsychos

Link: facebook.com/uvicpsychos/

IG: @psychos.uvic

Psych After Grad

Facebook:

facebook.com/groups/229693028597704

IG: @psych.after.undergrad

Unpacking Psychology (UP!)

Email: upclub.uvic@gmail.com

Facebook: @uvicupc

Link: facebook.com/uvicupc.ca

Students Above Stigma

Facebook: [facebook.com/Uvic-Students-](https://facebook.com/Uvic-Students-Above-Stigma-100285841894783)

[Above-Stigma-100285841894783](https://facebook.com/Uvic-Students-Above-Stigma-100285841894783)

Instagram: @uvic_sas

FOR THE COMMUNITY

Between September to April, weekly Cognitive and Brain Science Seminars (CaBSSem) are held over Zoom video conference.

Seminars are open to everyone and will resume in fall 2021.

For more information and to subscribe to the mailing list, visit: uvic.ca/socialsciences/psychology/graduate/brain-sciences/cabssem



EVENT SUMMARY: PSI CHI'S MEET THE DEPARTMENT

After a successful event last semester, the University of Victoria's Psi Chi hosted a second virtual Meet the Department on February 25th, 2021.

Psi Chi's co-presidents Kelsey and Anisa started the open meeting by sharing information about the chapter, the first of its kind in Canada. Club representatives from the Psychology Organization of Students (Psych. O.S), Unpacking Psychology (UP!) and Psych After Undergrad also introduced themselves and shared ways for students to get involved (shared below). Before separating into breakout rooms, faculty were called upon to share a little about their respective fields of expertise, research interests and the classes they teach.

With eight different breakout rooms led by faculty, students had the opportunity to opt into and switch between groups of their choice. Conversations ranged from asking advice on setting up research that focuses on influencers of friendship (Dr. Harris) to how Dr. Krawitz, who started as an undergraduate in computer science and worked in Silicon Valley, ended up in the field of psychology.

With the smaller, tailored groups, students and faculty talked about school, personal life and current experiences—engaging on a more personal level.

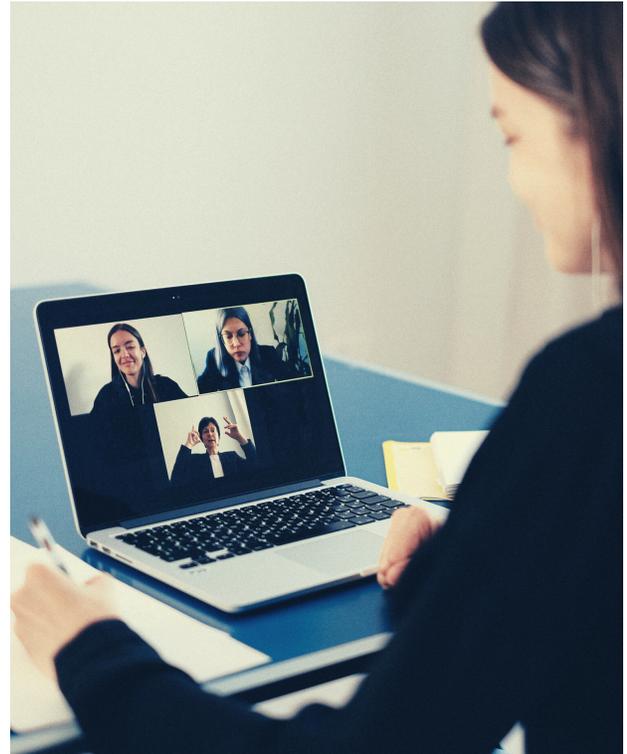
Post-breakout, students shared some of the challenges of working from home and the simple activities (e.g., walking to class in the mornings, seeing people in person, casually chatting before and after class) they are looking forward to post-pandemic. **"It's been hard for me to find a community in an online setting. At least on campus, you could interact with people—it's been hard to stay motivated,"** shared a student.

In anticipation of returning to in-person classes in the coming months, the meeting ended with a question by the chair of psychology, Prof. Mueller, on what changes or adaptations of current practices students would like to see post-COVID. Here were some of the reflections:

"As a mature student, online classes allowed me to return to university sooner than I had planned. I would be interested to see if online options can be kept for some courses."

"The chat function during online classes took away the anxiety of having to talk. It has been easier for me to ask questions in the chat as I have a hard time speaking up. An in-class chat option for students to share questions would be helpful."

"Having online recordings and pre-recorded lectures have been helpful. I feel I could learn a little more because I could re-listen to certain parts."



Visit [Psi Chi's Facebook page](#) for information on the next Meet the Department and other social events.



ADDITIONAL STUDIES RELATED TO COVID-19

Motivations for Changes in Alcohol Use Patterns during COVID-19 Lockdowns

Group: Dr. Tim Stockwell, Sybil Goulet-Stock, Lindsey McCullough
Network: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR)

We are hosting and analyzing the Canadian arm of the International Alcohol Control study by supporting a survey on changes to people's drinking patterns around the world during various levels of lockdown in response to COVID-19. Between May to December 2020, approximately 1400 Canadians completed a survey concerning levels of alcohol use, changes in alcohol use, motivations for any changes, how they sourced their alcohol and the extent of local restrictions.

An Investigation of the Relationships Between COVID-19 Infection Rates, Public Health Measures and Population Consumption of Alcohol in Canadian Jurisdictions

Group: Dr. Tim Stockwell
Network: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR)

With funds from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the BC Ministry of Health, we are compiling weekly data of alcohol sales from Canadian provinces and territories (by outlet and beverage type) to investigate how per capita alcohol consumption has been impacted by public health measures during the pandemic. Also, we are investigating the extent to which alcohol sales in restaurants and bars are associated with later rates of infection.

COVID-19 MAP Research Project

Group: Sybil Goulet-Stock, Lindsey McCullough, Dr. Tim Stockwell
Network: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR)

Managed Alcohol Programs (MAPs) are a harm reduction strategy designed for populations with severe alcohol use disorder, high-risk drinking, and unstable housing. This research aims to investigate whether MAP's can assist in reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection in participants by supporting physical distancing measures while improving individual safety, stability, mental and physical health of participants and reducing alcohol-related harms.

Parenting Stress, Behaviour and Parent-Child Communication During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Group: Erin Light, Dr. Ulrich Mueller
Lab: Child Development Lab

We hope to better understand how changes in the COVID-19 pandemic may relate to changes in parenting behaviour, communication, and parenting stress as well as how parents communicate with their children about the pandemic. We hope to measure these constructs at two timepoints in parents of children 6–12 years old. Understanding how parents are being affected will provide important information for how to better support parents during the pandemic and may have applications for future stressful events.

Psychological Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians

Group: Drs. Brianna Turner and Theone Paterson, Jamie-Lee Garden
Network: Risky Behaviour Lab

Canada is one of eleven countries seeking to identify what has been helpful or harmful to our well-being throughout the global pandemic. To do so, we are collecting three waves of national surveys. Also, we will complete in-depth interviews with three high-priority populations: healthcare workers, Indigenous people, and people living in rural and remote communities to identify the unique impacts of COVID-19 as well as resources or supports that would help each group bolster resilience. Learn more at oac.uvic.ca/covidmentalhealth

