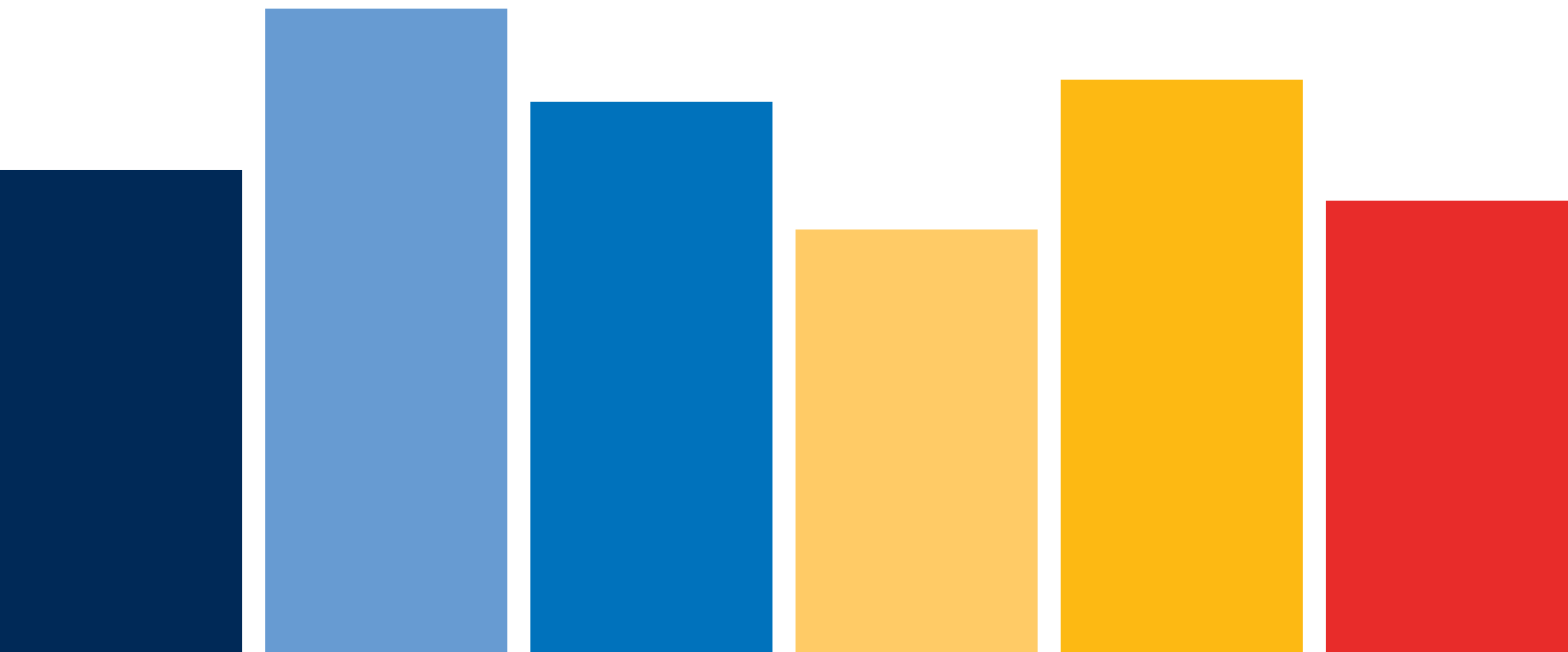


STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020/21



YEAR 3



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Territorial acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

We want to further acknowledge the traditional lands that many of us as individuals have occupied while working, teaching, learning and researching remotely during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

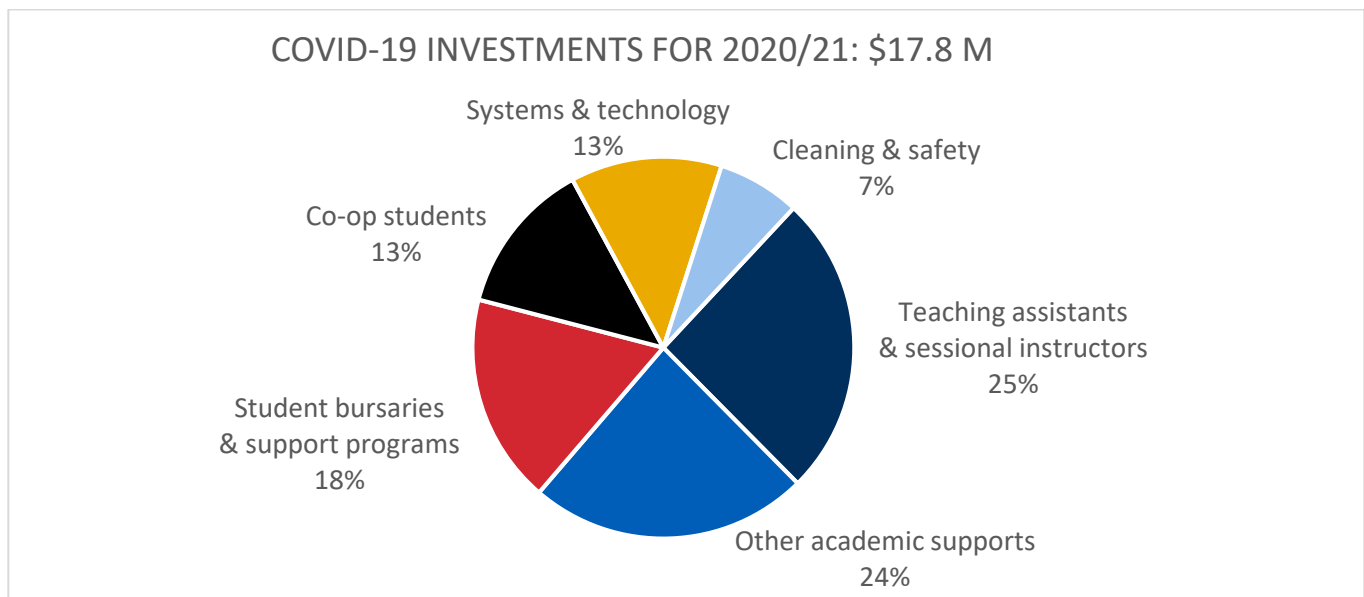
The University of Victoria and all educational institutions have a responsibility to learn about the history of Canada and address our role in perpetuating colonial systems. Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility, and all Canadians benefit from the continuation and celebration of Indigenous culture and knowledge as the country works to reconcile its difficult and troubled history with Indigenous peoples.

Our continued response to COVID-19

Since January 2020, UVic has been responding to the COVID-19 situation, following the advice and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer. Despite its challenges and devastating impact on the world, the pandemic has provided opportunities for UVic as an institution to learn and grow. While some of the university's initiatives were paused or slowed as we navigated the pandemic, other initiatives proceeded at a rapid pace as we adapted to better serve the UVic community. This report highlights some of those initiatives and emerging priorities.

We learned that we can adapt and move quickly in service to our community. We learned that we can deliver over 90% of our courses online while ensuring a high standard of quality. We learned that students appreciate being able to access some of our services remotely. We learned how to work together and collaborate in an online environment. Most importantly, we learned that we can still be a supportive community of faculty, staff and students even when we're not able to physically be together. These learnings and outcomes, along with many of our new initiatives, will continue well beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020/21, we invested \$17.8 million in COVID-19 supports. The majority of these investments were made in support of teaching and learning, including hiring graduate students as additional Teaching Assistants for online courses. We also invested in a new suite of technologies, with about 80 co-op students hired to support implementation. Additional academic supports included course design and accessibility experts, faculty mentors and academic advising supports. We also substantially increased student bursary supports by \$2.6 million, including through our emergency bursary program, and developed new ways for students to connect virtually through a range of peer mentorship supports.



COVID-19 investments for 2020/21 totaled \$17.8 million, the majority of which went towards supporting our academic mission.

While the majority of courses were delivered online, we had a significant number of face-to-face courses supported through enhanced cleaning and safety measures, including a new Classroom Safety Ambassador program. This program had the added benefit of re-deploying staff who were temporarily laid off due to the decrease in our on-campus population. Our research labs, music and art studios, offices, and other physical spaces also required enhanced cleaning and safety measures. Health and safety was a top priority for on-campus spaces and activities.

These investments were made possible due to sound financial planning, including precautionary budget measures, early scenario modeling, and regular assessments of student enrolment. We are pleased to share that our enrolment remained steady and on-par with the previous year, and we met our Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training enrolment targets as well as our own institutional targets. As such, we experienced no operating budget shortfall, despite a significant loss of revenue from ancillaries, the Division of Continuing Studies, and other revenue-generating services. We also worked closely with unions to stay connected with and redeploy laid off staff from these areas into emerging employment opportunities at UVic where possible.

Strategic direction

Our vision is to be the Canadian research university that best integrates outstanding scholarship, engaged learning and real-life involvement to contribute to a better future for people and the planet. Over the past three years, the [University of Victoria's Strategic Framework 2018-2023](#) has served as our guide to achieving this vision—setting out high-reaching goals in six key interconnected areas and articulating strategies to realize them.

While each of the strategic priorities is articulated separately in the Strategic Framework, they all weave together to create a unified guide to our future.

Further, our values as outlined in our Strategic Framework inform our actions in achieving our vision:

- Excellence in all our endeavours
- Ethical and intellectual integrity
- Freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech
- Equity, diversity and inclusion

In November 2020, we welcomed our new president, Dr. Kevin Hall. President Hall is a civil engineer and experienced university leader known for his commitment to community engagement and supporting broad access to education. He is dedicated to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as truth, respect and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Through President Hall's leadership, we continue to work towards a better future for all people, all places and our planet.

Major accomplishments of 2020/21

The following highlights, while far from a comprehensive account, demonstrate much of the work we have accomplished during our third year implementing the Strategic Framework towards achieving our mission and goals within our six key areas.

CULTIVATE AN EXTRAORDINARY ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Our goal is to be recognized internationally as a university of choice for talented students, faculty and staff.

For the tenth time in as many years, UVic has been recognized as one of [Canada's Best Diversity Employers](#). Guided by our institutional plans—including our Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan, Indigenous Plan and International Plan—we aim to attract, support and develop a diverse community on the West Coast of BC.

Meeting student demand

Throughout the pandemic, we quickly adapted to online learning and teaching, offering high-quality academic programming to meet student demand in a safe and accessible way. We were particularly successful in meeting demand in summer 2020, which was fully online and our largest summer enrolment to date. From Sept. 2020 to April 2021, UVic offered a blend of in-person and online instruction. About 3,500 students attended in-person classes each term, out of a typical population of 22,000. Further, an estimated 5,000 students already located in the region accessed campus in person, including for study spaces, research and computing labs, libraries, food outlets, and health and wellness services. About 800 students lived on campus, 40% of typical capacity and the maximum allowed under public health guidelines.

Building a more equitable and inclusive campus

UVic is strongly committed to building a diverse and inclusive campus for all members of the UVic community. Our SEM Plan outlines strategies and tactics to diversify our student population, including doubling our Indigenous student population, providing pathways for students who have experienced barriers and attracting international students from all over the world. Our Equity and Human Rights office is facilitating a campus-wide collaboration to develop a new equity, diversity and inclusion framework, which will identify actions that can be taken to make campus more equitable, diverse and inclusive while also ensuring these values are embedded in all that we do.

Student health and wellness

The new Student Wellness Centre opened in 2020, bringing together physical health, counselling and multi-faith services for students. In tandem, we launched SupportConnect, a virtual 24/7 student mental health and wellness support program available in multiple languages, which provided vital support during the COVID-19 pandemic. UVic also has two dedicated Indigenous counsellors providing direct and culturally appropriate supports. The pandemic has underscored the need for accessible health and wellness programming and resources, and UVic will continue to prioritize student life programs, student mental health initiatives, sexualized violence prevention and awareness programs, and health services in the coming year.

Connecting new students

For fall term 2020, we designed online pre-arrival and orientation programs to support the transition of new students and introduce them to key resources. We also launched the award-winning New Student Connect program, which pairs new students with upper-year students in their faculty or peer group. These senior students

help their peers transition to university and navigate academic life, while also building vibrant online communities. Peer groups were created for Indigenous students, students with lived experience in care, and LGBTQ+ students. Based on overwhelmingly positive feedback and an enrolment of about 3,700 students, we expanded the program into 2021 and will implement similar programming for fall 2021 and beyond.

Attracting and supporting talented students

Attracting and supporting a diverse community of talented students will always require investments in scholarships and bursaries. Our scholarship and bursary programs saw a significantly larger uptake this year than in years previous, partially as a result of financial burdens brought on by the pandemic, and we anticipate high demand next year as well. We continue to invest in graduate fellowship programs, including for Indigenous students and through the President's Research Scholarships for students who hold prestigious fellowships from granting councils.

ADVANCE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND IMPACT

Our goal is to excel in diverse forms of research and creative activity and heighten our place in the top tier of the world's research universities.

We are working to excel in diverse forms of research and creative activity—advancing human knowledge, improving and enriching lives and tackling global challenges. Our investments in faculty positions, university-wide research initiatives, and a new strategic research plan will help foster high-quality collaborations.

Leaders in research resumption

As a research-intensive university, we worked quickly to safely re-open our research labs following the province-wide shutdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal was to minimize the negative impact on research output and on researchers disproportionately affected. We developed comprehensive research resumption plans, which were shared with the other research universities and used as a model in BC for safe resumption. A significant number of research labs re-opened before September 2020, with safety plans in place. Further, UVic was very successful at re-opening research spaces to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students, providing opportunities to engage in meaningful research-inspired learning.

Accelerating research

In a year like no other, UVic researchers pivoted research and studied solutions to build more resilient communities in the wake of COVID-19. To support and boost research through seed funding, UVic created the Research Accelerator Fund (RAF). The first RAF campaign focused on COVID-19 research that strives to make communities stronger and speed up recovery. Studies include the adverse and lingering effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection on the brain; risk factors for COVID-19 and forecasting infection counts; what has been helpful or harmful to our well-being; legal and political vulnerability in PPE supply chains; and use of assisted living technologies among seniors.

Creating healthier societies

Collaborating with community groups and leaders, governments, health authorities and other health care agencies, more than 200 UVic researchers are providing evidence-based knowledge to improve the health and well-being of Canadians. We have several centres of research excellence that support healthy societies, including the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health, Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, and Centre for Indigenous Research and Community-Led Engagement. The ongoing UVic Health Initiative continues to enhance the quality and raise the profile of health-related research, academic programs and related activities at UVic.

Canada Research Chairs

UVic has an allocation of 36 Canada Research Chairs (CRCs) in the areas of health sciences, engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, law and humanities. Further, we are one of Canada's most successful universities in recruiting a diverse group of CRCs. In the last CRC assessment of equity, diversity and inclusion, UVic continued to

meet and exceed the equity targets for chair holder representation from women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities and Indigenous peoples and was recognized as a strong leader in the integration of best practices related to equity, diversity and inclusion. UVic is also home to a Canada 150 Research Chair in Materials Science, who is leading the development of advanced materials for health and clean energy applications.

Rankings and reputation

We are ranked as one of Canada's leading universities, consistently outperforming our peers—especially for our size. UVic is third among all Canadian universities in citation impact per faculty member (QS Rankings, 2021). UVic-based researchers wrote a higher proportion of top-performing papers based on international collaborations than any other university in North America (Leiden Rankings, 2020). In the 10 years the Leiden Rankings have been released, UVic has claimed this spot nine times. We are ranked as the second best comprehensive school in Canada for the fourth consecutive year and have consistently ranked in the top three since this ranking's inception (Maclean's, 2020). UVic is ranked number one among Canadian comprehensive universities for preparing career-ready students by the Times Higher Education Global University Employability Ranking (2019).

INTENSIFY DYNAMIC LEARNING

Our goal is to be Canada's leader in research-enriched and experiential learning.

Work-integrated learning is a vital element of UVic's academic programming, and our co-op program is one of the largest in Canada. Through these local and international opportunities, we are equipping students for personal success and to contribute effectively as global citizens.

Nursing practica during the pandemic

In collaboration with Island Health, UVic's School of Nursing provided 19 students with direct experience working in health care during a global pandemic. Students were placed in COVID-19 vaccination clinics and other public venues, handling patient screening, teaching, immunizing and monitoring health status of populations. Immunization clinics include those at the Victoria Conference Centre, in Indigenous communities and with seniors in long-term care. Through this educational approach, students gain skills and expertise that they can carry into the nursing workforce.

Preparing students for great careers with co-op

Last year, our co-operative education program created over 3,700 domestic and international job placements for students. Despite the pandemic, our co-op placements were better than the national average, with fall term 2020 placements up 5.4% from last year. Of these placements, 84% were in BC, helping to support the local and provincial economic recovery. The 1,154 different employer organizations included governments, non-profits and private businesses. UVic is also the largest provider of graduate co-op in Canada—close to 400 UVic graduate students participate in co-op each year at the master's and doctoral level. Nearly three in four UVic co-op students receive an offer of employment before they graduate.

New and expanded academic programs

Government-supported program expansions underway include engineering and computer science, the Nurse Practitioner program, and our JD/JID Indigenous law program. We continue to look for other potential areas of strategic growth, including health information science, as well as new academic program opportunities that align with institutional and provincial priorities. Our Master of Biomedical Engineering and Master of Management are two recent examples of new programs that will position UVic to be competitive in the recruitment of graduate students.

Recommendations from the Bamfield report

The important lessons learned from the 2019 bus accident have improved our approach not only for student trips to the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, but field schools more broadly. UVic has implemented all recommendations from the external report on conducting field trips to the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, except those involving a visit to the centre. A thorough review and reflection was critical to ensuring that all future field trips are as safe as possible and that any potential responses are coordinated, efficient and demonstrate the compassion we have for our students and their families.

Experiential learning guarantee

When students take part in hands-on experiences, they develop valuable skills such as teamwork, communication, and community engagement. UVic's new Co-Curricular Record (CCR) recognizes students' co-curricular involvement, including volunteer and student leadership experiences. A student's participation is validated by a faculty or staff member and students receive a record of the experience, which can be used in job applications and graduate school applications.

FOSTER RESPECT AND RECONCILIATION

Our goal is to be a global leader in creating opportunities for Indigenous students and advancing reconciliation.

We are committed to implementing transformative programs and pathways and entering into and fostering respectful educational and research partnerships with Indigenous communities. Forty-eight Indigenous faculty members work here, and our programs in Indigenous law, education and health are international exemplars in meeting the needs of Indigenous communities and providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment.

Culturally relevant supports for Indigenous students

The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement offers a range of programs and events to develop and nurture relationships with Indigenous students and communities. Programs like LE,NO~~N~~ET help ensure Indigenous students are supported throughout their studies and achieve success in their academic and personal endeavours—from recruitment to graduation and beyond. To support student success during the pandemic, we increased one-to-one support; enhanced financial supports; and offered many programs and events virtually, including the Elders in Residence program.

Inaugural Associate Vice-President Indigenous

On April 1, Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas began her term as the inaugural Associate Vice-President Indigenous. This newly established position underscores the importance of having an Indigenous person at the executive leadership table to ensure Indigenous ways of knowing and being are included in institutional decision making. Dr. Thomas also has responsibility for furthering the university's commitment to truth, respect and reconciliation. Development of a strategy that integrates Indigenous cultures, histories, beliefs and ways of being and knowing across all aspects of the university's mission is central to the role.

Pathways for Indigenous youth

UVic has created or expanded several pathway opportunities in recent years, including the Indigenous Youth 3C Challenge—a non-credit entrepreneurship program to encourage Indigenous youth to engage in the economy in their own terms—and Indigenous Student Mini-University—a week-long summer camp that gives BC youth a taste of university life. Other immersive and Indigenous-focused programs include the Opening My World of Learning Program and the Living Lab Project. During the pandemic, many of these pathway programs moved online. Through initiatives like these, Indigenous student applications and new admissions have increased over the years, with applications up 14% and new student registrations up 15% this past year.

Growth in Indigenous student enrolment

As part of the SEM Plan launched in 2019, we are committed to doubling Indigenous enrolment by 2029, where Indigenous students comprise at least 10% of the overall student population at UVic. Over the past 10 years we have seen a dramatic growth in Indigenous enrolment, from 982 to 1,508—a 54% increase. Currently, Indigenous students comprise over 6% of the overall student population and are enrolled in every faculty. Importantly for a research university, Indigenous enrolment in graduate programs has increased by 50% over the last 10 years, and there are now 71 Indigenous PhD students at UVic—a 184% increase.

Supporting Indigenous research, innovation and culture

Our Centre for Indigenous Research and Community-Led Engagement partners with communities and governments to help address important issues such as health, food security and climate throughout our province. The BC Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research, based at UVic, aims to increase and accelerate Indigenous-led research through key partnerships, programs and supports. And Dr. Onowa McIvor, a UVic President's Chair in the Department of Indigenous Education, co-leads NEȪOLNEW—a SSHRC-funded collaboration with nine Indigenous partners in six provinces to support and expand language revitalization efforts across Canada.

Strengthening Indigenous partnerships

Through UVic's Indigenous Community Engagement Council, we continue to strengthen relationships with local Indigenous communities. Outreach and collaboration also happens through the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement and our faculties. Community partnerships have substantially increased this year, with several communities providing language and educational programming, including new partnerships with the Tla'amin, Tseycum and Tsawout Nations.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Our goal is to be a global leader in environmental, social and institutional sustainability.

Our faculty and students are passionate about tackling real issues related to climate change and the environment—and it shows. UVic has become a global leader in environmental, social and institutional sustainability through academics, research, partnerships and campus operations. We continue to review and renew our approach to sustainability in every domain, including through the development of a new campus-wide action plan.

Global leaders in climate action

UVic is one of the world's leading universities in helping to address the most urgent problems of humanity, according to Times Higher Education. Their Impact Rankings are organized around the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how university research, stewardship, outreach and teaching advance efforts to meet them. UVic is among the world's top-100 performing universities in addressing nine of the 17 UN SDGs, including sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), the pursuit of clean water (SDG 6), life below water (SDG 14), reducing inequality (SDG 10), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), and the pursuit of zero hunger (SDG 2). UVic is ranked #16 globally for climate action (SDG 13).

Sustainability-integrated learning

Sustainability is integrated as a key part of UVic's academic curriculum in nearly every major field, with over 600 undergraduate and graduate courses including a sustainability theme. Academic units with a sustainability focus or stream include the School of Environmental Studies, the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, the Department of Geography, and the Gustavson School of Business, home to the Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation. Our field schools connect students with nature to promote a deeper understanding of things like wildlife, glaciers, and ecosystems—as well as the importance of good conservation monitoring and management to protect life on our planet.

Conservation research

Over 130 faculty and researchers across 30 academic departments are engaged in sustainability research. Recently, two positions have been created to further position UVic as a national leader in environmental advocacy and research: the UVic Impact Chair in Ocean Ecosystem Change and Conservation in the biology department and the Wayne Crookes Professorship in Environmental and Climate Journalism in the writing department. Additionally, marine ecologist and conservation biologist Dr. Julia Baum and hydrologist and groundwater scientist Dr. Tom Gleeson were appointed as UVic President's Chairs to help advance UVic's commitment to sustainability.

A greener campus

UVic is consistently listed as one of Canada's Greenest Employers. Sustainable initiatives that supported UVic's selection for 2021 include the Campus Sustainability Fund; the campus community garden; and progress toward becoming a zero-waste campus through composting, water conservation and recycling. We are also making major landscape enhancements through the Campus Greenway Plan and implementing our Campus Cycling Plan, which will create an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling network on campus.

Responsible investing

To support the transition to a low-carbon economy, UVic moved \$80 million in fixed income investments to a fund with a lower carbon intensity—reducing the carbon intensity on working capital investments by 33%. This is an important step towards achieving our 45% carbon reduction goal by 2030. We also invested in energy companies that support Indigenous economic development. To further our responsible investment policy goals, we committed to investing \$10 million in a renewable power impact fund that will measure the carbon emissions avoided by the fund's investments as well as \$500,000 to an Indigenous-led and owned financial intermediary that invests in Indigenous enterprises as catalysts for social change and prosperity.

Cultivating a culture of philanthropy

We continue to advance a culture of philanthropy on campus and in the community, establishing and fostering valuable relationships with donors to help ensure a sustainable financial future. This year, we surpassed our fundraising goal to raise a total of \$28.6 million from 4,962 donors. Of these funds raised, 28% went towards student awards and 22% went towards research chairs and professorships in accordance with donor wishes.

ENGAGE LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

Our goal is to be a preferred partner and leader in local and global engagement.

UVic is fostering connections and mobilizing knowledge—from the local Speakers Bureau to the national Building Reconciliation Forum to our international partnerships. We continue to enhance our reputation, building on the success of our faculty and alumni and using The UVic Edge to position ourselves to the world.

New look for UVic online

Ahead of our predominantly online fall 2020 term, we launched a new central UVic website to better serve our students, partners and community. Potential students can more easily learn about us—including what we value, our academic programs and our research strengths—while current students can more easily learn about and access our supports and services. The new and award-winning design is fully compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and provides an improved user experience for all audiences.

New websites to support community

In response to the pandemic, we launched two new websites specifically for teaching and learning online, to support instructors and students respectively. We also created The Great Indoors online platform, where members of the UVic community could come together to share ideas, have conversations, support each other, and learn from

UVic researchers and artists. Featured on this platform was Good Company, a YouTube show in which UVic Chancellor Shelagh Rogers chatted with UVic colleagues during the pandemic.

International mobility programming

International exchange, field schools, internships and co-ops provide students with culturally-relevant opportunities to engage globally. Notably, through our award-winning Indigenous International Mobility Program, Indigenous students develop employability skills while maintaining and strengthening their connection to their Indigenous identity, their values and traditions, and their communities. Although much of our student mobility programs are temporarily on hold for health and safety reasons, we have been able to find co-op placements for students in their home countries and are offering virtual programming opportunities through faculties.

Arts and culture

We have BC's only stand-alone Faculty of Fine Arts, home to nationally and internationally recognized creative scholars and practitioners. With one of the most comprehensive applied theatre programs in North America, UVic attracts students from around the world who use performance art to spark social change. In a typical year, the faculty offers over 150 community events a year—from concerts and theatre performances to readings and exhibits. During the pandemic, many events, like the annual BFA grad exhibition, were offered virtually.

Collaborative partnerships on global issues

In 2020, UVic partnered with the Senate of Canada to bring together change-makers to help generate solutions to some of the planet's most divisive problems. The virtual Victoria Forum, which focused on bridging divides in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, included more than 90 speakers from 23 countries. In 2021, in partnership with the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, President's Chair recipient Simon Pek helped to lead a Students' Dialogue on Democratic Engagement. The dialogue engaged 24 students from across campus on effective ways to practice democracy that capture and represent the varied interests of all citizens.

Connecting experts with communities

The UVic Speakers Bureau reflects our commitment to community engagement and to lifelong learning for everyone. The program—the only university-wide bureau of its kind in Canada—brings the expertise of UVic faculty, staff, graduate students and retirees to audiences across southern Vancouver Island. K-12 is the largest audience category for the bureau. Now in its 40th season, volunteer speakers were able to reach audiences virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Major priorities for 2021/22

We are a campus that continues to evolve, learn and respond to the changing needs of people, places and the planet. Our values and commitment to making the world a better place for all citizens inform our priorities and guide us in our decision making. Some areas of focus for the upcoming year include the student experience, research performance and recognition, community and alumni engagement, climate action, and financial sustainability. We also continually recommit to building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive campus while also advancing truth, respect and reconciliation.

Make student living more affordable and accessible

Construction continues on our new on-campus student housing and dining buildings, which will provide 782 beds (620 net new) to students and free-up rental spaces in Victoria. The buildings are designed to be accessible, welcoming and inclusive, targeting both LEED Gold and Passive House Standard. The province is providing debt financing of \$123 million that UVic will pay back from housing fees as well as a grant of \$5.2 million to achieve Passive House Standard. To further make living more affordable and meet urgent demand in our community, we are expanding our child care spaces with nearly \$1.5 million in provincial funding.

Improve the student experience

As part of our commitment to choice, quality and continued innovation, UVic will likely look different as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and leverage learnings from the past year. UVic has for decades offered a substantial

amount of online or hybrid instruction, particularly in social work, child and youth care, nursing, public health, and teacher education programs. This past year has further demonstrated that some students prefer the online or hybrid educational experience as it is high quality, affords convenience and flexibility, and appeals to students with different learning preferences and varying socio-economic situations. The same is true for some of our student supports and services. Equipping students for academic and personal success will remain our priority.

Expand engineering and computer science

UVic received approval and funding from the province to expand our engineering and computer science programs over five years, which includes 500 new student spaces, new faculty and staff positions and student supports. We are also finalizing plans for the addition to our Engineering and Computer Science Building and a high bay structures lab. Our Faculty of Engineering recently received approval from the Board of Governors to change its name to the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, to be more inclusive of our computer science students, staff and faculty. To support diversity, we aim to enrol 30% female students by 2030, with revised pathway programs and new scholarships and awards to help us achieve this important goal.

Embed practices of equity, diversity and inclusion throughout UVic

The current UVic Employment Equity Plan is set to expire in 2021. UVic's new Equity Action Plan, which will be implemented in 2022, is aimed at addressing systemic barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion, and embedding anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives and actions for transformative and systemic change. Further, our SEM Plan includes strategies, tactics and actions to improve access for students who have experienced barriers, including Indigenous and first-generation students.

Advance Indigenous law

Following a national dialogue and consultations with Indigenous communities, construction will begin on the National Centre for Indigenous Law and Reconciliation this year, to house the joint JD/JID program and Indigenous Law Research Unit. The project has been awarded to an Architectural Prime Consultant led by native-owned and operated Two Row Architect, and will be designed to reflect and honour the long-standing relationships between UVic and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ Peoples.

Refocus our institutional plans

Work is underway to develop a new Research and Creative Works Strategy for the university, provisionally titled, *Aspiration 2030: Creating a better world through curiosity, engagement and innovation*. This strategy will define our research priorities and opportunities for the rest of this decade, build on UVic's appeal as a university of choice for diverse and high-quality faculty and students, raise our external profile and attract new partnerships, and direct our research efforts toward societal impact. Also underway is a new Climate and Sustainability Action Plan—aligning academics, research and campus operations—as well as updates to our International Plan and Indigenous Plan over the coming year to ensure we working together towards common goals in these priority areas.

A final thought

Guided by our institutional Strategic Framework, UVic will work with our government, business and community partners to deliver on our commitments to people, places and the planet. Our strength lies in the integration of research, teaching and learning; the quality and accessibility of faculty and staff; and the excellence of our research programs with their strong interdisciplinary and international focus.

As this report demonstrates, we have achieved much and advanced as an institution in recent years, but we recognize that we still have a lot of work to do. This is especially true in the areas of truth, respect and reconciliation, as well as equity, diversity and inclusion more broadly. We are absolutely committed to creating a better and more just society for all citizens, both locally and internationally, through education, research and action. Together, we are working to build a better world.