

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The official publication of the UFV School of Business



Welcome to the latest edition of the UFV School of Business Newsletter!

In this issue, we reflect on our accomplishments from the first half of 2026 and share updates on ongoing projects and initiatives.

It's our way of keeping you connected with everything happening across our dynamic institution.

We hope it helps strengthen our ties and offers a glimpse into the exciting work shaping the future of business education at UFV.

Thank you for being a valued part of our community!

What's in this newsletter:

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MESSAGE

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TEACHING AND
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ENGAGEMENT

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Director's Message

Dear School of Business Family,

Business requires an entrepreneurial spirit, adaptability, and responsiveness to change. As a School of Business, we must embody those same qualities as we navigate today's landscape, including changes in international enrolment, funding pressures, and the fast-moving world of artificial intelligence. I am pleased to say that the School of Business has already adjusted to many of these new realities.

As we begin a new academic year, the goal will be, as always, to provide the very best learning environment for our students. To this end, this academic year will see us commence and conduct several comprehensive program reviews. These reviews will give us the opportunity to reflect on our programs, evolve and improve their delivery, and enhance opportunities for graduates to find fulfilling employment.



Gerry Palmer

This year also brings transitions. While we bid farewell to many beloved colleagues, we look towards our newest faculty to draw on their diverse backgrounds and education to fulfill greater roles. One of these roles will be to build and enhance connections with local businesses and employers.

We are fortunate that our university is located in one of Canada's fastest growing and most desirable areas, and grateful that Canada itself is one of the most desirable, diverse, and free nations in which to live. Although there are many immediate challenges, which we continue to manage in a business-like manner, the future of the School of Business is bright.

Sincerely,

Gerry Palmer
Interim Director, UFV School of Business

Convocation

Every June, the University of the Fraser Valley gathers to celebrate the graduation of thousands of resilient and ambitious individuals ready to leave their mark on the world.

As they cross the stage, these new grads officially step into their next chapter as alumni, joining a thriving network of over 55,000 UFV graduates worldwide.

By the Numbers

- For the 2025/26 academic year, the School of Business saw a total of **232 graduates**.
- This included **187 degrees** conferred and **45 diplomas**.
- The most popular BBA major was **Accounting**, with **46 graduates** choosing this route.

Graduate Address

This year's Graduate Address was given by Daria Tsynda, who completed the Bachelor of Business Administration Honours program, with a Finance major, and an Economics minor.

During her address, Daria spoke of having to leave her home country of Ukraine following the 2022 Russian invasion. She said she had always wanted to come to Canada - though this was not quite how she pictured it.

While Daria spoke with great humour, she delivered a message of profound wisdom:

“While you cannot control what life throws at you, you can control how you show up.”

A very powerful message. One we can all take to heart.



Daria Tsynda delivers the Graduate Address

Research

At the School of Business, we understand that research is central to driving academic advancement and practical impact in the business world.

Our growing focus on research empowers both faculty and students to tackle real-world business challenges, generating insights that drive innovative strategies and inform evidence-based decisions. This commitment enhances our academic programs, deepens the classroom experience, and prepares our graduates to lead and innovate in an ever-changing global marketplace. The following highlights showcase the outstanding contributions of our faculty.

Please find below details on the latest contributions to research.

FACULTY MEMBERS

Chris Schinckus



Dr. Chris Schinckus

Dr. Chris Schinckus, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Computing, continues to demonstrate exceptional research leadership with a scholarship portfolio that is both prolific and diverse, spanning finance, artificial intelligence in education, sustainability, and global health.

In this latest update, Dr. Schinckus showcases high-impact contributions ranging from pioneering studies on AI-driven models in financial learning and the green economy to major international collaborations on landmark global health studies published in top-tier journals like Nature and The Lancet.

Explore his latest publications below to see how his research continues to drive academic dialogue and shape global insights.

Journal Articles:

Schinckus C., Chong F. H.L, Hajbaba A. (2026), “Recrafting Financial Learning with ChatGPT: A Co-Constructivist Model of Knowledge”, Education Sciences (Q1 – Impact Factor: 3.5), 16(8), p,1253;
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci16081253>

Hitch, M., Wood, R., Barakos, G., **Schinckus, C.** (2026). Copper, Crime, and the Circular Economy: How Shadow Flows Threaten the Green Economy. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, (Q1 - Impact Factor 4.3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2026.101875>

Nguyen, C. P., Doan, N., Chavez-Bedoya, L., and **Schinckus, C.** (2026). "The Contribution of International Remittance to Financial Development in Developing Countries: A Further Investigation." *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, 29 (Q2 journal, Impact Factor: 2.8). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijfe.70203>

GBD 2023 IHD & Dietary Risk Factors Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global, regional and national burden of ischemic heart disease attributable to suboptimal diet, 1990–2023: a Global Burden of Disease study". *Nature Medicine* (Q1 - Impact Factor 50), 30. doi: 10.1038/s41591-026-04250-8

GBD 2023 Global Chronic Respiratory Disease and Covid Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors), "Global, regional, and national burden of chronic respiratory diseases and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1990–2023: a Global Burden of Disease study. *Nature Medicine* (Q1 - Impact Factor 50), 32, 197–223 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-025-04077-9>

GBD 2023 Meningitis & Antimicrobial Resistance Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global, regional, and national burden of meningitis, its risk factors, and aetiologies, 1990–2023: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023". *Lancet Neurology* (Q1 - Impact Factor 45.5), 6. doi: 10.1016/S1474-4422(26)00101-8

GBD 2023 Breast Cancer Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global, regional, and national burden of breast cancer among females, 1990–2023, with forecasts to 2050: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. *Lancet Oncology* (Q1 - Impact Factor 35.9). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(25\)00730-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(25)00730-2)

GBD 2023 Mental Disorder Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Updated trends in the global prevalence and burden of mental disorders, 1990–2023: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023". *The Lancet*. 21 (Q1 -Impact factor: 98.4), May 2026. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(26)00519-2

GBD 2023 Diarrhoeal Disease and Enteric Infectious Diseases Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global burden of enteric infectious diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, and corresponding aetiologies, 1990–2023: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023". *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* (Impact factor: 31). June 2026. doi: 10.1016/S1473-3099(26)00194-5

GBD 2023 Road Injuries Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global, regional, and national burden of road injuries: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023". *The Lancet Public Health* (Q1 - Impact Factor: 25.4), July 2026. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(26)00141-6

GBD 2023 Child Growth Failure Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors), "Quantifying the fatal and non-fatal burden of disease associated with child growth failure, 2000–2023: a systematic analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023". *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, (Q1 – Impact Factor 13.4), 10(1), pp.22-38.

GBD 2021 AEMT Collaborators (**Chris Schinckus** is a member of the co-authors) (2026). "Global burden of adverse effects of medical treatment from 1990 to 2021: a Global Burden of Disease Study 2021". Korean Journal of Internal Medicine (Q2 journal - Impact Factor: 3.165), 41(2):350–66. doi:10.3904/kjim.2025.278

Keynotes:

Chris Schinckus was invited by the Hunan University of the Arts and Sciences (HUAS) to deliver a keynote speech entitled “ The Transformative Power of AI in Higher Education Leadership” – April, 27, 2026 - Changde, China.

Chris Schinckus was invited by the Hunan Applied University of Technology (HUAT) to deliver a keynote speech entitled “ The Transformative Power of AI in Higher Education Leadership” – April, 29, 2026 - Changde, China.



Dr. Chris Schinckus delivers keynote at HUAT

Felicia Chong



Dr. Felicia Chong

Dr. Felicia Chong is the Chair of Research Coordination and one of the School's most accomplished researchers. See her latest publications below.

Journal Articles

El Sayad, I., **Chong, F.H.L.**, & Gosal, B. (2026). Risk assessment in mortgages: a comparative study of AI models. PeerJ Computer Science, 12, e3494. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.3494>

Schinckus, C., **Chong, F.H.L.**, & Hajbaba, A. (2026). Recrafting Financial Learning with ChatGPT: A Co-Constructivist Model of Knowledge. Education Sciences, 16(8), 1253. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci16081253>

Research Events

On February 24, Dr. Chong hosted the winter semester installment of Writing Tuesdays, providing an opportunity for all faculty and staff of the School of Business to share with and support each other in their writing projects.

On March 26, Dr. Chong hosted the School's first PhD Colloquium. For more information see p. 14.

Benny Davidson



Dr. Benny Davidson

Dr. Benny Davidson is one of the School's most prolific researchers, combining his role as an accomplished Associate Professor in Business Management with extensive experience as a management consultant. Explore his latest contributions below.

Journal Articles

Dias, S., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, Chully, A. A., & Sharma, T. (2026). Application of distinct motivational types in shaping generative AI (GenAI) adoption behaviour. *Discover Artificial Intelligence*. (SJR - Q1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44163-026-00844-w>

George, J. P., Muttungal, P., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, & Priya, N. (2026). When the Therapist Is an Algorithm: Understanding Autism Spectrum Students' Acceptance of Generative AI as a Mental Well-Being Tool through the Technological Acceptance Model. *Northeast Journal of Complex Systems (NEJCS)*, 8(3). (SJR - Q4). <https://doi.org/10.63562/2577-8439.1163>

Nakamura, A., Tahri, Q., Ando, M., Bruno, D., Kim, S., & **Davidson, B. G. J.** (2026). Buying cheap or buying smart? Analyzing young consumers' green real estate purchase intention. *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*, 1–22. (SJR - Q2 | ABDC - B). <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijhma-02-2026-0038>

Saraf, V., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, George, J. P., & Muttungal, P. V. (2026). Understanding learner adoption of generative AI-powered Ed-Tech applications by dissertation-based master students. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 1–25. (SJR - Q2 | ABDC - C). <https://doi.org/10.1108/jieb-08-2024-0103>

Varghese, A., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, George, J. P., & Muttungal, P. V. (2026). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives; Organizational Culture; and Employee Retention: Situational Traits—Mediated Model. *FIIB Business Review*. SJR - Q2 | ABDC - B). <https://doi.org/10.1177/23197145261421995>

Conference Proceedings

Presented a Paper entitled "When the Therapist Is an Algorithm: Understanding Autism Spectrum Students Acceptance of Generative AI as a Mental Well-Being Tool through the Technological Acceptance Model" during the International Conference on Complex Systems Modeling, Analysis & Applications [CSMA - 2026] held on 13-14 February 2026 at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Lavasa, Pune, India and online sponsored by Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA

Book Chapters

George, J.P., Muttungal, P.V., **Davidson, B.G.J.** (2025). AI and Big Data: Harnessing Data Science for Enhanced Consumer Insights. In: Shukla, S., Sayama, H., Tiwari, K., Kureethara, J.V. (eds) Data Science and Security. IDSCS 2024. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 1354. Springer, Singapore. (Scopus Indexed). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-4880-1_23

George, J. P., Muttungal, P. V., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, & Priya, N. (2025). Neuroplasticity, stress, and resilience in the modern workplace. In Impact of neuroplasticity on organizational effectiveness and labor productivity. IGI Global. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-2292-6.ch004>

Muttungal, P. V., George, J. P., & **Davidson, B. G. J.** (2026). Humanizing Industry 5.0: Creating human-centric experiences. In A. Saini & V. Garg (Eds.), Industry 5.0: Pioneering business and management transformations. Emerald Publishing Limited. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83608-826-4>

George, J. P., Muttungal, P. V., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, & Priya, N. (2026). Credibility, engagement, and purchase: How virtual influencers drive Gen Z's consumer behavior. In A. Saini & V. Garg (Eds.), Industry 5.0: Pioneering business and management transformations. Emerald Publishing Limited. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83608-826-420261009>

Muttungal, P. V., George, J. P., Priya, N., & **Davidson, B. G. J.** (2026). Water sustainability and smart monitoring: IoT and AI for water use. In Data-driven sustainability: Harnessing technology for a greener future and environmental resilience. Springer. (Scopus Indexed). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-13412-7_6

Davidson, B. G. J., Muttungal, P. V., & Tur, A. (2026). Cognitive computing: Merging modalities for human-like artificial intelligence. In S. Eslamian, P. Nanjundan, J. George, & F. Eslamian (Eds.), Multimodal learning using heterogeneous data (pp. 217–221). Morgan Kaufmann. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-27528-9.00006-1>

Thomas, A. A., Baby, R., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, & George, J. P. (2026). Revolutionizing education: Evaluating the impact of AI and EdTech tools on learning outcomes. In Human-AI collaboration and the evolving role of educators. IGI Global. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-4521-5.ch014>

Muttungal, P. V., George, J. P., **Davidson, B. G. J.**, & Priya, N. (2026). mHealth applications for maternal and child health in developing countries. In C. Sui & P. Yu (Eds.), Addressing global health challenges through financial innovation and health technologies. IGI Global. (Scopus Indexed). <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-3341-0.ch008>

Chang Lu

Dr. Lu has maintained an active and impactful research agenda, marked by significant journal publications, interdisciplinary collaborations, and conference presentations. His latest work spans top-tier entrepreneurship research, organizational sociology, and emerging technologies.

Journal Articles

Dr. Lu's article "Emancipatory Entrepreneurship by a Stigmatized Social Group" was published in the Journal of Business Venturing, a FT45 journal and an A* journal on the ABDC list. It contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by showing how emancipatory entrepreneurship (EE) by a stigmatized group occurs and illustrating that the emancipatory effect of entrepreneurship is an outcome of the interactions between entrepreneurs and audiences rather than the heroic actions of the entrepreneur.

- **Lu, C.**, Zhang, R., & Reay, T. (2026). Emancipatory entrepreneurship by a stigmatized social group. Journal of Business Venturing, 41(3), 106578. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2026.106578>



Dr. Chang Lu

Dr. Lu's article "A Prototype for Real-Time Traceability in Agricultural Supply Chains", authored with Saijd Safeer and Victoria Lemieux, will appear in the Emerging Science Journal, Volume 9, Issue 06. It sits at the intersection between business and computer science and applies blockchain technology to the supply chains in the agriculture industry.

- Safeer, S., Lemieux, V., **Lu, C.**, & Pulvento, C. (2026). BloT-DApp: A Prototype for Real Time Traceability in Agricultural Supply Chains. Emerging Science Journal, 10(2), 638–655. <https://doi.org/10.28991/ESJ-2026-010-02-02>

Dr. Lu's article "Jolted to Change: How Do Elites Disrupt the Institutional Orders They Inhabit?", authored with Rongrong Zhang and Emma Jing, has been accepted by Research in the Sociology of Organizations and is currently in press. The article contributes to the literature on institutional logics by showing the difference between institutional logics and institutional order in the context of elite-led institutional change.

Book Chapters

Dr. Lu's book chapter "Blockchain applications in AI renewable energy systems", coauthored with Ibriham Javed and Prabhkirat Batra, has been published in the edited volume "Artificial Intelligence-based Energy System" by Elsevier. It represents a collaboration between faculty members in business and computer science.

The chapter "Organizational stigma from the perspective of power and politics", coauthored with Rongrong Zhang and Llewellyn D W Thomas, is set to be published in the edited volume Research Handbook on Organizational Stigma.

Presentations

Dr. Lu delivered a presentation, "Entrepreneurial Fraud and Industry Emergence: Fraud and the Cryptocurrency Industry 2013-2025", at the CEEC Entrepreneurship Research and Pedagogy Conference in April 2026.

Donna Derksen

Introducing Dr. Donna Derksen!

A massive congratulations to Dr. Donna Derksen for successfully completing her PhD in Human Resource Management and Strategic Management at the Australian Institute of Business.

Her dissertation is titled “An investigation of the role of multinational enterprises’ (MNEs) mental health supports for expatriates during pre-departure and post-arrival preparation for international assignments and resultant psychological adjustment”. It is the first empirical validation of a new framework (Derksen et al., 2024) that positions mental health as a foundational driver of expatriate success and psychological adjustment. Crucially, the research identifies a hidden "recursive loop" between personality and mental health that has historically kept mental health out of global mobility strategies.

Beyond theory, the study offers a practical blueprint for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs). It pinpoints the exact mental health supports that directly improve adjustment outcomes – not just for employees, but for their accompanying spouses and children as well.

We are so proud to have someone with Dr. Derksen’s dedication and expertise at our school. Cheers to this incredible milestone!



Donna Derksen

Jelena Brcic



Dr. Jelena Brcic

Dr. Jelena Brcic embodies research excellence at the University of the Fraser Valley. She is a leading expert on the nature of human adaptability in extreme environments.

Her two-year national research project on women in Search and Rescue (SAR), backed by Public Safety Canada’s SAR New Initiatives Fund (NIF), continues to make significant progress. Over the last year Dr. Brcic has interviewed dozens of female SAR volunteers, examining their successes, challenges, and pathways to leadership. On June 22, 2026, she shared these findings in a webinar attended by 173 people.

Dr. Brcic has also delivered numerous related talks and events. For instance, the International Women’s Day panel which she hosted brought together women from Fraser Valley Search and Rescue groups, Women in the Wild, and BC Adventure Smart who are passionate about the outdoors and sharing their expertise to empower other women to get into nature! She also gave a presentation titled “Adapting Beyond Earth” talk at Science World that demonstrates how astronauts adapt to take on “hard things”.

Zubair Raja



Dr. Zubair Raja

Dr. Raja has demonstrated exceptional leadership in community-engaged research and international relations. Explore Dr. Raja's recent grants, institutional achievements, and conference presentations below:

Dr. Raja has also recently completed his initial two-year probation as determined by the Individual Probationary Evaluation Committee (IPEC).

ROSA Grant

Dr. Raja received a ROSA grant (approximately \$8000 CAD) to facilitate the publication of his article titled “Empowering Communities: Leveraging Tactical Urbanism for Land Use Planning with Tzeachten First Nation”. The grant was issued March 2, 2026.

Chair, International Partnerships and Collaboration

As Chair of International Partnerships and Collaboration, Dr. Raja facilitated more than one new partnerships. First, in May 2026, he delivered an internship transfer agreement with Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia. Next, in June 2026, he established a BBA articulation agreement with East Delta University, Bangladesh.

Presentations

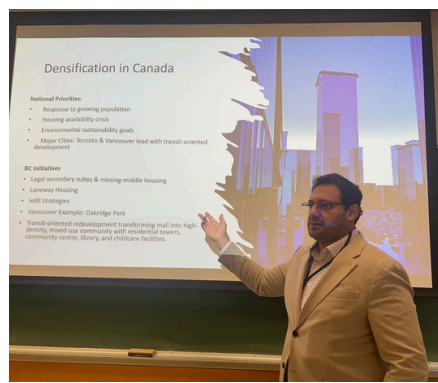
Dr. Raja presented his research, “Weight Loss Sentiment and Stick Returns”, at UFV’s Micro-Lectures Series in February 2026.

Dr. Raja presented his research, “Understanding Public Support for Urban Densification: Challenges to Intensification in the Fraser Valley, BC” at UBC in March 2026.

Dr. Raja presented his research, “Co-Creating Place: How Tactical Urbanism Supports Land Use Planning with First Nations”, at the Planning Institute of BC conference, June 2-5, 2026.



Dr. Raja presents at UFV’s Micro-Lecture Series



Dr. Raja presents his research at UBC



Dr. Raja presents at the Planning Institute of BC

Saeed Rahman

Dr. Saeed Rahman is the School's resident sustainability expert. His research focuses on how businesses can advance sustainability by better understanding business-nature relationships and integrating local, place-based knowledge of ecosystem processes and functions.

See his latest contribution below - a case study in sustainable waste management.

New Ivey Business Case: MCC Centre: Sustainable Solutions for Clothing Waste

A new Ivey Business School case, MCC Centre: Sustainable Solutions for Clothing Waste Management, examines a challenge unfolding right here in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

The case follows the director of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Centre Thrift Shop as she confronts a growing and complex issue: what to do with unsellable donated clothing. While thrifting continues to rise in popularity, the volume of donations – particularly low-quality or unsellable items – has created significant downstream consequences, including landfilling and exporting textiles.

At its core, the case centres on a difficult balancing act: reducing clothing waste while preserving donation flows, maintaining strong financial performance, and staying aligned with the organization's mission and community commitments.



Dr. Saeed Rahman



Authors

Developed by Dr. Saeed Rahman, Associate Professor in the School of Business at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), alongside Dr. Stefania Pizzirani of UFV's Environmental Studies program, the case reflects an interdisciplinary approach to a complex operational and sustainability challenge.

Dr. Rahman's research focuses on how organizations adapt to environmental constraints – particularly how businesses respond to ecosystem degradation and resource limitations without undermining long-term resilience. That perspective is evident throughout the case, which treats clothing waste not just as an operational issue, but as part of a broader system of interdependencies.

Dr. Pizzirani brings complementary expertise in environmental systems, resource management, and community-engaged research, strengthening the case's grounding in ecological realities and stakeholder complexity.

Teaching Application

Designed for both undergraduate and graduate classrooms, the case is well suited for courses in sustainability, strategy, operations, innovation, and social enterprise.

Students working through the case are asked to evaluate trade-offs and develop actionable approaches. In doing so, they will:

- Examine how the thrifting model both supports and falls short of triple-bottom-line sustainability
- Assess the strengths and limitations of pursuing a zero-waste target
- Build a deeper understanding of sustainability as a multi-dimensional concept
- Identify and apply the core principles of the circular economy
- Analyze the operational and strategic implications of sustainability-driven change

Why This Case Matters

Textile waste is often discussed at a global level, but its impacts are managed locally – in organizations, in communities, and in systems like the one here in Abbotsford.

This case brings that reality into focus, showing that extending the life of clothing is not simply about good intentions; it requires systems thinking, process redesign, and difficult decisions about what can and cannot be sustained.

Ultimately, it asks the question: how can organizations create meaningful value from what is currently treated as waste – and what does it take to do that in practice?

Congratulations to Dr. Rahman and Dr. Pizzirani on the publication of this case!

David Dobson



Dr. David Dobson

Dr. David Dobson is an applied researcher with a strong background in advanced analytics and marketing research.

He was recently featured by the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC) along Marketing Divisional Co-Chair Dr. Robert Opoku (Red Deer Polytechnic). In this spotlight, they discuss their roles as Co-Chairs and the value of building a multidisciplinary, collaborative research community. They highlight the roles that artificial intelligence and ethical marketing will play in the marketing field moving forward, while also diving into personal questions such as what excites them the most about the future and what advice they would give to new members.

Find the full LinkedIn post here: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/administrative-sciences-association-of-canada_asac-marketingresearch-academiccommunity-activity-7449445054479343616-nImj

For more about Dr. Dobson, see Guest Speakers on pp. 19-21, and Conversations with Dr. David Dobson on p. 24.

Jon Thomas



Dr. Jon Thomas

Dr. Jon Thomas is an Associate Professor at the School of Business, Director of the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (EFCIE), and the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Canada-India Partnership Development at UBC. His research focuses on technology management, venture emergence, and turning academic science into commercial impact. See his latest scholarly contributions below, and for more information about Dr. Thomas' work with the EFCIE see the Engagement section, pp. 27-30.

Books

Dr. Thomas collaborated with a team from the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore on a book Returnee Entrepreneurs and Tech Startups in India: Distinctive Features, Innovativeness and Outcomes.

Conference Presentations

Fardghassemi, S.*, Bodnar, C., & **Thomas, V. J.** (2026). Addressing agtech adoption challenges through agricultural cooperatives. R&D Management Conference 2026.

Wasnik, A. P.*, Rasmussen, E., **Thomas, V. J.**, & Maine, E. (2026). From academic lab to spinoff: How opportunity beliefs evolve from individual to venture during technology-market matching. R&D Management Conference 2026.

RESEARCH EVENTS

PhD Colloquium

On March 26, **Dr. Felicia Chong** hosted the School of Business' first **PhD Colloquium**. The purpose of the gathering being the creation of a supportive space where faculty and staff come together to offer encouragement and constructive feedback to colleagues who are approaching the final stages of their PhD.

Our presenters were **Nathan Arney** and **Donna Derksen (now Dr. Donna Derksen)**, who shared their ongoing work and reflections. We are also delighted that **Dr. Mariana Toniolo Barrios**, who completed her PhD two years ago, joined to share her research and her journey beyond completion.

All School of Business colleagues were warmly invited to attend, whether to participate as an engaged audience member, or to share their own experiences, or simply to support one another through this significant professional and personal milestone.

The completion of a PhD is a milestone which represents more than just an academic achievement. It also represents perseverance, growth, and transformation, and we are excited to host this as a meaningful opportunity for positive reflection, connection, and exchange within our School.



Learning Exchange

The **Learning Exchange** brings together the School of Business and the School of Computing to share innovative research, spark interdisciplinary dialogue, and build connections across the faculty in an informal, engaging setting. The most recent session took place on June 5, 2026 during the Faculty Council meeting and was moderated Learning Exchange Committee Chair, **Dr. Mariana Toniolo Barrios**.

- From the **School of Business**, **Dr. Saeed Rahman** gave a presentation titled “From Idea to Publication: Publishing Teaching Cases with Ivey Publishing”.
- From the **School of Computing**, **Dr. Russell Campbell** gave a presentation titled “Course Content, Copyright, and Artificial Intelligence”.

Undergraduate Research Excellence Awards

Each year, the UFV Office of Research and Graduate Studies presents the Undergraduate Research Excellence (URE) Awards to students who have demonstrated research excellence as part of a work study program, as research assistants, as part of their coursework, or as part of a self-directed research project.

Departments/Schools are invited to submit nominations for their best research student for projects done in the past year. The Research Office then selects the top project from each department. Winners are honoured at a celebratory dinner – this year, on May 27, 2026 – where they are awarded a \$1,000 prize!

This year, the winners from the School of Business are Victoria Alatabi and Trey Smith. They were selected for their research project, “The Impact of Message Framing on Tourists’ Attitudes and Decision Making for Abbotsford, British Columbia”, which explored various types of message framing and the effect it had on tourists’ overall perception of Abbotsford as a destination.

Congratulations Victoria and Trey!



**Victoria Alatabi and Trey Smith
with Dean Chris Schinckus**

Business Student Research Day

On April 7, the UFV School of Business hosted its annual Student Research Day. Student Research Day is an opportunity for business students to present their research to peers while having them judged by faculty.

Our students did an excellent job presenting the applied research projects, which led to many insightful discussions.

The event was well attended by both students and faculty. Many thanks to the judging panel for reviewing student papers and presentations: Raymond Leung, Felicia Chong, Nathan Arney, and Chang Lu. Thank you also to our Director, Gerry Palmer, for his support.



Business students pose with the judges

Student Activities

Student participation is the lifeblood of our community. Whether you are looking to build connections, sharpen your skills, or give back, active involvement makes a difference. From industry-focused clubs community projects to mentorship opportunities, student-focused activities keep our campus active and connected. Check out the latest highlights and opportunities below.

Enactus

Enactus UFV is a student-led organization that works in collaboration with the UFV School of Business, faculty, business leaders, and the community to form business projects that create social change and empower those they interact with. They use our entrepreneurial mindsets to create businesses that address social initiative issues in our community.

Enactus UFV currently has four business projects: Big Brain Literacy Program, Fraser Valley AgroConnect, Oak & Earth, and Wellness Connections. For more information: <https://www.ufv.ca/business/enactus-ufv/our-projects/>

Enactus UFV also participates in the Regional and National competitions. See the latest results below.

2026 Enactus Regional and National Competitions

We're so proud of our incredible Enactus UFV students who competed at the Western Regional Exposition (March 15-16, 2026) and the National Exposition (May 6-8, 2026)..

At the Regionals, our students competed in three competitions, finishing as Regional Runner-Up in the Canadian Tire Corporation Environmental Sustainability Challenge. At the Nationals, our team finished as Semi-Finalists out of 55 teams from across the country.

We must acknowledge the enormous amount of time and effort our students dedicated to preparing for this competition, including countless hours spent practicing presentations and Q&A. Special credit goes to Enactus UFV President Sargun Gill and Vice President Durgesh Chitre for their leadership.



The Enactus UFV team at the 2026 National Exposition

Student Clubs

The UFV School of Business has 5 major-specific student run clubs: the Student Accounting Association (SAA), the Human Resources Student Association (HRSA), the Marketing Club, the Professional Sales Student Association (PSSA), and the Aviation Alliance.

Each club offers students the opportunity to connect with other students with similar interests and goals. Each club offers several events each semester, ranging from casual social events to networking events with industry professionals. See the collection of event posters from Winter 2026 below.



CLASSROOM TO CORPORATE: LIFE IN HR

FEBRUARY 11, 2026
5:30-7:30 PM
A210 | A BUILDING



**LOW PRESSURE.
HIGH VALUE.**
SCAN THE QR
CODE TO RSVP
& LEARN MORE

Open to students curious about HR & business | Pizza, chips & drinks provided

- HR professionals + UFV profs with corporate HR experience
- Ask about careers, internships & how to break into HR
- Rotate tables. Meet multiple professionals.



Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are at the core of everything we do as a business school. This section is dedicated to showcasing the creativity, experimentation, and dedication that drive our academic mission forward. It's where theory meets practice – and where students and faculty collaborate to make learning truly transformative.

From immersive course experiences like student-produced podcasts and field-based learning, to the integration of guest speakers and global initiatives like Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), our classrooms are more dynamic and diverse than ever. Highlighting these stories allows us to celebrate the rich educational experiences happening every day – and to inspire continued innovation in how we teach, learn, and grow together.

Guest Speakers

Connecting academic theory with real-world expertise is central to our mission, and Dr. David Dobson consistently bridges this gap by bringing guest speakers into his classroom. This past term, we were privileged to host a fantastic group of industry leaders and subject matter experts. Here is a look back at the distinguished guests who came by to share their time, experience, and insights with our business school community.

Jesse Kaufman - Account Executive, Salesforce ***Customer Relations Management (BUS 324)***

On February 3, David welcomed Jesse Kaufman, account executive at Salesforce and proud UFV alumnus, to his Customer Relations Management (BUS 324) class. Jesse shared among many insights, ways in which AI is transforming the CRM landscape, moving it from simple databases into intelligent assistants.

In David's words, "Jesse's career advice and motivational stories resonated with our students. The students were highly engaged and asked several questions. Seeing our alumni achieve such great professional success and then give back to the next generation by coming back to campus is what makes teaching at UFV so rewarding."



**Jesse Kaufman attends
Dr. David Dobson's BUS 324 class**

Amy Keryluick Casey - Training Manager, Cascade Aerospace
Larissa Horne - Experiential Education Coordinator, UFV CECE
Business Research Methods (BUS 320)

On February 11, David welcomed Amy Keryluick Casey, a training manager at Cascade Aerospace, and Larissa Horne, an Experiential Education Coordinator at UFV's Centre for Experiential and Career Education (CECE), to his Business Research Methods (BUS 320) class.

Amy provided the students with an overview of the aerospace sector, highlighting industry challenges and the innovative ways Cascade is training the next generation of technicians. while Larissa shared the work UFV's CECE does to connect students with hands-on learning and career development opportunities.



**Amy Keryluick and Larissa Horne attend
Dr. David Dobson's BUS 320 class**

Mehtab Chhina - Data Scientist, Later
Business Statistics (BUS 260)

On March 4, David welcomed Mehtab Chhina, a data scientist at the social media marketing platform, Later, to his Economic and Business Statistics (BUS 260) class.

Mehtab shared insights into how foundational statistical concepts like Regression and Analysis of Variance are transforming the marketing landscape into a world of predictive analytics and machine learning.

According to David, "Mehtab's career advice and "real-world" transition stories from SPSS to professional Python and R environments resonated with our students. The students were highly engaged and asked several questions about building "data intuition" for the tech industry."



**Mehtab Chhina attends
Dr. David Dobson's BUS 260 class**

Dr. Hippolyte Fofack - Research Associate, Harvard University
Business Research Methods (BUS 320)

On March 18, David welcomed Dr. Hippolyte Fofack, Research Associate at Harvard University to his Business Research Methods (BUS 320) class.

Students had the opportunity to listen to his insights on the future of Africa as a global economic powerhouse. We discussed how Africa's demographic momentum and structural shifts are positioning the continent as a player in the global market. Dr. Fofack challenged the students to consider the potential for business and investment across the continent over the coming decades. This led to a lively Q&A session.



**Dr. Hippolyte Fofack at
David Dobson's BUS 320 class**

Many thanks to Dr. Edward Akuffo (Political Science) and Gerry Palmer (School of Business) for arranging this visit.

Professional Selling (BUS 221)

The hallmark of Professional Selling (BUS 221) is practical, real-world application that moves beyond the textbook. Students build practical communication fluency by engaging in simulated B2B sales interactions, alternating roles as both seller and buyer to master every angle.

Standout student Benoit Laflamme exemplified this hands-on drive by earning first place in the class' competitive Elevator Pitch Competition.

Additionally, students recently connected with local employers at the UFV Career Fair, networking directly with corporate sponsors like Fastenal Canada, HUB International, and DeVry Greenhouses.



**BUS 221 students connect
with local sponsors at the
UFV Career Fair**

Professional Sales Practicum (BUS 494)

As the capstone course in our Professional Sales Minor, the Professional Sales Practicum (BUS 494) offers an invaluable example of work-integrated learning where students build authentic job-related skills in a real-world environment. This 13-week journey begins with two weeks of intensive classroom preparation, followed by 10 weeks embedded directly in the workplace where 12 students this year dedicate 80 hours over a three-month period to sales-related roles at Fraser Valley companies and non-profits.

The experience deeply resonates with participants, as one student shared: “Overall, the practicum provided a realistic view of both the opportunities and challenges in a sales career. It helped me better understand where I currently stand and what skills I need to continue improving.”

Practicum students also learned about the social side of business from the comfort of a private suite at Rogers Forum to enjoy watching the Abbotsford Canucks play! A big thank you to Canucks Sports & Entertainment (CSE) and Tyrone Robertson for making it happen!

“

“Overall, the practicum provided a realistic view of both the opportunities and challenges in a sales career. It helped me better understand where I currently stand and what skills I need to continue improving.”

”



**Mark Breedveld and students
at the BUS 494 Reception**



BUS 494 students socialize at a Canucks game

Because the Professional Sales Practicum rests entirely on the participation of its dedicated sponsors, the semester always concludes back at UFV with a special reception to recognize and honor all the workplace supervisors who make this transformative program possible. A great thanks to this year's hosts, including HUB International, Leavitt Machinery, DeVry Greenhouses, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Lotus Terminals, Magnificent Lighting Co., and BMO.

Business in Europe

From May 25 to May 30, 2026, students and faculty from the School of Business took part in an immersive field school in Switzerland, hosted by the OST Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences. The week was packed with academic lectures, cultural excursions, and exclusive behind-the-scenes company visits across Eastern Switzerland.

Academic & Professional Highlights

The group gained firsthand insight into Swiss industry and business practices across several key sectors. At Alpinamed AG in Romanshorn, students learned how traditional herbal medicine meets modern pharmaceutical standards. A visit to Maestrani Chocolatier Schweiz AG in Flawil highlighted over 170 years of chocolate craftsmanship, sustainable sourcing, and brand innovation. And a tour of Brauerei Locher AG in Appenzell demonstrated how a five-generation family brewery leverages local spring water and ongoing product development to stay competitive.

Students also engaged in interactive academic sessions at OST, including Intercultural Perspectives with Dr. Christa Uehlinger and Marketing Communications with Benjamin von Walter.

Cultural & Networking Highlights

The study tour blended academic learning with rich cultural experiences:

- Exploring St. Gallen & Ebenalp: Students explored St. Gallen's historic Old Town, Cathedral, and UNESCO World Heritage Abbey Library through a City Photo Challenge, and later took in views during an alpine excursion to Ebenalp and Wildkirchli.
- Farewell Celebration: The trip concluded with a traditional Swiss dinner at Restaurant Drei Linden, hosted alongside leadership from the OST School of Management and International Office.

Special thanks to Prof. Sigmar Willi, Cristina Garone, and the team at OST for hosting such a memorable and insightful international learning experience!



Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (OST) Rooftop Terrace



Tour of phytopharmaceutical company Alpinamed

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is an essential part of building a strong and forward-thinking institution. When professional development is supported, faculty and staff are better equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and create meaningful learning experiences. It provides educators opportunities to step out of their comfort zones, and thereby strengthen their knowledge, develop new skills, share ideas, and continually improve their practice. See some of our latest PD activities below.

Kurt Siemens

Coordinator - Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Stakeholder Engagement

Kurt Siemens successfully completed the executive training program, ***AI Prototyping for Business Innovation***, offered through the **Ivey School of Business**. The program examined the way artificial intelligence is reshaping industries and workflows while showing leaders how to remain ahead of the curve. By completing the program, Kurt learned to develop the proper mindset for responsible AI use, strengthen his leadership capacity, use AI to rapidly prototype solutions to new and classic problems, and to successfully and strategically position an organization through AI-led innovation.



Kurt Siemens

Julie Croft

Education and Career Advisor

Julie Croft recently completed the ***Professional Certificate in Career Development and Academic Advising*** at the **University of Calgary**, specializing in career development through courses such as Employment Interviews and Resumes and Cover Letters. Combining theory with practical learning, Julie continues to apply this knowledge to support School of Business students in planning their transition from university to meaningful careers that align with their goals and work-life balance. She is also pursuing her Certified Career Development Professional (CCDP) designation.



Julie Croft

Benny Davidson

Assistant Professor

Dr. Benny Davidson successfully completed the executive training program on ***Generative and Agentic AI for Business: Driving Growth and Competitive Advantage*** from the **Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto**, in March 2026. The program focused on advancing expertise in generative AI and agentic systems, and on their applications for driving innovation and competitive advantage in modern organizations.



Dr. Benny Davidson

Engagement

Engagement is about more than just participation – it's about building meaningful connections, taking initiative, and making a difference. Whether through collaborative projects, student leadership, alumni mentorship, or community partnerships, engagement brings our school's mission to life. In this section, we spotlight the people and programs driving connection, purpose, and impact across our business school community.

Conversations with Dr. David Dobson

Dr. David Dobson hosts his very own podcast, eponymously titled Conversations with Dr. David Dobson. Over the last 3 years, David has hosted a wide array of guests, speaking on many topics, from marketing strategies to workplace relationships to artificial intelligence.

David has also hosted a large number of School of Business friends and colleagues, including Dr. Saeed Rahman, Dr. Khyati Shetty, Dr. Jon Thomas, Tanya Vanpraseuth, and Cyrus Chaichian. In the first six months of 2026 alone, David has published an impressive 24 episodes, including two with School of Business faculty members.

Dr. Chang Lu

Episode 150 - March 6, 2026

Dr. Dobson speaks with Dr. Chang Lu about innovation adoption. They discuss socio-organizational barriers to implementing technologies like blockchain in regulated industries, such as healthcare and life sciences. They also explore Dr. Lu's research on "Emancipatory Entrepreneurship," examining how stigmatized groups, including First Nations in Canada, navigate systems to build ventures and redefine success.

Dr. Donna Derksen

Episode 151 - June 18, 2026

In this episode, Dr. Donna Derksen unpacks her research on a major corporate blind spot: the 'Personality-as-Proxy' loop in international business assignments. She shares why international business assignments fail up to 70% of the time, why global HR departments consistently mistake a 'resilient personality' for actual mental health, as well as the isolation experienced by spouses. They also discuss her newly developed three-tiered policy roadmap to fix international assignment design from day one.

Dean's Conversation Series

The Dean's Conversation Series is a forum designed to spark meaningful dialogue around the evolving priorities and challenges in education today. Through presentations and open discussions, these events provide space for faculty and staff to share insights and experiences. By encouraging exchange of voices and perspectives, the conversations aim to inspire collaboration and foster a stronger, more connected academic community.

Cristen Gleeson

On March 11, 2026, Dean Schinckus welcomed Cristen Gleeson, Chair of the UFV Board of Governors and a Partner at Baker Newby Law.

During her presentation, Cristen clarified the role of the Chair of UFV's Board of Governors, explaining how the Chair connects governance, the President, the Ministry, and external partners.

Board Chair – Purpose/Philosophy

It is the responsibility of the Board Chair to lead and manage the Board's governance process, the affairs of the Board, relationships with the University President, the Ministry, and other government representatives, and to speak on behalf of the Board.

Cristen further spoke about how the Faculty of Business & Computing can align with and support the Board's priorities, which include Institutional Strength and Culture, Student Experience and Success, Applied Research and Scholarship, and Regional Engagement and Community Prosperity.



Cristen Gleeson
Chair, UFV Board of Governors

About Cristen Gleeson:

- Cristen Gleeson was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario. There she graduated from with an English Literature degree and a Law Degree from Queen's Law School. While in Ontario she was also an Initial Attack Forest Fire Fighter.
- Cristen was called to the Bar of BC in 2002. She has been a Partner at Baker Newby LLP since 2013 and Managing Partner since 2019.
- She is currently Chair of the UFV Board of Governors and Chair of the FV Healthcare Foundation.
- Cristen is also a tree farm owner and a mother of two.

Sean Wicker

On May 27, 2026, Dean Schinckus welcomed Sean Wicker, District Principal for Career Education at the Chilliwack School District.

Sean discussed how UFV can work together with local school districts to better support the transition to post-secondary. Sean emphasized key collaborative opportunities, including expanding dual-credit and pre-university programs, leveraging UFV expertise in high school classrooms, sharing educational resources, and engaging students early through high school career fairs.

Beyond institutional partnerships, Sean focused on easing the shift to university life. He highlighted the importance of student mentorship and helping incoming students adapt to greater independence, heavier workloads, and rigorous academic expectations. Crucially, he spoke on demystifying the "hidden rules" of higher education — specifically encouraging students to proactively seek help and guidance on using AI ethically in their studies.

Thank you to Sean for sharing his actionable vision for guiding the next generation of business leaders!



Sean Wicker
District Principal - Career Education
Chilliwack School District

About Sean Wicker:

- Sean Wicker was born and raised in Chilliwack.
- He recently completed an Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Western Washington University. He also holds a Master of Education from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Education in Middle Years from UBC. He began his post-secondary studies at UCFV, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts with extended minors in History and Geography.
- In addition to his work, Sean maintains strong connection to Chilliwack and the Fraser Valley by playing and coaching sports.

Media Apperances

David Dobson - Calgary Morning Show

In honour of Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Dr. David Dobson was interviewed on the QR Calgary Morning Show. In this conversation, he discussed the vital difference between autism awareness and autism acceptance, while sharing his own son's autism journey. His goal was to share the joy and brilliance found in neurodiversity and to encourage a shift in how our broader community perceives and supports autistic individuals.

Watch the full interview here: <https://youtu.be/WHclK8i6-Z4>

Dr. Jon Thomas & The Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Dr. Jon Thomas, in his roles as Director of the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (EFCIE), BC Regional Innovation Chair, and Associate Professor at the School of Business, has actively engaged with partners locally, nationally, and internationally, cultivating strong relationships for the school and university. See a list of highlights below:

CYPE x EFCIE Elevate Your Edge: Mentorship and Boards

EFCIE, in partnership with CYPE (Company of Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs - Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce) for a panel series, hosted at EFCIE on March 10 and 23, 2026.

The events featured industry leaders Keenan Beavis (Longhouse Branding & Marketing), Aman Gill (Express Employment Professionals), Brian Vickers (Zacharias Vickers McCann LLP), Amanda Mango (The Mango Market), Jove Loewen (The Table Bistro), Cathy Press (CEO, Chinook Helicopters), Vineet Verghese (VP Commercial Financial Services - Langley & Fraser Valley, RBC), Jason Lum (Councillor, City of Chilliwack) and Don R. Campbell (President, Cutting Edge Research Inc.), who all provided nuanced insights into mentorship and board governance for students and community members.



EFCIE hosts panel of industry leaders

EFCIE Explores Collaboration with NIT Calicut

Dr. Jon Thomas shared information about UFV and EFCIE and engaged in exploratory discussions on potential collaborations with Deans and Heads of Departments and Research Centres during an invited visit to NIT Calicut facilitated in part by BCIBN Co-President Sobhana Jaya-Madhavan.



Dr. Jon Thomas and EFCIE explore collaboration with NIT Calicut

Respectful Innovation: Pathways for Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

Dr. Jon Thomas was an invited panellist for a session “Respectful Innovation: Pathways for Partnerships with Indigenous Communities” at the 2026 AUTM (Association of University Technology Managers) Canadian Meeting held in Winnipeg, Manitoba April 27–29, 2026.



Dr. Jon Thomas speaks at 2026 AUTM Canadian Meeting

Commercialization Training for Indigenous Technology Entrepreneurs

EFCIE partnered with Stó:lō Community Futures (SCF) to deliver a four-day workshop “Commercialization Training for Indigenous Technology Entrepreneurs” from March 3–6, 2026 at Stó:lō Nation, Chilliwack for the National invention to Innovation (i2I) Network.

The workshop was oversubscribed and nearly 20 participants engaged in interactive workshops, discussions, and collaborative learning activities focused on transforming ideas and early-stage technology solutions into viable products and services.

This initiative reflects UFV’s continued commitment to supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, and community partnerships that empower Indigenous entrepreneurs and contribute to regional economic development.



Stó:lō Blanket Ceremony

Dr. Jon Thomas was honoured to receive in a Stó:lō ceremony a Blanket from Associate Vice-President, Xwexwílmexwawt Dr. Shirley Hardman (Stó:lō name: Swelchalot) in recognition of his Indigenizing work with Indigenous peoples and particularly Stó:lō communities in S'olh Temexw.



Dr. Jon Thomas is honoured with a Stó:lō blanket

FVICBA Mingler

At the 2026 Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association (FVICBA) Scholarship Mingler, EFCIE provided a scholarship to Tearyn Heaven, School of Business student pursuing a BBA in Aviation. Additionally, former MP and a co-founder of FVICBA Jati Sidhu was on hand to recognize Jon's extensive support for student scholarships.



Dr. Jon Thomas is honoured by FVICBA co-founder, and former MP, Jati Sidhu

UFV and EFCIE Awarded \$520,000 Grant

UFV has been awarded \$520,000 through the Government of Canada's Indo-Pacific Scholarships and Fellowships for Canadians (IPSFC) program to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between Canada and India in the agricultural technology and clean technology sectors.

EFCIE Innovation Grants

EFCIE Innovation Grants support faculty mentors and students in refining initial research results and assessing the viability of the proposed solutions to unmet needs in society.

2026 Innovation Grant Recipients

1. Matthew Miller (Supervisor: Dr. Linus Chiang) – Chemistry
2. Sierra Colpitts (Supervisors: Dr. Olav Lian, Dr. Sam Woor, Dr. Maria Schaarschmidt) –Planning, Geography & Environmental Studies
3. Simrat Hara (Supervisor: Dr. Harley Gordon) – Biology
4. Ania Bula (Supervisors: Dr. Lucy Lee, Dr. Dina Navon, Dr. Mitra Tabatabaee) –Biology
5. Promise George (Supervisor: Dr. Mitra Tabatabaee) – Biology
6. Tamanna Pannu (Supervisor: Dr. Golfam Ghafourifar) – Chemistry
7. Harleen Kaur Bhullar (Supervisor: Dr. Mitra Tabatabaee) – Biology
8. Gurjasraj Singh (Supervisor: Dr. Vahid Tadayon) –Mathematics and Statistics
9. Caio Nicholson de Figueiroa (Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Lee) – Biology
10. Sophia-Rose Snelgrove (Supervisor: Dr. Lauren Erland) – Agriculture

EFCIE congratulates all innovation grant recipients and faculty mentors, and thanks adjudication committee members for their expertise and support.

Catalyst Innovation Network - Keynote Address

Dr. Jon Thomas delivered the keynote address at the Maple Ridge Catalyst Innovation Network event, hosted by ISACA Vancouver Chapter in partnership with the City of Maple Ridge on February 26, 2026.

The event brought together industry leaders, innovators, and community stakeholders to discuss emerging trends and opportunities in innovation and technology.



Dr. Jon Thomas delivers keynote address at Catalyst Innovation Network

Plenary Talk at IISc, Bangalore

Dr. Jon Thomas delivered a plenary talk, "Science & Technology Commercialization for Social Impact", at the International Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Deep-Tech Startups: Role of Entrepreneurial Universities, held at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, from May 20–22, 2026.



Dr. Jon Thomas delivers plenary talk at IISc, Bangalore

DeVry Greenhouse Tour

DeVry Greenhouses recently welcomed 3rd & 4th year School of Business students as well as staff, faculty, and alumni, for a tour and behind-the-scenes look at their main facility in Chilliwack.

It was a fantastic opportunity to see how a large-scale business operates, from day-to-day execution to high-level strategy. It was also a chance to network with professionals and UFV alumni and explore potential job opportunities.

Huge thanks to the **Professional Sales Student Association (PSSA)** for organizing such a valuable experience (complete with complimentary food and transport!), and to DeVry Greenhouses for being such gracious and insightful hosts.



DeVry Greenhouses, Main Facility, Chilliwack, BC

External Program Advisory Committee

The **UFV School of Business External Program Advisory Committee (EPAC)** met April 22, 2026, to provide industry perspective and strategic insight in support of the School's mission.

The Committee discussed strategic steps the School may take to ensure continued relevance in the rapidly evolving landscape of post-secondary education.

One member from each Area attended:

- Quan Cheng, Area Chair, Accounting and Finance
- Cindy Stewart, Area Chair, Marketing
- Saeed Rahman, Area Chair, Management
- Mariana Toniolo Barrios, Faculty member, Human Resources

The Committee's Chair, Interim Director, Gerry Palmer, opened the meeting with a report. He acknowledged that UFV as well as the Canadian post-secondary education sector continues to face new obstacles posed by a reduction in international students.

In response, and moving forward, the School would like to see international students from a greater variety of locations. The School would also like to create better connections with local high schools to attract more domestic students.

The Committee discussed several important issues. First among them was a sense that students and recent graduates are anxious about finding an appropriate job. This is concerning, as traditionally, our students did not experience this problem.

Committee members acknowledged that this concern mirrors real structural changes in the labour market. Employers are looking for less employees, and the ones they do hire have greater requirements. One member acknowledged that only two years ago a role that once required a diploma now often requires a master's level degree. The change is caused in part by the introduction of AI into the marketplace.

The Committee discussed AI in further detail, acknowledging its role in changing the marketplace. Members provided advice on how to adjust post-secondary curricula and pedagogy.

Marketing professor Cindy Stewart shared that AI has been a part of marketing for at least five years. Recently, the Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) has taken the position that AI is no longer optional but rather a foundational competency, with a focus on prompting, ethical usage, and data privacy.

The meeting wrapped up with a round-table discussion.

The next EPAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 29, 2026.

Announcements

Lorne Mackenzie - Professor Emeritus

We are pleased to announce Lorne Mackenzie's appointment as Professor Emeritus in recognition of 25 years of dedicated service to the UFV School of Business.

Lorne brought invaluable industry experience, thoughtful leadership, and generous mentorship to his teaching and colleagues. His calm wisdom and commitment to students have left a lasting legacy.

We are delighted that Lorne's connection to the School continues in this new chapter.



Lorne Mackenzie

Executive in Residence - A UFV First!

The Faculty of Business and Computing (FBC) is proud to welcome Byng Giraud as UFV's first Executive-in-Residence.

As Chris Schinckus, Dean of FBC, says, "The creation of an Executive-in-Residence related to 'Reconcili-action' marks a pivotal step in our mission to integrate ethical economic development into the heart of UFV. Through this initiative, FBC is proud to provide our community with direct access to expertise in economic reconciliation, promoting better practices for better sustainability of non-Indigenous and Indigenous businesses."

As UFV transitions from reconciliation as a concept to a tangible reality, support from experienced leaders such as Byng will be critical.

Byng's role will include:

- Providing office hours for students, faculty, and alumni to discuss project de-risking, Indigenous procurement, and ethical economic development. Byng will be 'In Residence' twice per semester, maintaining a consistent presence that enables deep relationship-building.
- Advising UFV leadership on initiatives that support economic reconciliation (e.g., land use, partnerships, and Indigenous-led environmental assessments).
- Acting as a neutral table for external industry leaders, Indigenous communities, and government officials to explore collaborative economic models.



Byng Giraud

