

St'elt'elawtexw

Celebrating community in the Fraser Valley





Bringing our community connections to life

A message from Dr. James Mandigo,
President and Vice-Chancellor

Éy swáyel,

One of the greatest strengths of the University of the Fraser Valley is our deep connection to our region and the people who call it home. Our partnerships across education, Indigenous communities, industry, health care, agriculture, government, and beyond help our students engage in meaningful learning, connect our researchers with real-world challenges, and strengthen the Fraser Valley across Stó:lō Téméxw.

Over the past year, we have seen that connection come to life in many ways. We celebrated the launch of our new Experiential Learning Lab, providing nursing students with opportunities to develop the skills necessary to respond to the evolving needs of our health-care system. We also strengthened our commitment to student success through a regional agreement with six Fraser Valley school districts, helping students see clearer pathways from kindergarten to post-secondary education.

We are pleased to celebrate the reappointment of Dr. Jo-ann Archibald, Q'um Q'um Xiem, for a second term as Chancellor and the continuation of her thoughtful leadership and deep commitment to education, reconciliation, and community. We also welcome Lesa Lacey as Chair of the Board of Governors. Having served the university through her leadership

on the Board, Lesa brings a deep understanding of UFV and our communities as she begins her new role.

Through initiatives like the annual Grounded Innovation Summit, UFV and community explored complex challenges impacting food security through a One Health approach.

As a Changemaker Campus, we believe education is more than preparing students for careers. They graduate with the knowledge to recognize opportunities, the conviction to lead with empathy, and the desire to create positive change.

Each of these successes originates from being a student-ready university — recognizing that each learner brings their own gifts, experiences, circumstances, and aspirations and then working to create the conditions for those students to grow and transform.

All of this is made possible through the generosity of our donors, the insight of our community partners, the leadership of our alumni, and the dedication of our faculty, staff, and volunteers who invest in the success of the Fraser Valley. Your contributions enrich learning, inspire discovery, and help ensure the benefits of a university education extend well beyond our students and campuses.

Within these pages, you will find stories that reflect this shared commitment. They showcase how collectively we are making a difference through engaging learners, building community, and transforming lives.

Thank you for being a part of the UFV community and for all that you do to help our students become changemakers.

Kw'as hoy.



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Long before Canada was formed, the Stó:lō (People of the River) lived and thrived on the land on which UFV is located. UFV gratefully recognizes and honours the contributions that Indigenous people have made, and continue to make, to our community.

Halq'eméylem, the upriver dialect of Halkomelem, is spoken in many Stó:lō communities throughout the upper and central Fraser Valley, the lower Fraser Canyon, and near Harrison Lake. The term St'et'elawtexw means "community" in Halq'eméylem.

At UFV, St'elt'elawtexw is woven into our fabric, and we are grateful for the connections we have with the individuals and organizations who contribute to our collective impact.

Learn how to say
St'elt'elawtexw
with Elder
Siyamiyateliyot.
ufv.ca/community



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Bringing our story to life: UFV's new brand



ON THE COVER

Like the threads of a weave, our individual strengths become something greater when they come together. The cover of St'elt'elawtexw reflects the people, places, ideas and experiences that shape UFV — each distinct, yet connected through the relationships that strengthen our communities and create shared impact.



Deepening our commitment to listening, collaborating, and creating meaningful impact

A message from Susan Mide Kiss, VP, Community Engagement

Each new academic year offers an opportunity to reflect on the relationships that continue to shape who we are as a university. Over the past year, we have taken important steps to strengthen the relationships that define UFV — not simply through new initiatives, but by deepening our commitment to listening, collaborating, and creating meaningful impact together. This past year reminded me that our greatest strength has always been found in the relationships we build — with one another, with our communities, and with the place we call home.

That spirit is reflected not only in the work we do, but also in the people who help guide our university.

One of the most meaningful areas of work this year has been the ongoing development of UFV's first Community Engagement Framework. Through conversations with students, colleagues, Indigenous communities, alumni, and community partners throughout the region, we have been listening to different perspectives on what meaningful engagement looks like and how UFV can strengthen the relationships at the heart of our work. These conversations help shape the framework while creating valuable opportunities for connection, reflection, and shared learning along the way.

We also continued to build on our designation as a Changemaker Campus, advancing a culture where students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners come together

to address complex challenges with creativity, compassion, and purpose. Our refreshed brand identity also reflects this evolution, offering a renewed expression of who we are today — a university rooted in the Fraser Valley, shaped by community, and looking confidently toward the future.

The stories in this report demonstrate these commitments in action. They highlight students discovering purpose through experiential learning, researchers working alongside community partners, alumni creating positive changes, and organizations collaborating to strengthen the places we call home. Together, these stories remind us that our greatest impact is achieved not alone, but through the relationships we build and the trust we earn.

As you read this report, I hope you see your own contributions reflected

in these pages. Whether you are a student, employee, alumnus, partner, donor, or supporter, you are an essential part of the community that continues to weave UFV's future. Thank you for helping us build a university where connection, collaboration, and shared purpose continue to guide our work.

Yalh yexw kw'es hoy — thank you for all that you do.



*"St'elt'elawtexw reflects
the very best of who we
are and what we can
accomplish together."*

UFV CHANCELLOR Q'UM Q'UM XIEM, OC,
DR. JO-ANN ARCHIBALD

The beauty and power of storytelling

A message from UFV Chancellor Q'um Q'um Xiiem, OC,
Dr. Jo-ann Archibald

Éy swáyel.

Those who know me well know that I am an advocate for Indigenous Storywork — incorporating Indigenous traditional and life-experience stories into our teaching and learning as a way of understanding Indigenous culture and learning about ourselves, others, and the world in which we live.

Stories are powerful. They create connections. They educate and inspire. Stories invite the reader or listener to reflect and to share, weaving deeper ties to their community.

St'elt'elawtexw, our community report, exemplifies the beauty and power of storytelling. Within these pages we find students and faculty collaborating with UFV's many partners to identify the problems that we as a society face and developing practical solutions.

Partnerships are at the roots of the tree. When the roots are healthy, as they are now, the branches of the tree grow strong and reach far.

The stories of *St'elt'elawtexw* teach us the value of collaboration, how people from different cultural, professional, and geographic backgrounds can work together, leading us to places we may never find working alone. The stories also point out the importance of each individual contributing their gifts of knowledge, experience, and commitment.

From Indigenization and meaningful action on truth and reconciliation, to social justice, climate change and more — there is so much we may learn from one another. As UFV seeks to engage learners and transform lives, *St'elt'elawtexw* reflects the very best of who we are and what we can accomplish together.

I am very grateful to see what's been accomplished over the last year, and I am very excited to see what next year has in store. May these stories inspire new conversations, new partnerships, and new possibilities for our communities. 🌱

Q'um Q'um Xiiem, OC, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald serves as Chancellor of the University of the Fraser Valley. An esteemed Indigenous scholar, member of the Soowahlie First Nation, Professor Emeritus at UBC, and Officer of the Order of Canada, she has spent her career advancing Indigenous education and strengthening connections between Indigenous knowledge, teaching, and community.

UFV'S NEW EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING LAB

Practice makes prepared for future nurses

Before nursing students care for patients, they need a place to make mistakes, ask questions, and build confidence. UFV's new Experiential Learning Lab gives them exactly that. Designed to mirror real health-care settings, the flexible learning space lets students practise clinical skills, strengthen critical thinking, and gain hands-on experience in a safe environment before beginning their practicums. As demand on the health-care system grows, the lab helps ensure graduates are ready to step into practice with confidence.

Historically, nursing students have benefited from experiential learning in hospitals, clinics, and laboratory settings. But with nursing shortages and more patients to care for, health practitioners are less able to provide students with appropriate learning opportunities.

"Enhancing engagement and bridging theory and practice, simulation-based learning in the Experiential Learning Lab supports students as they transition into professional practice and strengthens their ability to provide safe, effective care for individuals, families, and communities," says Cindy Schultz, associate dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.





Taylor Schleppe is a nursing student going into her final semester this fall. She has taken part in many simulations during her time at UFV and still thinks back to the first time she conducted a head-to-toe assessment on a breathing mannequin. It was something she'd practised with her dog at home, and she felt fully prepared, but during the assessment she forgot to assess the patient's gastrointestinal system.

"While it wasn't really a big deal, the wonderful thing about simulation labs is that they give us a space to iron out our practice in a safe environment," Taylor says. "All of the little habits that need to be formed, and the steps that for some reason you just keep forgetting to do, can be figured out and fixed in the lab."



"That's why I always looked forward to simulations, eager to participate and see what I might miss, because I knew that each simulation would show me where I could do better."

Talking to a peer after one experiential lab, Taylor remembers them saying, "They throw in the slightest thing and expect us to catch it and find the bigger issue. We're not even nurses yet. How are we supposed to know how to do that?"

"And that's the point," Taylor says. "Simulations prepare you for exactly how to do that."

"Because of my simulation experiences, I learned to follow my gut when something seems different, because that can often be a sign

Special guests, including UFV board members and local politicians, visited the brand-new Experiential Learning Lab on the Chilliwack campus at a grand opening on June 16.

"Simulation-based learning in the lab supports students as they transition into professional practice and strengthens their ability to provide safe, effective care for individuals, families, and communities."

CINDY SCHULTZ, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

of something bigger. Recently, I walked into a patient's room and one quick glance at them told me that something was different from the last time I had seen them. After a quick assessment, I found that their blood pressure was dangerously low."

Taylor says UFV's Nursing program has a strong reputation for setting nursing students up for success upon graduation.

"It has been such a privilege to learn in a program with passionate, knowledgeable, and supportive faculty behind me, and I am so excited for what this new addition can bring to elevate the program even more, setting a new standard of learning that other schools should hope to follow," she says. "What makes this lab special is that it's not just a classroom. It's a place that will shape future nurses, improve patient care, and become a place where students grow from nervous learners into capable professionals."

"Clinical experience is the heart of a nursing program. Theory builds the foundation, but practising and experiencing real patient scenarios in a safe environment is what transforms students into the confident and qualified nurses that UFV is known for creating."

"With an aging population, B.C.'s health care system faces increased pressure to make sure hospitals and clinics are fully staffed with well-trained health care professionals, and UFV is helping to meet that demand," says Lara Duke, dean of UFV's Faculty of Health Sciences.

"The ELL, furnished with cutting-edge simulation equipment, ensures our students are graduating with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a real-world setting, confident in their ability to provide thorough, efficient, and safe treatment for the patients they see." ❁

"Because of my simulation experiences, I learned to follow my gut when something seems different, because that can often be a sign of something bigger. Recently, I walked into a patient's room and one quick glance at them told me that something was different from the last time I had seen them."

TAYLOR SCHLEPPE,
NURSING STUDENT

UFV develops mentorship program for nursing faculty

UFV is helping experienced nurses make the leap from clinical practice to the classroom with a new Nursing Faculty Development program.

Supported by \$453,340 from BC's Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, the four-year initiative will give new nursing instructors practical tools, mentorship, and support as they develop their skills as educators.

"Transitioning from bedside nurse to educator can include a steep learning curve, because the world of post-secondary education requires a different skill set," says Cindy Schultz, associate dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

UFV nursing faculty are developing interactive learning modules, workshops, clinical support strategies, simulations, and best practices for team teaching. The goal is to help instructors confidently engage students while balancing student learning with patient and student safety.

UFV plans to share the mentorship program with other institutions across BC, helping strengthen nursing education across the province. ❁





Students explore community-centred AI at UFV's Ideation Jam

When Amarnoor Kaur arrived at UFV's 2025 Ideation Jam, she didn't have a team or a project idea — just a willingness to learn and collaborate. "I didn't really know anyone when I arrived," she says. "I was excited to meet people, work together, and actually build something."

Forty-eight hours later, she and a team of students she had just met earned first place in the competition with Agriverse, an AI-powered concept designed to support Indigenous farmers by preserving traditional knowledge while offering practical, culturally informed farming tools.

The Community Ideation Jam, co-hosted by UFV's Centre for Experiential and Career Education (CECE) and the Canadian AI Advancement Institute (CAIAI), in partnership with UFV Alumni Engagement, challenged students to develop AI solutions that address real community needs.

Rather than creating technology for its own sake, Amarnoor's team focused on helping farmers

whose knowledge systems are often overlooked. Their concept included a knowledge graph to preserve Indigenous teachings, AI-powered disease detection for crops and soil, a farming assistant rooted in Indigenous practices, and a marketplace designed to reduce exploitation by middlemen.

"It wasn't about building something flashy," Amarnoor says. "We wanted to think about real farmers, real challenges, and tools that could actually help."

For Tristan Taylor, founder of CAIAI, UFV alumnus, and co-organizer of the event, the Jam demonstrated how quickly students can turn ideas into meaningful solutions.

"We now live in a world where some of our best ideas can come to life in

minutes or hours instead of months or years," he says. "What inspired me most was how students weren't afraid to take risks or try something new."

Jason Li, a career education coordinator at CECE, says the event emphasized more than technical skills.

"Collaboration, communication, and ethical decision-making are just as important as learning how to use AI tools — especially when students are thinking about how their ideas can create real impact in their communities."

For Amarnoor, the experience transformed how she thinks about artificial intelligence.

"Before the Ideation Jam, I mostly saw AI as a technical thing," she says. "But this made me see AI through a human lens. AI becomes meaningful only when it solves a real problem for real people."

The Ideation Jam reflects CECE's commitment to helping students develop practical skills while exploring emerging technologies in ways that strengthen communities and create meaningful impact. 🌱

Meriem Lmooubariki, Amarnoor Kaur, and Simar Saini were the winning team at the Ideation Jam. ▼



Building a place to belong: Angelina Joseph receives 2026 UFV Outstanding Student Leadership Award

Growing up as an only child, Angelina Joseph always loved school — not just for learning, but because it was where she found connection.

That passion for building community shaped her time at UFV. Rather than simply finding a place to belong, Angelina created that sense of belonging for others through student leadership, mentorship, and campus involvement. For her contributions, she has been named the recipient of UFV's 2026 Outstanding Student Leadership Award.

Angelina arrived at UFV from Dubai in 2021 just as campus life was emerging from the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As an international student, I know what it's like to arrive in a new country not knowing anybody," she says. "The warmth I felt during orientation is what I wanted to give back when I got to campus."

Over the next four years, she welcomed new international students, represented students on the Board of Governors and Senate, founded the UFV Dance and Music Club, served as president of the Criminal Justice Students Association, mentored fellow students, and helped organize student programming through the Student Experience Office.

"One opportunity often led to another because of the connections

I made," she says. "I kept asking myself, 'Will I grow from this? Will I be giving back? Will I help people feel like they belong?'"

That commitment to others was tested in 2023 when Angelina suffered a serious burn injury that left her bedridden and using a wheelchair for four months. During her recovery, friends, faculty, staff, and counsellor Justin Van Winkoop rallied around her, while her parents supported her daily from nearly 11,000 km away in Dubai.

"The community showed up for me even when I couldn't show up for them," she says. "I realized my value wasn't based on how productive I was."

As she prepares to return to Dubai, Angelina hopes her impact will be measured not by the leadership positions she held, but by the people who felt more connected because she was there.

"I credit my faith as the key reason I kept building community. If one conversation encouraged someone to stay, if one smile changed someone's day, if one student felt welcomed because of something I helped organize, then it was worth it." 🌱

"If one conversation encouraged someone to stay, if one smile changed someone's day, if one student felt welcomed because of something I helped organize, then it was worth it."

ANGELINA JOSEPH, 2026
UFV OUTSTANDING STUDENT
LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER





BEYOND BLANKETS TAKES ON NEW URGENCY AFTER BC COURT RULING

What begins as a patchwork of blankets laid out to represent Stó:lō territory slowly shrinks, fragments, and disappears. Pristine territory is scarred by the arrival of railways, highways, pipelines, and hydro lines. Reserves shrink, and Sumas Lake disappears.

In a year marked by a BC Supreme Court ruling on unsurrendered Indigenous land, the lessons of Beyond Blankets: A Stó:lō Lands Exercise resonate more deeply than ever.

Developed by Hi:olemteḷ (Grand Chief Clarence "Kat" Pennier) and UFV's Dr. Keith Carlson, and supported by Stó:lō knowledge keepers, the exercise has proven transformational for hundreds of participants.

"We're going to continue living in this territory, and we need to have good relationships with the other people who are here," Kat says. "Together, we need to find better ways to look after the land and resources."

PARC PARTNERSHIP MODEL RECOGNIZED WITH INTERNATIONAL AWARD

This year, UFV's partnership model through the Peace and Reconciliation Centre (PARC) received international recognition with a 2026 Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Circle of Excellence Silver Award for Building Trust: UFV's Peace and Reconciliation Centre Partnership Model. The award recognized an approach rooted in relationship-building, reciprocity, and authentic community engagement.

Led by Dr. Keith Carlson, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous and Community History, and developed alongside Indigenous communities and partners, PARC has become a space where reconciliation is advanced through listening, collaboration, and shared action. The CASE recognition reflects not only excellence in storytelling, but the strength of the relationships and shared commitments that made the story possible.

The award places UFV among institutions recognized internationally for innovative engagement and reinforces the university's commitment to building community through partnership, trust, and reconciliation.





BRINGING A NATIONAL CONVERSATION TO THE FRASER VALLEY

UFV welcomed internationally recognized human rights lawyer and 2025 CBC Massey Lecturer Alex Neve to the Abbotsford campus for a special conversation on human rights, justice, and collective responsibility.

Neve was touring Canada with his Massey Lecture series, *Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World*. Although UFV was not an official stop on the tour, a connection with Dr. Mark Kersten of UFV's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice brought the conversation to the Fraser Valley.

"Too often big cities and capitals get all of the attention when it comes to human rights cases, advocacy, and opportunities," Mark says. "But human rights, as Alex points out, are universal."

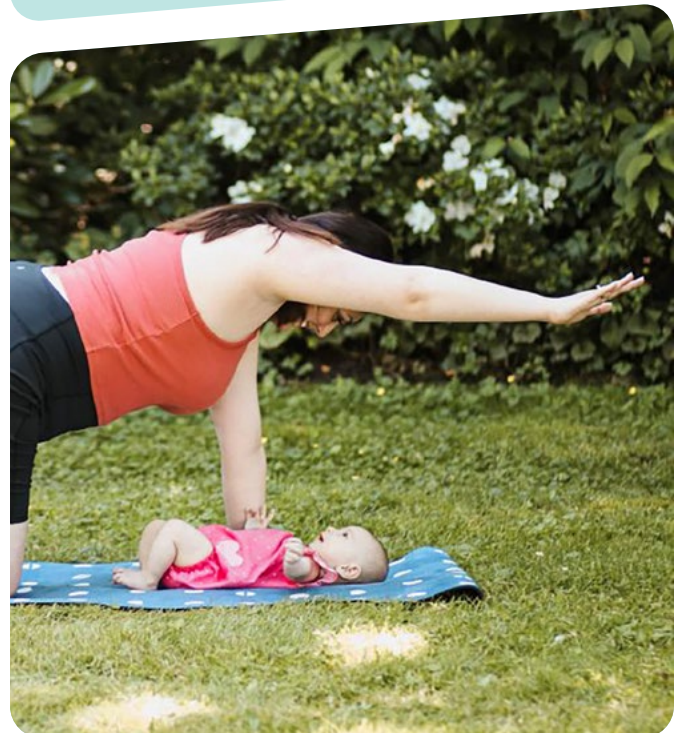
The event created an opportunity for the UFV community to engage with one of Canada's leading human rights advocates and consider how global challenges connect to action within our own communities.

LESSER SUPPORTS POSTPARTUM WOMEN RETURNING TO EXERCISE

Building on earlier research into postpartum exercise, Dr. Iris Lesser, an associate professor of kinesiology at UFV, worked with UFV kinesiology students and the Community Health and Social Innovation Hub (CHASI) to create inclusive, accessible online exercise resources featuring real postpartum bodies and home environments.

Her research showed that comparison to idealized online images can damage the self-efficacy, self-compassion, and confidence of postpartum mothers returning to exercise. When creating images and video references, it was important to her that they reflect real postpartum bodies and actual home environments.

"We know from systematic reviews that physical activity is actually more effective than medication in supporting postpartum depression," she says. "Part of equity in health care is having an opportunity for everyone to be able to move their bodies."



UFV LAUNCHES OPEN EDUCATION STRATEGY

UFV celebrated Open Education Week (March 2–6) by launching its first institutional Open Education Strategy and hosting events highlighting the value of Open Educational Resources (OER). Developed with support from BCcampus and the Office of the Provost, the strategy promotes accessibility, collaboration, inclusivity, and student-centred learning. Throughout the week, students, faculty, and staff explored workshops and presentations on adopting and creating OER, while instructors shared examples of open education projects supported through UFV's Open Education Microgrant program. The week concluded with the official strategy launch and celebration on March 5, recognizing the individuals and initiatives that expanded Zero Textbook Cost courses and improved access to learning materials across the university.



AFTERNOON EXCHANGE BRINGS STUDENTS AND ALUMNI TOGETHER FOR INFORMAL NETWORKING

The Afternoon Exchange brought UFV alumni back to campus for an afternoon of meaningful conversations with students and recent graduates. Through short, rotating discussions, alumni shared career advice, personal experiences, and lessons on adaptability, integrity, and lifelong learning. From networking tips to unexpected career paths, students gained practical insights while building connections with alumni who once stood where they are today. Hosted by UFV Alumni Engagement, the event fostered community, mentorship, and a sense of possibility, reminding participants that meaningful careers are often shaped by curiosity, resilience, and relationships. The program marks the beginning of more opportunities for alumni to give back by supporting the next generation of UFV graduates.



BIOCHEMIST HARLEY GORDON HELPS MAKE NEW DISCOVERY ABOUT SALICYLIC ACID

Sometimes when conducting research, scientists make unexpected discoveries that change how we understand the world.

In Dr. Harley Gordon's case, the unexpected discovery came while he was studying how salicylic acid is synthesized in plants. Harley, an assistant professor of biology at UFV, was part of a team that recently discovered a brand-new mechanism of phytohormone synthesis in a range of plant species. This kind of discovery matters because salicylic acid plays a central role in how plants keep themselves healthy.

Salicylic acid, the plant compound that inspired the creation of aspirin, plays a central role in plant immunity — and now researchers better understand how it's made.

"We've discovered the main way that most plants appear to create salicylic acid," Harley notes. "We've identified brand new biosynthetic enzymes for the natural production of salicylic acid."



A photograph of two women in an indoor setting, possibly a hallway or meeting area. The woman on the left, with blonde hair, is wearing a tan blazer and is gesturing with her hands while speaking. The woman on the right, with brown hair tied in a bun, is wearing a white top and a grey patterned shawl. She is smiling and holding a rolled-up document. In the background, there are glass partitions and a blurred figure of another person.

**"Everyone's path is unique,
but each student has
a team of supporters
cheering them on."**

UFV BOARD OF GOVERNORS CHAIR
LESA LACEY

Looking forward to leading and learning

A message from Lesa Lacey, Chair, UFV Board of Governors

I first connected with UFV through my company's involvement in the trades and construction sector, and I was inspired by the way the university supported its trades students and apprentices. Over the past few years as a member of the UFV Board of Governors, I've been impressed by how welcoming and open the people at this university are, and by their willingness to share.

Faculty, staff, administrators, and community partners all work together to create a caring environment as students go through the life-changing experience of their UFV education. Everyone's path is unique, but each student has a team of supporters cheering them on, whether it's faculty members sharing knowledge, advisors guiding students through the steps of their educational journeys, or researchers mentoring students in labs and in the field.

In these pages you'll learn more about alumni making a difference locally and beyond, a faculty member researching how astronauts cope in outer space, a family of four whose lives were all enriched through their experience with basketball at UFV, researchers working with Indigenous partners to support food sovereignty in northern Canada, an annual month dedicated to promoting sustainability, and new ways of supporting aspiring French teachers.

You'll read about UFV's commitment to community engagement, and to defining a shared vision of how our university builds relationships, learns alongside its communities, and creates positive change.

As someone based on the north side of the Fraser, I'm impressed with UFV's multi-campus focus and its commitment to all of its communities.

Lesla Lacey serves as Chair of the University of the Fraser Valley Board of Governors. A longtime business leader and community advocate, she brings decades of experience in the construction industry and is passionate about strengthening education, supporting skilled trades, and helping communities thrive.

UFV'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
RECOGNIZES THE INTERCONNECTED RELATIONSHIPS THAT
SHAPE OUR UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

Weaving relationships, creating transformation

Every day, community engagement happens across the University of the Fraser Valley.

Students learn alongside local businesses and community organizations. Researchers work with Indigenous communities to explore food sovereignty and language revitalization. Alumni mentor future graduates. Faculty members partner with municipalities, schools, health authorities, and non-profit organizations to address challenges that matter across the Fraser Valley and beyond.

Each partnership looks different. Together, they tell a larger story about the university UFV is striving to be.

Rather than beginning with answers, UFV began with conversations.

Throughout the past year, students, faculty, staff, Indigenous communities, alumni, and regional partners have come together to help shape UFV's first Community Engagement Framework. More than creating a document, the process is weaving together perspectives and experiences to help define a shared vision for how the university builds relationships, learns and unlearns alongside its communities, and creates positive change.

For Susan Mide Kiss, Vice-President, Community Engagement, the work





is about recognizing something that has always been part of UFV's identity.

"Community engagement isn't something we do in addition to teaching, learning, or research," Susan says. "It shapes how we approach all of those priorities. This framework is an opportunity to better understand the incredible work already happening across the university and deepen the relationships that make that work possible."

Guided by UFV Chancellor Q'um Q'um Xiiem, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald, who generously served as a cultural advisor on the journey, the process has been intentionally collaborative. Participants have explored what community engagement means

at UFV, where the university's strengths already exist, and how future partnerships can continue to reflect the institution's values. Rather than adopting another university's model, participants involved in the process focused on creating something authentic to UFV — something shaped by the people and communities it serves. That approach emerged repeatedly throughout the group's discussions, which emphasized building on existing strengths, fostering relationships, and ensuring the framework reflects UFV's own culture and values.

One idea surfaced again and again: community engagement begins with relationships.

Mike Teigen and Susan Mide Kiss of UFV's Community Engagement leadership team take part in an exercise, hosted on the Mission campus, symbolizing how community is woven into the fabric of UFV's identity. At right: Sharon Nickel, corporate partnerships specialist for the City of Abbotsford, chats with UFV Student Union Society representatives at a UFV Community Champions gathering at Abbotsford City Hall, part of UFV's Community Engagement Framework consultation process.

"Listening to different perspectives isn't a step in the process — it is the process."

DR. MARTHA DOW, SENIOR ADVISOR, CHANGEMAKING, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The conversations explored how lasting partnerships are woven over time through trust, reciprocity, and listening, rather than built through one-time transactions. Members discussed creating multiple pathways for people to engage with the university, recognizing that meaningful relationships often begin in different places and evolve over time. They also emphasized that the goal is not to create new structures where they are unnecessary, but to better connect, support, and celebrate the work already happening across UFV.

For Dr. Martha Dow of UFV's Community Health and Social Innovation Hub, who has helped guide the framework's development, that process reflects the very principles the university hopes to strengthen.

"If we want community engagement to be rooted in collaboration and reciprocity, then the framework itself has to be created that way," Martha says. "Listening to different perspectives isn't a step in the process — it is the process. Every

conversation helps us better understand how UFV can learn and grow with our communities."

Students have also helped shape those conversations.

As one of the student voices involved in the process, Angelina Joseph says participating in the discussions reinforced that some of the most meaningful learning happens when universities create space for different perspectives to come together.

"Being part of these conversations reminded me that community engagement isn't just about volunteering or attending events," Angelina says. "It's about building relationships where everyone has something to contribute and something to learn. As students, we don't just benefit from those relationships — we help shape them."

The framework is also closely connected to UFV's growing commitment to changemaking. By bringing people together across disciplines, backgrounds, and communities, the initiative encourages new ways of thinking

about shared challenges and shared solutions. It recognizes that lasting change rarely comes from a single project or department, but through partnerships built over time.

Although the Community Engagement Framework is still evolving, the process has already created new opportunities for dialogue across the university and throughout the region. It has invited participants to reflect not only on what community engagement looks like today, but what it could become in the years ahead.

The framework doesn't create those relationships. People do.

What it offers is something equally important: a shared vision that helps the university recognize, strengthen, and celebrate the interconnected relationships that have always been at the heart of UFV — and that will continue weaving its future for years to come. 🌱



"Community engagement isn't something we do in addition to teaching, learning, or research. It shapes how we approach all of those priorities."

SUSAN MIDE KISS, VICE-PRESIDENT,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

◀ President Dr. James Mandigo visits with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Givers at UFV's annual Celebration of Community hosted at the Mission campus.



Scan or click the code to learn more about Dr. Síyamíyateliyót and the journey of Halq'eméylem at UFV.



Dr. Síyamíyateliyót and the journey of Halq'eméylem at UFV

When Dr. Síyamíyateliyót (Elizabeth Phillips) received an Indspire Award, the most prestigious celebration of Indigenous excellence in Canada, recognizing her lifetime of work revitalizing the Halq'eméylem language, she made a decision that reflected everything she has spent decades teaching.

Instead of displaying the award at home, she donated it to UFV Halq'eméylem students.

Today, the award sits on the Abbotsford campus, where most Halq'eméylem classes are held. Rather than celebrating one person's achievement, it serves as a daily reminder that the future of the language belongs to the students learning to speak it.

"I wanted the students to have it," she says. "They're the future."

Dr. Síyamíyateliyót has spent more than 50 years working to ensure that future exists. Widely recognized as the last surviving fluent speaker of Upriver Halq'eméylem who learned the language as a child, she has dedicated

her life to preserving not only the words themselves, but the culture, stories, and identity they carry.

In recognition of that extraordinary contribution, UFV awarded her an honorary Doctor of Letters degree during its 2018 Convocation. The honour acknowledged decades of work developing language resources, mentoring students, and working alongside Elders and linguists to document and preserve Halq'eméylem for future generations. Her work helped transform the language from one passed down almost entirely through speech into one supported by a written orthography, dictionaries, recordings, and teaching materials that continue to be used today.

For Dr. Síyamíyateliyót, however, the language has never been about books alone.

Halq'eméylem carries the history, humour, values, and worldview of the Stó:lō people. Like many Indigenous languages across Canada, it suffered devastating losses through the impacts of colonization and residential schools, where many children were discouraged or punished for speaking their language. Revitalization has meant rebuilding not only vocabulary, but connections between generations.

That philosophy is reflected in UFV's Halq'eméylem program. Through partnerships with Stó:lō communities, students learn more than pronunciation and grammar. They explore the stories embedded in the language, deepen their understanding of the land they live on, and discover how language connects people to culture, community, and place.

Dr. Síyamíyateliyót often tells students they do not need to be perfect speakers to make a difference. Every conversation, every lesson, and every new learner strengthens the future of the language.

Her decision to donate the Indspire Award captures that belief perfectly. By placing the honour in the classroom rather than on her own shelf, she transformed a personal achievement into a shared source of inspiration — a reminder that the journey of Halq'eméylem will continue through every student who chooses to speak it, teach it, and carry it forward. 🌱

Tuchscherer basketball family marks the end of an era

It seems like only yesterday that a photo of Al Tuchscherer and his young family was taken at centre court in the UFV Athletics Centre: Al in the early days of his UFV basketball coaching career and daughters Deanna and Julia not yet in elementary school.

Sometimes, time seems to pass like a fast-break offence, and it'd be nice to call a timeout.

In the blink of an eye, it's 20 years later. Julia is no longer a toddler, but a young woman who finished up her fifth and final season with the Cascades last spring. Coach Al completed his 24th year as the team's head coach, and the family marked the end of a special era that saw both Julia and her older sister



After being a standout player for the Cascades herself in the 1990s, Denise Tuchscherer (centre) had the pleasure of watching her daughters Julia (left) and Deanna (right) excel on the basketball court for UFV, coached by their father Al. Bottom: the Tuchscherer family in 2006. Opposite page: Julia Tuchscherer in action.

Deanna (who graduated last year) playing for the Cascades and being coached by their dad.

"It has gone really fast," Al admitted. "For them to come and play here was an honour for me, and watching their careers unfold and be part of this stage of their life has been incredible."

Julia, whose mother Denise is another UFV basketball legend, said she loved playing at UFV. She graduated early from high school (Chilliwack's G.W. Graham Secondary) just to get an extra year with Deanna.

"I loved playing with Deanna, and it brought us closer together on and off the court," says Julia, who graduated in June with a Bachelor of Science degree (biology major). "We became friends and not just sisters."

Together, they formed one of the more dynamic front-court duos in Cascades history, and the program's record book speaks to their dominance.

This season, Julia was the Canada West scoring leader averaging 17 points per game.

Career-wise, Julia held the program record for most blocks (163), ninth



all-time in U SPORTS and tied for third in Canada West. Julia accumulated the second most assists (262), third most rebounds (696) and fifth most points (1,193), while recording the highest field goal percentage of any UFV women's basketball player ever at 51.9 per cent. She also set a new program record with 49 blocks in a single season.

Deanna is close behind in most categories.



Powered by the Tuchscherers, dynamic guard Maddy Gobeil (now playing pro in Spain) and a deep and talented supporting cast, the Cascades posted a 77–21 record between 2019–25, earning the Canada West bronze medal in 2023–24 and qualifying for the U SPORTS national championship tournament in 2024. 🍀

Ethan Wiens believes in giving back: 2026 Young Distinguished Alumni Award

The UFV Young Distinguished Alumni Award goes to a graduate of UFV who is 35 or younger and who has achieved outstanding distinction in career, educational achievement, or community service.

Dentistry and giving back to the community are two things that run deep with the Wiens brothers, Evan and Ethan.

Back in 2013, Evan received UFV's Young Distinguished Alumni Award, and Ethan is this year's recipient. A graduate of the Bachelor of Arts program in 2016, he's being recognized for his commitment to giving back through community service.

"You can go work every day and do your thing, but I find in dentistry it's important to be involved in your community, investing time in getting to know the people around you," Ethan says. "That's a practical reason for giving back, but for both Evan and

me, I think it's just innate to us. We do it because we want to do it."

Inspired to follow in the footsteps of his big brother, Ethan participates enthusiastically in local events such as MissionFest, Sip 'n' Stroll, and Mission Rotary Club. He's the treasurer for the Mission Dental Society, a group of local dentists providing scholarships for young students pursuing education in the field of dentistry, such as the Certified Dental Assistant program at UFV.

Ethan also supports the Abbotsford Canucks as an in-game dentist, working alongside other medical staff to support athlete health. 🍀

"You can go work every day and do your thing, but I find in dentistry it's important to be involved in your community, investing time in getting to know the people around you."

**ETHAN WIENS, 2026 UFV
YOUNG DISTINGUISHED
ALUMNI AWARD WINNER**



SHAYLA BIRD COMBINES LOVE OF BLACK HISTORY, ADVOCACY, AND EMPOWERMENT TO SHAPE UNIQUE CAREER

If you want a deep dive into the history of Black Vancouver, Shayla Bird is the guide for you.

Recently designated as an experiences host by Airbnb, Shayla specializes in tours of Hogan's Alley, the original Black community in Vancouver's Strathcona area. Much of Hogan's Alley was destroyed by the construction of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts in the 1970s, but the stories live on through the work of community historians.

Shayla, who earned a BA and a BEd from UFV, is also an education specialist with the Vancouver School Board. She works with students with complex needs, supporting their individual education plans.

She taught in the Abbotsford School District for several years, where she helped launch a successful Black Connections club. Shayla organized special events for the club's students, including a visit from a fellow alum, author Harrison Mooney, tours of historically Black areas of Vancouver, and collaborations with UBC's Black Futures project.



UFV RESEARCHERS HELP LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR FOOD SECURITY IN CANADA'S NORTH

Two UFV research chairs are combining expertise to support Indigenous food sovereignty in northern Canada. Dr. Cindy Jardine (Health and Community) and Dr. Lauren Erland (Berry Horticulture) received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Catalyst Grant to partner with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation on community-driven solutions to climate-related food security challenges. Working with Elders, children, and youth, the researchers documented traditional food plants through activities such as photography, geocaching, and plant health assessments while exploring opportunities for sustainable agriculture. The project also connected northern community members with Indigenous and community food production initiatives in BC. The collaboration will help guide future research and support access to healthy, locally grown, and culturally appropriate foods. This work continued through the summer of 2026, laying the groundwork for future community-led research.

SPRINGING INTO ACTION WITH MARCH FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Every March, departments across UFV come together for March for Sustainability, offering activities that encourage people to learn, connect, and engage with solutions for a better future. Events range from open mic nights and film screenings to workshops on cedar weaving, gardening, and cooking.

That commitment was recognized this year when UFV earned a Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), recognizing efforts across academics, research, campus operations, planning, and community engagement.

"Seeing the number and variety of people from all different backgrounds, passions, and fields of study and work who come out to these events shows me I'm not alone in this — that there are so many people who care," says UFV sustainability manager Jennifer Martel. "I leave every March fulfilled, empowered, and so, so hopeful."



CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY EXAMINES THE EFFECTS OF STRESS AND ISOLATION ON ASTRONAUTS

A UFV professor received \$1,145,460 from the Canadian Space Agency this year to investigate how astronauts experience long-term missions on the International Space Station. Over six years, Dr. Jelena Brcic will work with astronauts to understand how they manage stress and find meaning in their work.

"We'll track both the challenges astronauts face and the positive emotions — such as gratitude, compassion, and awe — that help them thrive," Jelena says.

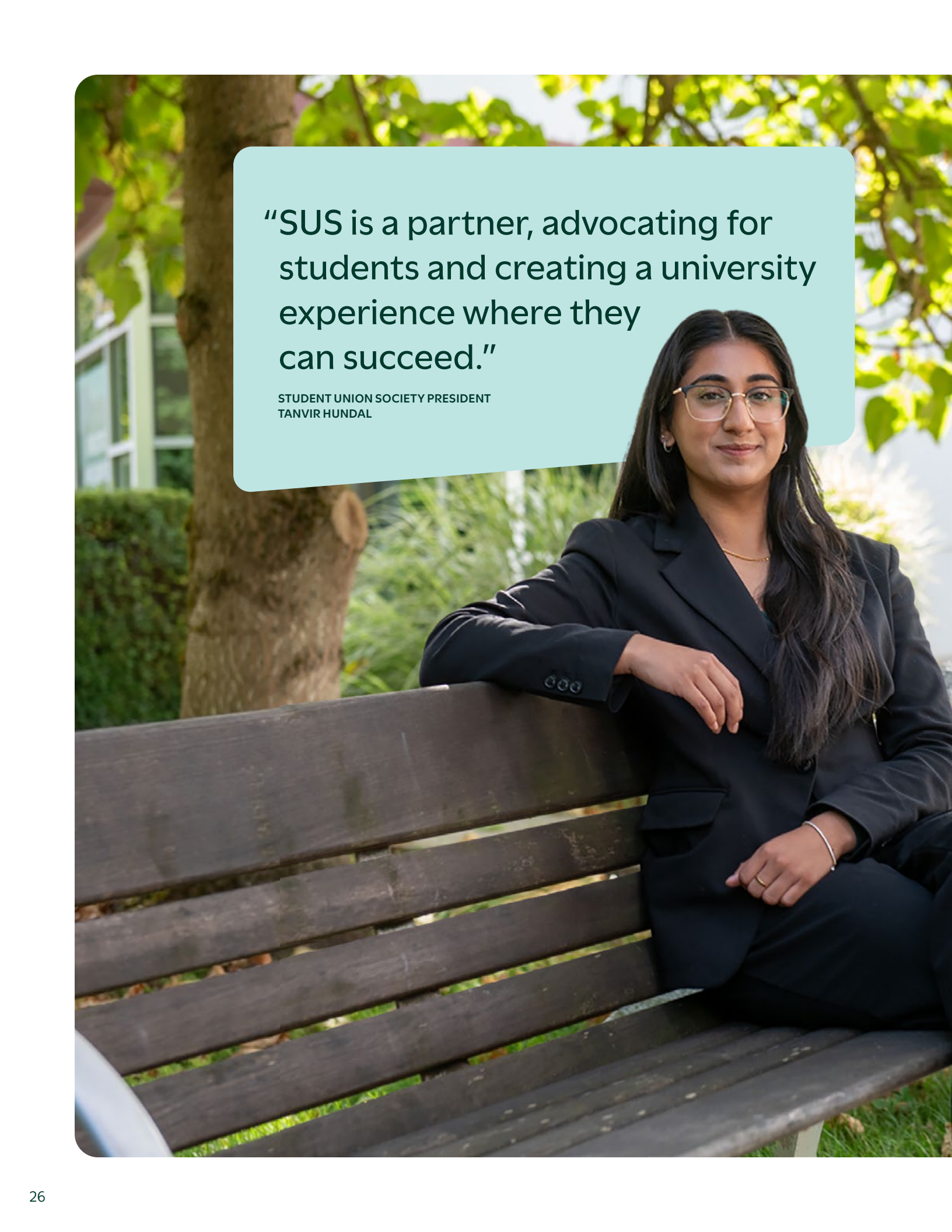
Jelena is the principal investigator, collaborating with a team of co-investigators from other institutions. This study comes at an exciting time when missions to the Moon, and eventually to Mars, mark major steps forward in space exploration.

Jelena suggests astronauts' job performance, physical health, and psychological well-being will depend on their ability to navigate the negative and capitalize on the positive.

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE OF ASPIRING FRENCH TEACHERS

UFV's School of Education is helping future French teachers replace self-doubt with confidence through Education 480: Designs for Teaching French as a Second Language. The course prepares students to teach in K-12 classrooms while addressing the linguistic insecurity many French learners experience. Through hands-on classroom placements, students learn practical teaching strategies and discover that effective language teaching isn't about perfection, but about creating supportive spaces for learning. Now officially part of UFV's Bachelor of Education program's French Teacher option, the course is preparing the next generation of educators to meet the growing demand for qualified French teachers across Canada.





"SUS is a partner, advocating for students and creating a university experience where they can succeed."

STUDENT UNION SOCIETY PRESIDENT
TANVIR HUNDAL

Creating stronger, more connected campuses

A message from Student Union Society President Tanvir Hundal

When I began at UFV, I wasn't sure I would finish my degree here. During my first year, university felt like a routine: attend class, complete my coursework, and head home. My focus was on academics and on discovering what career I would pursue after graduation.

Everything changed when I became involved beyond the classroom. Through research, clubs, recreation, studying abroad, and eventually volunteering with the Student Union Society, I discovered a community that transformed my university experience. Those opportunities introduced me to people, perspectives, and experiences that helped me grow both personally and professionally. Today, serving as SUS president is a privilege I never imagined when I first arrived at UFV.

That journey reminds me why the Student Union Society exists. SUS is more than a gathering place for students; it is their advocate, their voice, and a partner in creating a university experience where students can succeed. We work alongside UFV administration, faculty, staff, and community partners to strengthen student life, improve services, and

ensure students have opportunities to connect, lead, and be heard. Whether through student advocacy, supporting more than 80 student clubs, operating services and events, or providing spaces where students can build lasting connections, our goal is to remove barriers and help students thrive.

This past year has been another reminder of what is possible when students, the university, and our community work together. Every initiative, partnership, and conversation has been driven by a shared commitment to creating a stronger, more connected campus where students are supported both inside and outside the classroom.

To our donors, community partners, alumni, faculty, staff, and everyone who supports the Student Union Society, thank you. Your investment in students extends far beyond their time at UFV. Together, we are building a campus community where students not only earn an education but develop confidence, relationships, and leadership skills that will shape the communities they serve long after graduation. 🌿

Tanvir Hundal is a political science student and president of the University of the Fraser Valley Student Union Society. Passionate about advocacy and student leadership, she works to ensure students are heard, supported, and empowered while helping build a stronger campus community through collaboration and meaningful engagement.

**HOW NEW SPACES TO LIVE, EAT, AND GATHER
ARE RESHAPING THE ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS**

Making room for more

The University of the Fraser Valley marked an exciting milestone this spring, welcoming students, community members, and government partners to its Abbotsford campus for the official opening of new student housing and a revitalized dining hall. The celebration included a ribbon cutting for Lá:léms Ye EverGreen, a six-storey student housing building that adds nearly 400 new student beds, as well as the expanded Cascade Café dining hall, which significantly increases space for students to gather, connect, and share meals.

Bowinn Ma, BC's Minister of Infrastructure, joined UFV students, leadership, and members of the Fraser Valley community for the event, highlighting the importance of student housing in supporting access to education and student success.

Designed to support a diverse student population, the new residence includes a mix of living arrangements along with shared spaces for studying, gathering, and cultural connection. The project also features an active transportation hub with secure bike storage and shower facilities.

The building is currently referred to as Lá:léms Ye EverGreen, a name that reflects a sense of home, belonging, and continuity grounded in the Halq'eméylem language and the





connection between people and place on Stó:lō territory.

The name and spelling were guided by Síyamíyateliyót (Dr. Elizabeth Phillips), whose decades of work have helped preserve and revitalize the Halq'eméylem language. The name serves as an initial option while UFV continues a broader, consultative process to determine a permanent name for the building.

For Dr. James Mandigo, UFV president, the new spaces represent an important investment in both student success and community.

"When students live on campus, share meals, and build community together, their university experience becomes something much richer," he said. "Spaces like this create an

environment where students can connect and support one another."

UFV student Afeef Alam shared his experience living on campus during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"University is more than just academics — it's the experiences you have, the connections you make, and the lessons you learn along the way," he said. "Living on campus has helped me build friendships, get involved, and grow both personally and academically."

The expanded dining hall supports the growing number of students living on campus, offering more seating and improved food services.

UFV alumnus Nathan Speedie is director of student housing. When he looks up at the impressive new

A happy crowd gathered in the foyer of Lá:léms Ye EverGreen, UFV's new student housing, to celebrate the opening of the building and the expanded dining hall.

Students enjoy private rooms and bright, modern shared spaces designed for campus life.

Photo (top right): Latreille Architectural Photography

"When students live on campus, share meals, and build community together, their university experience becomes something much richer."

DR. JAMES MANDIGO,
UFV PRESIDENT

Lá:léms Ye EverGreen building, he's struck by the notion that he has returned to a university that has grown and changed in many ways since he was a student in 2003.

And he's changed too. No longer a young student unsure what he'd study or what career he'd pursue, Nathan has returned to UFV as an experienced manager in the student-care sector, with a special emphasis on student housing.

Although he transferred before finishing a credential at UFV, he did pick up one lasting connection: he met his wife Robin (BA '05) in Spanish class on the old Chilliwack campus.

Nathan is thrilled to have joined UFV's Student Housing team, where he helps foster the campus culture for students who are studying, attending classes, and living on campus.

The sector also involves a significant amount of crisis management.

Now that he's back at UFV, Nathan sees the difference two decades of growth have made, including the development of student housing, which began when Lá:lem te Baker opened in 2006.

"Having people who live on campus, and being able to offer that to students, has had a real impact on the mindset and feel of the Abbotsford campus," he said. "And now that we have even more capacity with the new building opening, it's a great opportunity to step up and grow into a different kind of university."

While international students have traditionally made up a large share of the student housing population, Nathan sees the opportunity to draw in students from other parts of the Lower Mainland, British Columbia, and Canada as UFV's reputation grows.

"Students who live a bit too far to commute every day have the option to live here. Student athletes also like the convenience of living on campus."

He even sees potential for local students who want to try living away from home.

The new building triples the capacity of student housing on campus and a big part of Nathan's job is marketing. He's always happy to arrange tours for potential tenants.

"There's a lot of interest, and it's always fun to see the reactions people have to this incredible new space," he noted.

As he looks back at his own time as a UFV student, he remembers the good friends he made and the quality of teaching.

"The quality of education was better here than at any other institution I attended," he notes. "I felt noticed and my needs attended to when I was a UFV student."

Nathan is looking forward to a bright future with the on-campus community playing a vital part in the university's development. 🌱



"In five years, we see more than 600 students living here. It will be transformational, in tandem with development in the U-District adjacent to campus. This won't be passive change. UFV will be driving it."

**NATHAN SPEEDIE, UFV ALUMNUS
AND DIRECTOR OF STUDENT HOUSING**

◀ Nathan (second from left) with Kimberly Ferguson, Housing Operations manager; Christine Zapisocki, Campus Living manager; Lindsay Alsop, Housing Operations coordinator; and Hayden Koppes, Campus Living coordinator.



Betty Urquhart Award winner Pavi Toor supports a strong community

A good volunteer strengthens their community, and Pavi Toor is no exception. His dedication to youth mentorship through the Young Guns Weightlifting Club has earned him the Betty Urquhart Community Service Award, which recognizes the outstanding contributions of an individual, group, or organization.

Pavi's Mission-based fitness group provides free athletic training with certified instructors for youth in the area, while raising and donating thousands of dollars to local causes. The UFV alum founded the organization in 2019 when looking for support for his two sons, Jaiden and Pravin. With no youth weightlifting programs in the area, his solution was to hire a trainer at a nearby leisure centre to teach them proper technique along with a few friends from their basketball team — and the Young Guns Weightlifting Club was born. They raised funds by selling merchandise and protein donuts, and the group outgrew and outlasted Pavi's original expectations, making a

far greater impact than he predicted. He saw that regular physical activity with a community of their peers helped teenagers develop discipline and take care of their mental health, giving them essential skills for future success. Former club members have even gone on to win provincial and national powerlifting championships.

"Obviously they get physically stronger and they get better at their sport, but also what I started to see was their own confidence and mental toughness started to go higher," says Pavi. "I think that overall, it's positively impacted nearly every kid who's been in the program and their parents. We've gotten great feedback."

Together, Pavi and his sons have published an educational resource for young investors, thrown a fundraising gala that raised \$40,000, started a free youth basketball club, sponsored the Vancouver Police Department's Iron Bulldogs Powerlifting Competition for youth, funded a girls-only weightlifting program, and upgraded fitness equipment at Hatzic Middle School and Abbotsford Traditional School. He's now passed the leadership of Young Guns Weightlifting Club down to Jaiden and Pravin.

"Working with youth, partnering with local gyms and certified trainers, I learned a great deal about several Fraser Valley communities and about myself, and I built lasting connections. Volunteering helps keep our society strong. It keeps us strong. We regularly tell the youth in our program: it never gets easier, you just get stronger," he says.

"Thank you again for this award. Let's all keep showing up — for our communities and for ourselves." 

Adaptive movement fair highlights benefits of cooperation

UFV students joined Stitó:s Lá:lém Totí:lt Elementary/Middle School for an adaptive movement fair designed to make physical activity engaging and accessible for children with disabilities.

The fair brought together students from UFV's Kinesiology 465 course and the Workplace Training in Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge (TASK) program, an eight-month pre-employment program for adults living with disabilities. Together, they designed and led activity stations that encouraged movement, creativity, and confidence through activities such as ribbon dancing and yoga.

The collaboration gave everyone an opportunity to learn from each other. Elementary students explored movement in a fun, supportive environment, while TASK students developed leadership and teaching skills. For kinesiology students, the event provided valuable hands-on experience designing inclusive activities and adapting them to meet the needs of participants with diverse abilities.

For TASK students Lydia and Nick, the fair reinforced their career goals



while building confidence. "I want to work with kids when I'm older," Lydia shared. "This gives me an idea of how to help children."

Nick appreciated the opportunity to both teach and learn, noting that every student brought unique strengths to the experience.

For kinesiology students, the day offered practical preparation for future careers in rehabilitation, education, and health care.

"As a future physiotherapist, I really want to make sure participation experiences are possible for everyone, regardless of their ability levels," said student Shawn.

Fellow kinesiology student Amy added that the partnership allowed students to apply what they had learned in class in a setting that more closely reflects the collaborative environments they will encounter in their professions.

The impact was equally meaningful for the elementary students. Kate Banham, an elementary education assistant at Stitó:s Lá:lém Totí:lt, described watching initially hesitant children become more confident as they participated alongside their peers, discovering the joy of trying new activities with friends.

Beyond movement and play, the fair demonstrated how community partnerships can create meaningful learning opportunities for everyone involved. By bringing together kinesiology and TASK students, educators, and elementary students, the Adaptive Movement Fair highlighted the value of inclusion, experiential learning, and shared leadership. Each group contributed its own knowledge and perspective, showing that meaningful education happens when everyone has the opportunity to participate, teach, and grow together. 🌱

Service goes beyond the badge for Dean Duthie: UFV Distinguished Alumni Award

Every morning before starting work, Saanich Police Chief Constable Dean Duthie pauses with his badge in his hand. “I look at it every day to remind myself of my purpose,” he says. “It reminds me how many people really depend on me bringing my best every single day.”

That sense of purpose has guided Dean throughout more than 30 years of police work in the community of Saanich and is one of the reasons UFV has named him its 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient.

Dean graduated from the Criminal Justice degree program at what was then the University College of the Fraser Valley in 1995. He credits the close-knit learning environment, supportive instructors, and strong relationships with classmates for giving him the confidence to pursue a career built on service and lifelong learning.

“The entire environment made everything click for me,” he says. “The smaller classes and support from instructors gave me the confidence to pursue my goal of becoming a police officer.”

Throughout his career, Dean has served in frontline patrol, major crime investigations, recruiting and training, professional standards, and executive leadership. Alongside his policing career, he has continued his education, earning a Master of Education and an Executive Master of International Police Leadership. He is now pursuing a diploma in

Global Leadership through the United Nations University for Peace.

His leadership was tested just five months after becoming Chief Constable when a shooting following a bank robbery became one of the most devastating events in the department’s history.

“We were fortunate to have his steady and thoughtful leadership through one of the toughest times in the history of the department and the community,” says Saanich Mayor Dean Murdock. “His care and compassion for people continue to have a lasting impact.”

Rather than trying to have all the answers, Dean focused on being present for his people.

“Being authentic, being vulnerable, and being available for people has become more important for me than ever.”

DEAN DUTHIE, 2026 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT



Although his career has earned national recognition — including appointment to the Order of Merit of the Police Forces in 2024 — Dean still points to UFV as a defining chapter in his journey.

“I really credit UFV for instilling that confidence while pushing me to grow outside my comfort zone,” he says. “I don’t know how things would have turned out otherwise.” 🌱

UFV'S BERRI LAB HIGHLIGHTS EMERGING RISKS FOR BC CRANBERRY CROPS

Cranberry sauce is a staple on Canadian tables during the holiday season, enjoyed by millions of people.

But what if this delicious seasonal favourite became a rarity? Cranberry crops will be impacted by climate change in the years to come, according to research from UFV's BERRI Lab.

Student Yowana Kanyumwa confirmed that warmer temperatures lead to fewer berries. She tested six varieties and found a substantially lower yield for all of them when they were grown in a controlled environment that simulated a two-degree Celsius increase in temperature.

The results back up computer modelling that Dr. Lauren Erland, the UFV BERRI Lab director and Canada Research Chair, published in 2022.

Not all the varieties evaluated in the trial suffer equally, and that may help growers in choosing which plants they use in future planting.



FINDING CONNECTION THROUGH PEER PATHWAYS

The university experience is about more than earning a credential. It's also about finding connection, building confidence, and knowing where to turn when challenges arise.

Through the Prospera Peer Pathways program, Prospera Credit Union and the Prospera Foundation are helping UFV students access one-to-one and group peer support, creating spaces where they can build meaningful relationships, strengthen their sense of belonging, and support their mental well-being.

"I love getting to be a part of students' lives every day," says Robbyn Bennett, UFV's executive director of student affairs. "Prospera has impacted our community in such a significant way by allowing us to offer one-to-one supports and group connection through the Prospera Peer Pathways program. This relationship with Prospera has been truly meaningful and impactful, and we are so incredibly grateful."

CHASI RESEARCH SUPPORTS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORK IN ABBOTSFORD

UFV alumnus Taylor Wilson and his team at the Abbotsford Restorative Justice and Advocacy Association (ARJAA) worked with UFV's Community Health and Social Innovation Hub to improve their community services. ARJAA provides a holistic, relational approach to crime and conflict as an alternative to the criminal justice system, focusing on wraparound support, repairing harm, and building empathy to prevent future offences.

CHASI's lead researcher Chelsea Klassen, a team of research assistants, and CHASI's knowledge mobilization team analyzed the effectiveness of ARJAA's referral system and mentorship program, and created a new database for case record management, making it easier to find information and evaluate impact.

The partnership between CHASI and ARJAA was a natural fit, bringing together ARJAA's mission of restoration and repair with CHASI's commitment to strengthening communities.



UFV STUDENTS DEVELOP PLAN FOR FORMER ABBOTSFORD HOSPITAL SITE

Three UFV students used the former Matsqui, Sumas, and Abbotsford (MSA) hospital site on McCallum Road as a canvas for learning. As part of UFV's Regional and Community Planning degree program, Rza Sandhu, Jasleen Deol, and Jeevani Harry developed a comprehensive plan for the site featuring three mid-rise apartments with amenities, green spaces, and full accessibility to transit.

Working in a real-world setting challenged the students to think and act like city planners.

"We put in a lot of work, and we were all super excited about the outcome," Jasleen says. "From the day we started, we had so many ideas clicking, and it was great seeing everything in a finished form. It was tiring and stressful at times, but it was also a lot of fun and a great experience."



APPRECIATING INDIGENOUS ART ON CAMPUS

UFV curator Teresa Carlson showcases local Indigenous artists to help Indigenous community members see themselves represented at UFV. After a piece of art was damaged on campus, it prompted important reflection. Teresa and the Xwexwílmexwawt office are now using that moment to deepen understanding of why these works are so significant, and how we can engage with them in respectful and meaningful ways.

"The Stó:lō say that everything happens for a reason. An incident that started as something hurtful has led to discussion, art walks, maps of the art pieces — it's just blossomed into this super positive, wonderful way to continue that education now," Teresa says. "Let's use that as a way to reflect on what happened, foster reconciliation, and think about how we can do better in the future."





"Together, we have an important role to play in shaping the next chapter of UFV's story."

UFV ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CHAIR
BRADLEY MENARD

Fostering connection and extending our reach

A message from Bradley Menard, Chair, UFV Alumni Association

The past year has been one of growth, connection, and reflection. In this, my final year as chair, it is especially meaningful to see the UFV Alumni Association mark its 25th anniversary, a milestone that speaks to the enduring strength of our alumni community and the relationships that continue to shape the University's future.

For 25 years, the Alumni Association has worked to foster lifelong connections among UFV graduates and champion the interests of alumni. Today, that commitment remains stronger than ever. Through programs, events, and initiatives that bring alumni together, we continue to create meaningful opportunities for engagement while honouring the legacy of those who helped build our association.

I am continually inspired by the impact of UFV alumni around the world. Their leadership, service, and innovation reflect the values that define this university and demonstrate the many ways alumni contribute to stronger communities. Whether supporting students,

advancing their professions, or creating positive change, alumni continue to strengthen UFV's reputation and reach.

As I look ahead, I know the Alumni Association remains committed to fostering connection, elevating alumni voices, and supporting initiatives that help future generations of students thrive. With more than 57,000 alumni worldwide, our community continues to grow in both size and influence. Together, we have an important role to play in shaping the next chapter of UFV's story.

To my fellow alumni, thank you for your ongoing engagement and pride in our university. To our community partners, volunteers, and advocates, thank you for your dedicated support. Together, we will continue to strengthen the bonds that connect us and ensure UFV remains a vibrant and impactful institution for years to come. 🌱

Bradley Menard (*sixth from left*) is a lifelong learner and proud UFV alumnus who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education in 2021 and a Bachelor of General Studies in Educational Technology in 2014. Alongside several additional credentials from other institutions, his education reflects a commitment to continuous learning and personal growth.

WHERE THE NEXT STEP BEGINS — UFV CONTINUING EDUCATION HELPS LEARNERS BUILD NEW SKILLS, CAREERS, AND POSSIBILITIES

Sometimes, the next chapter begins with a single course.

Every day, learners walk through the doors of UFV's School of Continuing Education with different goals. Some are changing careers. Others are returning to school after years away. Some want to build on existing skills, while others are taking the first step toward an entirely new profession.

Whatever brings them there, they all have one thing in common: a desire to keep learning.

At UFV's Clearbrook Centre, lifelong learning is more than a concept — it happens every day. Through short-term certificate programs, professional development, customized training, and industry partnerships, the School of Continuing Education helps learners respond to changing workplaces, pursue new opportunities, and develop the skills their communities need.

Programs are designed with flexibility in mind, recognizing that many learners are balancing careers, families, and other responsibilities while investing in their future. Whether they are completing a credential in under a year, earning a professional certificate, or upgrading existing skills, students gain practical, career-focused education that can be applied immediately.

UFV ALERTS EARNS INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

When emergencies happen on campus, timely and accurate communication is critical.

That challenge inspired a cross-functional team to develop UFV Alerts, an in-house emergency communications solution that received international recognition last spring.

The system was put to the test when a bear wandered onto the Abbotsford campus in April.

A COMMUNITY-LED PATH FORWARD

The Mission Living Lab is an emerging community-based initiative bringing people together to explore local priorities and turn ideas into action.

Rather than a physical laboratory, the living lab will create space for the Mission community and UFV researchers to collaborate on challenges and opportunities, from health and housing to sustainability and economic development.

Supported by UFV's Community Health and Social Innovation Hub (CHASI), the initiative is still in its early stages. Its priorities and possibilities will be shaped with community voices.

GROWING INNOVATION IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

With a \$250,000 contribution from RBC Foundation, UFV's Food and Agriculture Institute is launching the Agricultural Technology Foundry, bringing students, faculty, industry, and community partners together to tackle real-world challenges in food and agriculture.

Participants will gain hands-on experience in innovation and entrepreneurship, working alongside industry and business mentors to shape ideas and move them from concept through trial and into new ventures.

"By bringing students, researchers, and industry together around real-world challenges, we're creating opportunities to develop new ideas, build practical skills, and strengthen the connections that will shape the future of food and agriculture in the Fraser Valley. Supporting education and collaboration helps build stronger communities and creates opportunities for everyone to thrive," says Martin Thibodeau, Regional President, British Columbia, RBC.

The long-standing and growing collaboration with RBC Foundation will help prepare the next generation of food-system innovators while strengthening connections between UFV, industry, and community.

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SKILLED-TRADES LEADERS

A new \$75,000 gift from Coast Capital is expanding opportunities for students in UFV's Faculty of Applied and Technical Studies, supporting initiatives that improve inclusion and access to skilled-trades education.

The partnership is already celebrating student leadership through the new Coast Capital Leadership Awards, which recognized 17 UFV students for the impact they are making in their classrooms and communities.

"Accessing post-secondary education can be a challenge for many students," says Tara Walter, manager, social purpose ecosystem at Coast Capital. "We also partner with organizations and universities, including those offering Red Seal training, that provide wraparound supports to ensure individuals are successful and overcome barriers that might impact their ability to achieve their goals."

The new investment also marks a significant milestone in a relationship spanning more than 30 years, bringing Coast Capital's cumulative support of UFV to \$1 million.

A DECADE OF IMPACT THROUGH THE NICK TAYLOR CHARITY CLASSIC

The 10th annual Nick Taylor Charity Classic raised \$589,000 for charities throughout the Fraser Valley, bringing the event's 10-year fundraising total to more than \$3.5 million. Of this year's proceeds, \$150,000 will support UFV golf student-athlete endowments and the Cascades golf program.

Led by professional golfer and UFV honorary recipient Nick Taylor and UFV alumna Andie Taylor (BSW '12), together with co-chairs Phil Algra and Chris Bertram, the event brings donors, sponsors, volunteers, and charitable organizations together in support of the community. UFV is proud to have been a beneficiary throughout its remarkable 10-year history.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

As Canada faces more frequent climate-related emergencies, UFV is helping communities prepare, respond, and recover — together.

Through a new \$2.4 million, five-year SSHRC partnership grant, UFV is participating in *Connecting to Place through Disaster Response*, a pan-Canadian initiative exploring how community-campus partnerships can build disaster resilience. UFV is the only post-secondary knowledge-sharing partner representing BC.

The initiative will bring together UFV students, faculty, and regional partners to share knowledge and learn from one another. The work supports UFV's commitment to changemaking while building relationships, sharing practical expertise, and strengthening resilience across the Fraser Valley and beyond.

CREATING STRONGER PATHWAYS FROM K-16 TO UFV

UFV and six Fraser Valley school districts are creating stronger pathways for students from kindergarten through post-secondary education.

Announced at UFV's ConnectED Teaching and Learning Conference, the new Collaborative K-16 Framework focuses on six priorities, including early engagement, future-ready skills, expanded dual-credit opportunities, Indigenous engagement and reconciliation, and stronger connections between K-12 and post-secondary learning.

Those connections are already taking shape across UFV. This summer, eight Grade 11 and 12 students joined a four-day camp hosted by UFV's Community Health and Social Innovation Hub (CHASI), where they explored research, sustainability, and changemaking while investigating community issues they care about.

Initiatives like these help students experience university learning earlier and imagine where their own educational journeys might take them.

Bringing our story to life: UFV's new brand

This year marked the beginning of a thoughtful, long-term evolution of the UFV brand — one designed to better reflect the university we've become and the experience people have come to know.

Higher education is changing. Students have more choices than ever, communities expect deeper partnerships, and universities are challenged to clearly communicate not only what they do, but who they are and the impact they create. As UFV has grown over the past 50 years, it became clear that the way we present ourselves should reflect the people, relationships, and purpose that define us.

At UFV, learning has always been about more than lectures and textbooks. It's about transformation. It's about the moments that shape lives, the connections that strengthen communities, and the discoveries that create new possibilities. It's about turning knowledge into action, passion into purpose, and ambition into impact.

Our refreshed brand brings that story to life. More than a new visual identity, it's a shared expression of who we are and the experience people have with UFV. It made its public debut at Convocation, where thousands of graduates, families, and guests experienced the new brand at a moment that celebrates transformation, achievement, and new beginnings.

As the brand continues to roll out across campuses, digital platforms, and university communications, it will create a more connected and consistent experience — one that reflects the university our students, employees, alumni, partners, and communities know, and the future we're building together.



Scan to watch a video of our brand story and learn more about the brand refresh at ufv.ca/brand.



ufv.ca/community

St'elt'elawtexw, UFV's 2026 Community Report, is produced by the Office of the Vice-President, Community Engagement.

