

Monthly Report to the Provost – Faculty of Science – April 2026

Engaging Learners

Dr. Stefania Pizzirani

April 25 hosted a UFV Environmental Studies table at the Mission Earth Fest event

Presentation entitled “*Exploring and Expanding the “Indigenization at UFV” report*” at the UFV ConnectEd 2026 Workshop

Dr. Lauren Erland & BERRI lab

Hosting Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program (ELAP) research intern Karen Quispe, a visiting undergraduate researcher from Peru for the Winter Semester.

Dr. Renee Prasad

As part of their semester long project on chafer beetles, Nightmare on Every Street, students in Dr. Renee Prasad's Agri 306 (Field Techniques in Pest Management) spent the month of February sampling for chafer beetle larvae in Chilliwack parks, Abbotsford cemeteries and UFV campuses. They presented their findings in April to Elder College (Chilliwack) and as part of the winter term City Studio Hubbub in Abbotsford.

BAS student Hailey Simmonds and Dr. Renee Prasad co-presented the results of Hailey's survey of parasitism of *Delia radicum* pupae at the Lower Mainland Horticulture Conference (January) and the Pest Management Centre's s Reduced-Risk Strategy for Cabbage Maggot Management in Brassica Crops webinar (February).

UFV Agriculture student's Manraj Rhandawa, Alex Slater, Anna Ramirez De Garcia and Hallie Moorthy have been selected to attend the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) conference as part of a partnership between UFV and the Oppenheimer Group.

Transforming Lives

Dr. Marina Turlakis

Sciworthy page - [Sciworthy](https://www.sciworthy.com/) is a non-profit group of science communicators who want to increase accessibility of science to the general population. They have a mandate to publish unbiased summaries of recent, high-impact research studies for public consumption. They offer a Professor Partnership Program where they partner with a professor to connect their editors with undergraduate students over the course of a term to support them in developing science communication skills through iterative peer review cycles. They select some of the student work to be featured on their site: UFV Biology student Liam Sheffield published a summary of recent study on genetics education to combat biological determinism. You can find his summary on the UFV page here: <https://sciworthy.com/category/ppp/ufv/> And if you are interested in participating, please see here: <https://sciworthy.com/ppp/> and feel free to get in touch with me.

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Dr. Renee Prasad

The agriculture department hosted a weekly mentoring lunch event during March (Mentoring March). Each week mentors presented on a different theme. Mentors included alumnae: Stephanie Saccomano (horticulture careers), Trish Gendron (entrepreneurship and starting your own business), Emma Bryce, Bev Lynch and Jade Sherwood (graduate school). To mark International Women's Day and the International Year of the Woman Farmer, Arzeena Hamir, food security advocate, politician, agrologist and farmer presented on her career journey.

Dr. Jessica Wang

Collaborating with Dr. Tomohiro Hamaoka and Akiko Sato from Asahi Biosciences on a fee-for-service project to evaluate probiotic feed additives in livestock production. Focused on Fraser Valley farms, this work aims to enhance animal gut health, reduce pathogenic bacteria, and support sustainable production systems. The project also includes Mr. Mizuki Uematsu as a practicum student, providing hands-on laboratory training and opportunities to conduct applied research on feed additives and animal health.

Dr. Javian Hadian

Participated as a panelist at the *Pathways of Healing Symposium* at Kwantlen Polytechnic University on March 14, 2026. The symposium brought together Indigenous knowledge holders, Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners, researchers, and community members to explore holistic approaches to health and healing. In the panel session, "*From Disease Treatment to Whole-Person Healing*," he shared perspectives from Traditional Persian Medicine, emphasizing health as a state of balance and illness as an imbalance within the body and its relationship with the environment.

Building Community

Dr. Stefania Pizzirani

From January-April, been a core member of the Mission Environmental Stewardship Society Organizational Committee for the 2026 Earth Fest event

Dr. Robin Endelman

Super Science Club, delivered in partnership with Science World, is engaging students in hands-on science learning this month across several schools. Programs are running or have run at Terry Fox Elementary and Mathxwi Elementary, along with two Super Science Club groups at Dr. T.A. Swift Elementary. These sessions provide students in our community schools with interactive, inquiry-based experiences that spark curiosity and build enthusiasm for science.

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Dr. Lauren Erland

Shared results of ongoing industry- partnered research on leafhopper presence and diversity through presentations to both Quebec and BC Growers through Annual Meeting of the LeafHope NSERC Sustainable Agriculture Research Initiatives annual meeting and the BC Berries Research Review. This project to date has engaged one research technician and 4 undergraduate researchers at UFV.

Shared results of research on cultivar susceptibility of blueberry scorch virus, a collaborative project with Dr. Renee Prasad and BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food Small Fruits Specialist Carolyn Teasdale with growers and end users at the BC Berries Research Review. This project has engaged 10 UFV undergraduate researchers to date.

Presented an update to academic and end users at BC Parks on an ongoing project supported by BC Parks Living Labs program on understanding interaction between wildfire-derived hormones in soils and ecosystem recovery post fire at the Collective for Parks, Conservation, Innovation and Leadership (CPCIL) eSummit in March 2026. This project has to date engaged 5 UFV undergraduate researchers and 1 postdoctoral fellow in the BERRI Lab.

Presented an update on ongoing work with the BC Cranberry Marketing Commission on variety resilience to warming simulating futures climates at the BC and PNW Cranberry Congress, a grower focused event. This work is now in year 4 and is a collaboration with Dr. Sandra Gillespie (Biology), Dr. Renee Prasad and Dr. Gina Sidelis (Rutgers) and has engaged > 10 UFV undergraduate researchers to date.

Continued her outreach work with the next generation of scientists giving a virtual lecture with Exploring by the Seat of your Pants, an outreach and education organization dedicated to bringing science and exploration into the classroom. All presentations can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/live/ao2r80rmaOQ?si=pjZlz6SpkFxivg38>

Math & Stats

Sunday March 22, the Math & Stats department hosted nearly 70 local students and their parents for the 2026 Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest. This contest is for Grades 1-12 and is promoted and administered nationally by the Canadian Mathematical Society. The UFV site contest was organized by Rachel Toews, and supported by volunteers Almaz Butaev, Andrew Staal, Vahid Tadayon, Isha Dhiman, Serhii Myroshnychenko, Stan Manu, and Tanner Boos of the Math & Stats department.

Dr. Jessica Wang

Established an agreement with Bestmix, an industry-standard platform for least-cost feed formulation and nutritional optimization, providing UFV researchers and students with free access to the software to support teaching, research, and hands-on training. The integration of the Bestmix platform into the Agriculture program has strengthened connections between the university and the feed industry. This initiative supports collaboration with industry partners and

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aligns student training with current industry practices, contributing to workforce development and knowledge exchange within the agricultural community.

Dr. Chris Bodnar

Welcomed industry partners to Building H on CEP campus on February 10, Canada's Agriculture Day. The afternoon mixer was a chance to meet and greet new faculty, tour the agriculture facilities; and to reconnect with practicum and field trip hosts, research collaborators, guest lecturers, and alumni. This event was supported by Community Engagement and the UFV Alumni Association.

Dr. Javad Hadian

Hosted approximately 40 members of the Dogwood Garden Club. The club toured the CEP campus greenhouses where they were introduced to current teaching and research activities. The visit provided an overview of sustainable and modern food systems for growing fresh vegetables, including greenhouse production practices and innovations in controlled environment agriculture. Participants engaged with faculty and staff, gaining insight into applied research, student learning opportunities, and the role of local food production in supporting community health and environmental sustainability.

List of Publications (UFV student names underlined)

Dr. Vahid Tadayon, Assistant Professor in Math & Statistics, presented at the Fraser Valley Math & Stats Seminar on “*How Statistics Protects Privacy*” (March 30, 2026). The talk explored differential privacy as a framework to protect individual information while enabling meaningful data analysis, highlighting the balance between privacy and statistical accuracy, with applications in modern machine learning and mobility data.

Dr. Vahid Tadayon has been awarded funding through the Faculty/Student Research and Scholarly Activity Fund (FSRSAF) Stream A, UFV (March 2026). The project, funded at \$4,000 for 2026–2027, supports undergraduate student research on developing a geometric differential privacy framework for spatial data. The work emphasizes hands-on student engagement, open-source software development, and preparation of a peer-reviewed manuscript. The project is currently underway, with outcomes to be reported in the next cycle.

Sarah Koeppel, Alison N Goeres, Nykita Wigley, and Lauren Erland. Microalgae carbon capture waste acts as a biostimulant in strawberry (*Fragaria x ananassa* cv. Albion), altering the soil microbiome and improving soil nutrient availability. *Canadian Journal of Plant Science*. Just-IN <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjps-2025-0170>

Gaudet D, Hayward R, Sandhu PK, Murch SJ, Erland LAE. 2026. Kynurenine and related metabolites in St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum* L.). *Planta Medica*. Accepted.

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Khalil JR, Saini AK, Tipu MMH, Das PR, Erland L and Sherif SM. 2025. Plant Stress, 18:101101. doi: 10.1016/j.stress.2025.101101

Blatt, S., Fortier, A.-M., McCann, S., Prasad, R., Scott, I. M., Van Herk, W., & Vankosky, M. A. (2026). Cabbage root maggot, *Delia radicum* (Diptera: Anthomyiidae), research in Canada: past, present, and opportunities for the future. *The Canadian Entomologist*, 158, e9. doi:10.4039/tce.2025.10046

Gill, J. K., MacKintosh, V., McCuaig, B., MacIsaac, J., Li, X., Di Stefano-Pitre, S., Wang, J., & Collins, S. (2026). Egg quality and hen health benefit from dietary inclusion of hempseed presscake or oil in the diets of Lohmann LSL-Lite white laying hens housed in an enriched single-tier housing system. *Journal of Applied Poultry Research*, 35(2), 100685. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japr.2026.100685>

Wang, J. (2025). Request for registration of novel feed ingredient hemp meal under the *Feed Regulations, 2024*. Submission to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.