

Monthly Report to the Provost – Faculty of Science – December 2025

Engaging Learners

Andrew Staal

Coached four UFV undergraduate Math Majors wrote the William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition on December 6. Our UFV competitors were Isaac Brugge, Joshua Kerdachi, Malia Mercado, and Nathan Strong. The Putnam Competition is the preeminent mathematics competition for undergraduate college students in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This year's team was coached by Almaz Butaev and Serhii Myroshnychenko, and competition day was administered by Andrew Staal.

The Food and Agriculture Institute

Members of the FAI's Genome Canada ICT Team participated in the Cultivating Resiliency Summit: Reimagining Agricultural Futures held at SFU Downtown, October 27 and 28th. Team members Stephanie Eccles, Angela McIntyre, Jess Mukiri, and Alesandros Glaros submitted a poster for presentation. Stefania Pizzirani presented a project summary, and Lenore Newman participated as a panelist.

Lenore Newman

Dr. Newman delivered a workshop titled "The Coming Agricultural Singularity: What It Means for You, the Future of Agriculture in BC" at the Irrigation Industry Association of British Columbia's annual meeting on November 17th. In this talk, she examined how technology, climate change, and market forces are rapidly transforming agriculture, highlighting emerging tools like AI-driven farming and precision irrigation, and their implications for industry professionals, businesses, and the future of food systems.

Stefania Pizzirani

Dr. Pizzirani gave an overview of FAI at the VPCE Leaders Retreat | Institutional Priority Deep Dive, discussion topic: "How can the VPCE collaborate with FAI to help advance UFV's One Health interests from branding, communications, community programming, alumni engagement, and relationship and fund development perspectives?" on November 20th.

The Food and Agriculture Institute

Launched a new research project webpage on [Responsible Innovation Frameworks, Guiding Responsible Innovation in British Columbia's Vertical Farming Sector](#). This project was led by the FAI with support from the Department of Agriculture, and project collaborators including QuantoTech Solutions Ltd., Aright Greentech, Archway Community Services, the Public Health Association of BC, and Farm to School BC, November 2025.

Angela Bedard

On November 7, 2025, UFV BSc (Biology Major) alumna (2018) Eryn Braley, now Manager of Indigenous Health at the Provincial Health Services Authority, gave a one-hour guest lecture on *Indigenous Perspectives in Medical Genetics* in Angela Bedard's BIO 350: Medical Genetics course.

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Transforming Lives

Directed Studies program in Biology, the following Biology and BioChem students presented a 15-minute seminar outlining their research proposals on November 5 and 7, 2025. Samuel Wrayton (Supervisor: Alan Reid), Aidan Hendry (Supervisor: Nathan Bialas), Adam Winters (Supervisor: Nathan Bialas), Austin Currie (Supervisor: Nathan Bialas), Karam Dhillon (Supervisor: Mitra Tabatabaei), Semir Hasic (Supervisor: James Bedard), Matthew Miller (Supervisor: James Bedard), Anhad Kaur (Supervisor: Harley Gordon), Lainey Peters (Supervisor: Lauren Erland), and James Raack (Supervisor: Marina Tourlakis). Their final results will be presented in Spring 2026.

Building Community

On November 12, about 70 Grade 11 and 12 Indigenous students from the Abbotsford School District (SD34) visited UFV's Chilliwack campus for a day of learning, exploration, and connection. The students began their visit in the Gathering Place with UFV Elders and Knowledge Givers, then took part in both general information sessions about UFV and program-specific sessions showcasing Media Arts, Criminology, Agriculture, Kinesiology, Halq'emeylem, and Indigenous Studies & IASC Program. They tried out VR goggles, planted saffron, explored how the body works, learned about careers in criminology, translated their names into Halq'emeylem, and met UFV student mentors from the Indigenous Students Centre. Students also enjoyed lunch together, prepared by a local Indigenous catering company, and left with a glimpse of what campus life at UFV offers. Special thanks to the many UFV departments who helped make this visit possible: Faculty of Science, Indigenous Students Centre, Xwexwilmexwawt, College of Arts, Faculty of Education, Community and Human Development, Faculty of Health Sciences, Office of the Registrar, Future Students Office, UFV Alumni, Student Wellness, and the Centre for Experiential and Career Education.

Golfam Ghafourifar

Received an adjunct appointment at SFT and was invited to present a research talk at the institution in November.

The Food and Agriculture Institute

The Sustainable Food Systems for Canada (SF4C) Innovation node, <https://www.ufv.ca/sf4c-innovation/>, held its first SF4C ideation session on the West Coast in Vancouver on December 10th and 11th. The two-day event series hosted SF4C collaborators from BC, Alberta, and Ontario, and gathered industry, academia, and community partners. Day 1 included an Engagement Session to discuss opportunities for agriculture and agri-food social innovation in BC and collaboratively workshop SF4C-related programming, and Day 2 included tours of two local agri-food innovators, Maia Farms and QuantoTech.

Stefania Pizzirani

Dr. Renee Prasad and Dr. Pizzirani co-wrote an opinion piece published on November 11th in the Fraser Valley Current. The piece was entitled 'The Fraser Valley shows why protecting nature is essential to BC's farming future. Fraser Valley Current' and emphasized that the divide between

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farming and environmental protection in British Columbia is a false one. It argues that safeguarding natural systems like waterways, wetlands, and habitats is crucial for the resilience and sustainability of BC's agricultural sector and discusses UFV's One Health approach integrating agriculture and environmental studies by fostering collaboration, incorporating Indigenous knowledge, and promoting a holistic view of interconnected human, animal, and environmental health to support a climate-smart, sustainable farming future in BC.

<https://fvcurrent.com/p/opinion-the-fraser-valley-shows-why-protecting-nature-is-essential-to-bc-s-farming-future>

Lenore Newman

Dr. Newman gave an interview for a CBC News article entitled 'These farmers have a dream for the world's most expensive spice, and it's rooted in Canadian soil' by Baneet Braich. Published November 18th. The article highlights the pioneering efforts of growers in the Fraser Valley cultivating saffron, the world's most expensive spice, despite challenges like crop loss and lack of insurance. Newman underscores the importance of such innovations, noting that exploring alternative crops like saffron can diversify agriculture, maximize the use of the Agricultural Land Reserve, and strengthen Canada's agricultural economy and sovereignty.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/saffron-farms-budding-in-canada-9.6981899>

The Food and Agriculture Institute

Lenore Newman, Stefania Pizzirani, and Alesandros Glaros traveled to Guelph, Ontario, for the annual Arrell Food Institute Summit, in Guelph, Ontario, October 20-21st.

List of Publications (UFV student names underlined)

Stefania Pizzirani - Contributed to Report - Perkins and Will (2025). "The Resource Circularity Report: Reimagining Cities as Regenerative Ecosystems", Perkins and Will, Vancouver, BC.

Kumar, T., Rahman, S., and **Pizzirani, S.** (2025). "Agrikit: Modular Farming Solutions Enhancing Local Food Security", Ivey Publishing, No. W43746

Eccles, S., McIntyre, A., Mukiri, J., & Glaros A. [Land, Food, and Work in Conversations with Cellular Agriculture](#). (2025, October). [Poster presentation] Food and Agriculture Institute, University of the Fraser Valley.