



PADDLES & WINGS

NAVIGATING TOGETHER, SOARING FORWARD

Message from the President

Éy swáyel

While it may not have felt like a Winter Term with the absence of snow across the Fraser Valley, we are nearing the completion of what has been an extremely busy and challenging start to 2026. The financial headwinds facing post-secondary institutions across Canada have not spared UFV. As we respond to the loss of

tuition revenue stemming from Canada's new international student policies, we have had to make some very difficult decisions — decisions that meant saying goodbye earlier than expected to respected colleagues and friends. We recognize how painful and disruptive this is for those impacted, and for the teams and students who have worked alongside them. These individuals have shaped UFV in meaningful ways, and we are deeply grateful for their dedication, care, and years of service. Our community is stronger because of them, and they will be sincerely missed.

In moments like these, I am reminded why we called this newsletter Paddles and Wings. The canoe symbolizes our shared educational journey, and the hummingbird — a symbol of joy, resilience, and agility — reminds us of the strength and spirit that carry us forward, even when the path is difficult. Now more than ever, it is important to come together to engage learners, transform lives, and build communities.

Even when the skies feel heavy, there are still steady rays of light breaking through. Throughout this newsletter, you will see many examples of UFV's commitment to being a house of transformation — examples that reflect the care, creativity, and determination of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters. I hope you feel as encouraged as I do by the ways our community continues to show up for one another and for the Fraser Valley each day, turning challenges into meaningful impact now and into the months and years ahead.

Kw'as hoy

Dr. James Mandigo

Budget Updates

Financial Sustainability

UFV's third and final update of the 2026/27 Operating Budget was presented at a town hall hosted at the new Community Hall in Lá:léms Ye EverGreen on the Abbotsford Campus on March 5. The following is a video link to the town hall presentation: [Town Hall March 2026.mp4](#).

Throughout the budget development process, great care has been taken to ensure we continue to fulfill our mandate and pursue our vision of being a house of transformation — deeply rooted in the communities we serve, providing educational opportunities that prepare students to be changemakers who thrive, and contribute meaningfully to our world. I want to thank everyone who has contributed over the past eleven months — through ideas, conversations, committees, and town halls. Your engagement has mattered, and it is deeply appreciated.

The [consolidated budget](#) was officially approved by the Board of Governors on March 26. For the latest updates on UFV's budget planning for the 2026/27 fiscal year, please visit: [Budgets & Resource Planning > Financial Sustainability | UFV.ca](#).

Universities Canada Mission to India

In February, I joined a delegation of 20 Canadian university presidents on a trip to India organized by Universities Canada. The purpose of this trip was to help rebuild the decades-long relationships forged between Canada and India, unfortunately eroded over recent diplomatic tensions between the two countries. The delegation highlighted numerous examples of how educational partnerships

have been at the heart of the people-to-people relationship and are central to restoring the strong bond we have shared for many years. This trip took place two weeks prior to Prime Minister Carney's visit to India at the beginning of March and helped pave the way for the launch of the [Canada-India Talent and Innovation Strategy](#) and a series of announcements by the PM to highlight Canada's government-to-government agreements and MOUs with various Indian partners.

Two UFV-specific [announcements](#) were highlighted during the PM's visit. These included:

1. Signing of an [Articulation Agreement](#) between the University of the Fraser Valley and Panjab University to offer a dual degree in Business Administration.
2. [Announcement](#) from the Government of Canada's Indo-Pacific Scholarships and Fellowships for Canadians (IPSFC) program, awarding \$520,000 to Dr. Jon Thomas, Director of the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and BC Regional Innovation Chair in Canada-India Partnership Development at UFV, to strengthen innovation ecosystems in agtech and cleantech sectors between our two countries.

The past three months have seen a remarkable turnaround in the India-Canada relationship, and education has helped to lead the way. I am optimistic that after several years of cool diplomatic relations, we are quickly returning to rebuilding — and strengthening — our relationship. This is a positive step forward not only for UFV and the Fraser Valley, but for BC and Canada as well.



Renewal of Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP)

Members of the Board of Governors and Senate met in January to launch the renewal process for the Integrated Strategic Plan — [Íyáqáwtxw](#) — that will expire at the end of 2026. At this meeting, I shared with those in attendance a [Reflection Paper](#) that provided some insights into what I heard and learned during the first six months of my listening and learning tour to start my presidency at UFV. This paper was an attempt to articulate the opportunities that build on UFV's strengths, align our strategic priorities with our mandate as a regional university, and reinforce UFV's value proposition.

Over the next few months, Lorne Mackenzie, Professor Emeritus and retired Associate Professor in the School of Business, will be leading a series of focus groups with employees and university partners. A survey will also be sent to all internal members of the UFV community in mid-April to gather input and feedback on the renewed ISP. I encourage everyone to participate so that your voice can help to inform our next ISP. Senate and the Board of Governors will receive an update on what we heard throughout these focus groups and survey results in June.



Campus and Community Highlights

Fraser Valley India Awards Night

Fraser Valley India (FVI) is celebrating its 20th Anniversary of offering UFV academic programming in Chandigarh. Over the past 20 years, more than 1,500 students have participated in courses in the BBA, BCIS, and BA programs. While there have been several iterations of this program over the years, today, students typically take UFV courses in these programs for their first two years in Chandigarh and then transfer to UFV in Canada to complete their degrees.

During my two weeks in India, I attended the annual FVI Awards night. This event celebrates the many accomplishments of the FVI students alongside their family and friends before they make the long journey to join us at UFV, typically in the Fall semester. This was my fourth time attending the awards night, and each time I am so very impressed by the level of engagement of FVI students and how excited parents are about what the future holds for their children.

Students at FVI have the opportunity to learn side-by-side with their instructors by applying their theoretical knowledge to real-world settings through projects, case studies, and internships with local employers. Some of this year's award winners included students who created successful businesses rooted in social responsibility (FVI's 12th student business start-up), students who launched the fourth edition of the student-led magazine Fraser Crônica, and student volunteers working with organizations such as the Mehar Baba Charitable Trust to help foster employment skills among girls and young women in rural India.



Truth and Reconciliation Events

On January 22, senior leaders from across UFV participated in Beyond Blankets: A Stó:lō Lands Exercise, an immersive learning experience developed by Dr. Keith Thor Carlson of UFV's Peace and Reconciliation Centre (PARC) in partnership with Xwiyolemtel (Grand Chief Dr. Clarence "Kat" Pennier). Through storytelling, movement, and interactive role-play across blankets representing Stó:lō lands and history, we were guided to reflect on Stó:lō culture, the impacts of settler colonialism, and the enduring strength and resilience of Stó:lō peoples. I am grateful to Dr. Carlson, Leanne Jarrett, and Alexis Klassen for leading us with such care, knowledge, and generosity, and I look forward to witnessing how this learning will continue to shape our work at UFV. [Beyond Blankets takes on new urgency after B.C. court ruling — UFV Today.](#)

Also that week, PARC, in partnership with the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, hosted [Xyólhmet Ye Syéwiqwélh \(Taking Care of Our Children\)](#) — a public panel focused on Residential School research, truth-telling, and ongoing work toward healing. The panel shared the results of research that has earlier been reported to the Stó:lō communities and may now be communicated more broadly.

Events such as these have been instrumental in supporting UFV's ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. The Board of Governors recently updated Policy [BRP-200.05-Fulfilling-Our-Commitment-to-Aboriginal-Peoples.pdf](#) to affirm that "the denial, minimization, or misrepresentation of the harms and realities of the Residential School system is inconsistent with UFV's commitments to truth, Reconciliation, Indigenous self-determination, and respectful learning environments."

Finally, I would encourage you to watch the following video featuring honorary doctorate recipient Síyamíyatelíyót Dr. Elizabeth Phillips discussing her inspiring journey to preserve, protect, and share the Halq'eméylem language: [VIDEO: Dr. Síyamíyatelíyót and the journey of Halq'eméylem at UFV — UFV Today](#).

International Women's Day Events

In recognition of [International Women's Day](#), UFV partnered with the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce for an inspirational panel discussion led by Barb Sharp, Special Advisor, Conflict Resolution at UFV, to explore contemporary leadership through the experiences of former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in the documentary *Prime Minister*. Panelists included Pam Alexis, Former MLA, Abbotsford-Mission, and former Minister of Agriculture and Food; Charmaine de Silva, Vice-President & National Lead, Earned Media, Burson; Stephanie Fredette, former Councillor of Cheam First Nation, UFV alum, and current student; and Alex Mitchell, CEO, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce.



The South Asian Studies Institute hosted the [Trinjan Mela: A Celebration of South Asian Women](#) at the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium in Abbotsford for over 200 members of the public on March 7. The event featured eight performers showcasing traditional and contemporary South Asian folk arts through poetry and storytelling, music, and dance.

Dr. Satwinder Bains, Professor Emeritus and former director of the South Asian Studies Institute, was also part of the Power Women of Influence panel hosted by [DARPAN Magazine](#) at the Vancouver Convention Centre on March 21. Satwinder was joined by other panelists including Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh, physician and global health advocate; Farkhunda Muhtaj, Afghan-Canadian footballer and humanitarian activist; Diana Hayden, international actor and Miss World 1997; and Simi Sara, award-winning journalist and radio host.



Lá:léms Ye EverGreen

The [official ribbon](#) cutting for UFV's new 300-bed student housing complex, Lá:léms Ye EverGreen and dining hall expansion took place on March 17. Dignitaries joining the official opening included Minister of Infrastructure Bowinn Ma, MLA Abbotsford South Bruce Banman, MLA Langley-Abbotsford Harman Bhangu, Abbotsford Mayor Ross Siemens, Abbotsford City Councillors Patricia Driessen and Dave Loewen, and Knowledge Giver Qohtyetel John H. Williams.



Ripple Makers

UFV recognized four [Ripple Makers](#) with paddles for their financial support of students and UFV: [Stacey Irwin](#), Dick and Barbara Bate, Nicole Klassen, and TD Bank Group. The theme for the event was "A Day in the Life of a Student" and was hosted by student Board of Governors members Angelina Joseph and Daria Tsynda. The event was opened in a good way with drummer Qohtyetel John H. Williams, who shared a song of love and peace. Those in attendance were treated

to micro-lectures by Dr. Lenore Newman, Dr. Kyle Baillie, Dr. Martha Dow, Tricia Taylor, and Nathan Speedie.

Open Education Resource (OER) Strategy Launch

The Teaching and Learning Centre and UFV Library launched the [UFV Open Education Resource Strategy](#) during Open Education Week on March 5. OERs help to remove financial barriers for students and enhance access to scholarly work developed by faculty. UFV launched the [Zero-Textbook Costs \(ZTC\)](#) initiative in 2025 to identify courses on the registration page that adopt ZTC. The number of sections identified as adopting ZTC has increased from 14% in the Fall of 2025 to 25% of sections in the Winter of 2026 and includes participation across all 7 of UFV's Faculties.

President's Leadership Lecture Series: Changemaking in Complex Times

On February 19, UFV hosted a special edition of the President's Leadership Lecture Series, "Changemaking in Complex Times: Why Global Engagement Matters," on our Abbotsford campus.

We were honoured to welcome the Honourable Randeep Sarai, Secretary of State for International Development and Member of Parliament for Surrey Centre, who delivered a thoughtful keynote on leadership, partnership, and Canada's role in advancing sustainable development and global equity. His reflections underscored why collaboration across borders is more critical than ever in addressing complex challenges such as climate change, conflict, and economic inequality.

The event concluded with an engaging student panel featuring learners from UFV's Global Development Studies program, moderated by Dr. Geetanjali Gill, who shared candid insights on what global citizenship means to them and how they hope to contribute to a more connected and just world. Their perspectives were inspiring and a powerful reminder of the changemaking potential within our own student community.

[Students lead the conversation on global engagement at UFV President's Leadership Lecture — UFV Today.](#)



Open Houses

UFV hosted two Open House events across the Fraser Valley, one at the [Chilliwack Campus](#) on February 26 and the [Hope Centre](#) on March 6. A big thanks to all the faculty, staff, students, and administrators who provided such a warm and welcoming environment for members of our broader community to experience what UFV is all about!



Student Research Day

This year's [Student Research Day](#) on April 1 featured 130 student participants sharing their research projects through microlectures and poster presentations. Many of these research projects were conducted by undergraduate students. The opportunity for undergraduate students to work with and learn from faculty members on impactful research projects is not common at many universities across Canada. However, here at UFV, we see participation in research as a vital part of a student's academic learning journey to become changemakers. Changemaking is about asking thoughtful questions, engaging with complex issues, and working toward meaningful, positive change. Congratulations to all the students who participated and to the faculty mentors who inspired and supported these students throughout their research journey.



Special Shout-Outs

After nearly 37 years, [Jackie Hogan](#) officially retired from UFV as Vice-President, Administration. Jackie served in many roles at UFV, including budget manager, Associate VP Finance, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and a year as Interim President from 2017–18. Nicole Adams will be stepping into the combined role of CFO and Vice-President, Administration on April 1. Thank you, Jackie, for your many years of service and dedication to FVC/UCFV/UFV!



Congratulations to UFV Theatre's performance of [The Secret in the Wings](#), directed by Dr. Anna Griffith, that ran March 19–28, 2026.



Junior All Native Tournament (Basketball)

A total of 32 students from the varsity training program and from the Kinesiology program volunteered their time as athletic therapists at the 50th [Junior All Native Tournament](#) (JANT) in Langley. The student volunteers provided athletic therapy services free of charge for 308 basketball games over 5 days at 7 venues. Warm feedback from organizers and participants included “...this may have been one of the best medical covered events in the history of JANT. The students represented UFV with class and professionalism from the first tip off to the last.” Special thanks to UFV’s head athletic therapist, Grant Ammann, who coordinated, supervised, and helped prepare the student athletic therapists over the week-long tournament.

BC Top Employer

UFV was recognized for the 12th year in a row as one of [BC’s Top Employers](#).

March for Sustainability

Congratulations to the [Office of Sustainability](#) for another successful [March for Sustainability](#). A [series of 32 events](#) throughout the month was led by numerous groups across UFV who followed the 5 “Ps” of sustainable development: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

College of Arts Showcase

The [College of Arts Showcase](#) on March 31 and April 2 featured several student panels and presentations showcasing the work of students in Psychology, Social

Justice, Criminology, Arts and Integrated Studies, English, History, Sociology, and Anthropology.

In Memory

UFV recently lost two very close members of our UFV family.

Former President [Dr. Peter Jones](#), who served as UFV president from 1987 to 1997, passed away at his home on Gabriola Island on Tuesday, March 17. Peter oversaw [FVC's transition to UCFV](#). The Peter Jones Learning Commons (Building G) is named in his honour. Peter is survived by his wife Margaret, three sons, and numerous grandchildren.

Koyalemót — [Mary Diane Stewart](#), Associate Professor, Halq'eméylem in the Department of Modern Languages, passed peacefully surrounded by family on Monday, March 16. Mary completed a Diploma in Social Services from Fraser Valley College in 1986. Between Fall 2022 and Winter 2025, Mary taught the first cohort of the Halq'eméylem Graduate Certificate and Diploma, preparing future teachers to teach others the Halq'eméylem language.



Upcoming events with the President

The following are some of the events where the President is scheduled to attend. Check out the [UFV Events page](#) for the latest updates.

THURSDAY, APR 9

Cascades Athletics Banquet

FRIDAY, APR 10

Vaisakhi Luncheon with the Fraser Valley Indo Canadian Business Association

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society Gala

THURSDAY, APR 16

UFV Alumni Association 25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

FRIDAY, APR 24

Interpret Festival

4–9 pm, Abbotsford campus

[Visit the event page for information and tickets.](#)

SATURDAY, APR 25

Mission Hospice Gala

WEDNESDAY, APR 29

ConnectEd: Teach, Learn, Transform — Indigenous Storywork in a World of Changemaking at UFV

8:30 am–3:30 pm, Abbotsford Campus

[Register here.](#)

THURSDAY, MAY 21

Fraser Valley Economic Summit

JUNE 9–11

Convocation 2026

UFV Cascades Athletic Centre, Abbotsford campus

[Check here for the full Convocation Schedule.](#)

Questions or ideas?

Have a question you'd like answered in the next newsletter, or want to share feedback or story ideas? Email the [President's Office](#).

[Share your question or idea](#)

The University of the Fraser Valley is situated on the territory of the Stó:lō peoples. The Stó:lō have an intrinsic relationship with what they refer to as S'olh Temexw (Our Sacred Land). We express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living, learning, and working in this territory.



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