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THE UBYSSEY

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COVER BY
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THE UBYSSEY

AUGUST 31, 2021 | VOLUME CIII | ISSUE IV

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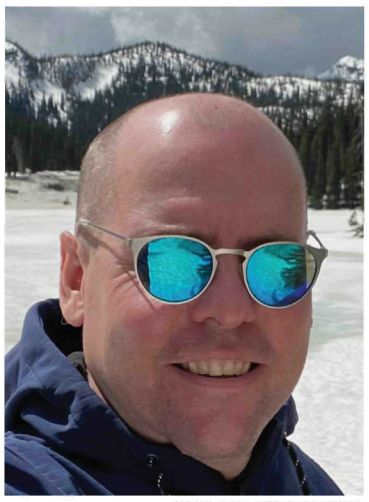
OUR CAMPUS

Dr. Leonard Foster is researching a way to develop a more targeted vaccine for COVID-19



COURTESY LEONARD FOSTER

Davy Lau
Contributor

Dr. Leonard Foster's first foray into scientific research came not in university, not even in high school, but in grade four.

"My dad was a high school science teacher, so I learned a lot about zoology, botany from an early age. From grade four onward, I participated in school science fairs," said Foster.

These weren't your run-of-the-mill baking soda volcano or potato battery experiments — his high school project, inspired by his parents' interest in beekeeping, tackled one of the lesser-known mysteries surrounding honey bees.

"One of the things that bees go out and collect, that many people don't know about, is sap from trees ... if there's increased bacterial disease in the hive, they will actively seek out this [sap] to apparently self-medicate ... so I was basically trying to prove that this [ability] was due to some specific compound in the sap," said Foster.

Foster's family was supportive of his extracurricular experimentation and happy to help him along. His cousin was a head lab technician at a hospital and let him use his lab to run experiments for his projects. His dad also gave him access to the high school lab.

"When I got to grade seven, I won the regional science fair and got to travel to the Canada Wide Science Fair ... It was a paid trip away for a week, and it was quite eye-opening, so that drove me to keep doing science fairs in later years as well," said Foster.

In grade 11, Foster was still working on his honey bee project so his mother, then a master's student at Simon Fraser University (SFU), connected him with a honey bee lab there. Foster worked at the lab throughout his undergraduate degree at SFU, where he majored in biochemistry.

ACADEMIA WAS ALWAYS IN THE CARDS

Having spent so much time on science projects throughout his life, Foster knew during his undergrad that academic research was what he wanted to pursue.

"I already had quite a bit of exposure to academic [research], so I thought that was quite interesting ... I probably knew more than most at my age, because I had that much experience in a lab," said Foster.

He entered graduate school upon completing his bachelor's, completing a PhD in biochemistry at the University of Toronto. His research deviated from honey bees to studying how the hormone insulin acts on glucose transporters to regulate glucose levels. After 4.5 years, he moved to the University of Southern Denmark to complete post-graduate work in the emerging field of proteomics. Proteomics refers to the many analytical methods that allow scientists to measure and identify proteins, whether it be in a small sample, a cell or an entire organism.

After his stint in Denmark, he began a faculty position at UBC in 2005, rising through the ranks from assistant, to associate, and finally to full professor over the span of a decade. In 2016, he became the head of the department of biochemistry and molecular biology.

On top of heading a department, Foster runs his own lab at the Proteomics Core Facility which provides protein analysis services for other researchers.

It is Foster's work in proteomics that led to his research related to COVID-19.

SWITCHING GEARS TO BATTLE A PANDEMIC

For years, the Foster Lab had focused on using proteomic techniques to study how cells react to pathogens. Proteomics can show which proteins are being produced when there's a disruption of a system, such as a cell being infected, thereby informing researchers what proteins are being produced as an immune response.

When the COVID-19 pandemic put the world in lockdown, it became clear to Foster and his colleagues that the proteomics methods they had been using could be applied to develop a vaccine for COVID-19.

"One of the directions my lab has gone in several years ago now was to use our proteomics technology to try to identify the parts of pathogens, that [is] the pieces of proteins that trigger an immune response," said Foster.

The Foster Lab had done prior research on vaccine development and its approach could be applied to any virus. Despite the clear potential to apply these techniques to combat COVID-19, it was not initially clear if the lab would be able to switch gears to COVID-19 research.

"It was obvious, as it was for many scientists, that the approaches we'd used for other systems could be applied to SARS-CoV-2. The question really [was], whether we should really change everybody's project in the lab, and set people back because of that, or if we could get new money to go after some of these ideas," said Foster.

According to Foster, money "really fell out of the sky," or rather, out of the clouds.

The Foster Lab had previously used cloud computing software donated by Microsoft in order to process the massive amounts of proteomics data they collected. When Microsoft reached out to UBC, wanting to fund COVID-19 research that used their donated software, the Foster Lab was eager to put forth an application for the funding.

But now with 72 per cent of the Canadian population vaccinated, and vaccine clinics already closing their doors in BC, it isn't entirely clear how Foster's research will fit into the current phase of the pandemic. However, his research certainly has wider implications in the field of vaccine development.

"And that's why academic research can never compete with industry, when industry really throws a lot of money at it. But, it's also pretty clear that none of the vaccines are going to work forever, and they're going to need to constantly change. Just generally knowing how vaccines work and how to make better vaccines is going to be helpful in the future," said Foster.

FROM A MOLECULAR TO A PUBLIC HEALTH LENS

Aside from Foster's COVID-19 vaccine research, as head of the biochemistry and molecular biology department he also has the safety of students and faculty in mind when they are back on campus for the winter term.

Prior to a mask mandate being announced in BC, Foster was considering implementing one for his department.

"I think it's stupid to go back without a vaccine and a mask mandate," said Foster.

Foster is also adamant that grade schools should have mandatory mask mandates and mandatory vaccine mandates for age-eligible youth. He predicts that without these mandates mild cases among the vaccinated population — known as breakthrough cases — may increase, and the unvaccinated population would be at major risk.

"People talk about requiring vaccinations leading to a two-tier society, but the unvaccinated are already making themselves a second tier by exposing themselves unnecessarily to severe health effects that the other 80 per cent is not going to have," said Foster.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING ACADEMICS

Even successful individuals like Foster experienced the stress and uncertainty that comes with being a university student.

"[University] was definitely stressful. My grades from high school dropped a lot in first and second term, and I realized I needed to put more work in," said Foster.

Foster believes the best way to overcome stress is to achieve a good work-life balance. For him that means spending time outdoors hiking, biking and canoeing with his kids.

Having had a long, varied career in academia that took him to many different schools, Foster recommended trying lots of different things.

"The opportunity to work and live in different cities certainly exposed me to different approaches to science, different approaches to life, and I think it absolutely broadened my horizons," said Foster.

For Foster, trying different things is what brought him back to BC and honey bees. The Foster Lab investigates which proteins are key for honey bees to fight off disease, a useful area of knowledge for beekeepers.

Foster also made a return to the activity that got him first started in scientific research: science fairs. He is now the chief judge of the Greater Vancouver Regional Science Fair.

"Science fairs have done a lot for me, so I wanted to keep putting some effort into it so others could benefit as well."

RETURN TO CAMPUS //

UBC to require rapid testing for unvaccinated students, faculty, staff

MIKA BAUMEISTER/UNSPLASH

This announcement follows a slew of new measures introduced by the province to allow for a safer return to campus.

Charlotte Alden and Nathan Bawaan
News Editors

UBC will require COVID-19 testing for all students, faculty and staff who are unvaccinated or don't wish to disclose their vaccination status.

President Santa Ono announced the new policy in a press release posted on Thursday, August 26.

"While we are aware that a significant majority of our campus community have already been vaccinated and all safety precautions are in place for September, we are working towards offering rapid testing for our community members who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19, or who choose not to disclose their vaccination status," he wrote.

Those who are fully vaccinated will be exempt from testing, but other details such as the frequency of these tests are still unclear.

The original announcement from the university only said that the university would "provide" rapid testing for students who weren't vaccinated or didn't disclose their status. It fell short of requiring testing for all unvaccinated people, a policy seen in other Canadian universities like the University of Toronto and in other BC universities like the University of Victoria.

This was reversed at 4 p.m. on August 27 when UBC Media Relations Director of University Affairs Matthew Ramsey clarified that tests would in fact be required for anyone who isn't vaccinated.

In an interview at 11 a.m. that day before the change in policy, Ramsey stopped short of saying the university would be mandating testing, and instead pointed to UBC's trust in students to make "safe and healthful decisions."

"Those in our community who are not vaccinated will be directed to rapid testing," he said. "We believe those not vaccinated for whatever reason will act responsibly and participate in the testing program." The university has since updated its position to make testing mandatory for the unvaccinated.

Along with the new rapid testing program, vaccinated students, faculty, staff and visitors to campus will be able to confidentially self-declare their vaccination status. No additional details were provided, but more information would be released when available, Ono wrote. However, students will be able to choose to not disclose their vaccination status.

In the Friday morning interview, Ramsey said UBC was developing its own system to allow students to self-declare their vaccine status.

"We know that there are many, many questions that are left to be answered, and we will be doing our very best to answer those questions in as clear and quick manner as we can," Ramsey added. "But we would look for a little bit of patience from those in the community as we work to address this very, very complex return planning."

Earlier on Thursday, Dr. Sabrina Wong, a professor at the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, announced that a new rapid testing clinic would be opening in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKB) on August 30.

In a message to *The Ubyssey*, Wong said the new clinic at IKB will run "alongside but separate" from the UBC clinic announced in Ono's press release.

The IKB testing site will be used as another clinical research trial — similar to the clinic in Orchard Commons that closed on August 20 — and offer more frequent testing to a greater age range, according to Wong.

UBC's announcement follows a slew of new measures introduced by the province to allow for a safer return to campus.

On Monday, August 23, the province announced a vaccine card system to start on September 13, in which only those who are vaccinated can go to places deemed non-essential, like gyms, restaurants and bars. The following day, the province added that vaccines would be required for those living in on-campus student residences starting September 7 — the first day of classes — and that an indoor mask mandate would begin August 25.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said that universities in BC could not institute a broad vaccine mandate for students — save for health sciences students — but could for faculty and staff as an employer. Ono reiterated that proof of vaccination would not be required for "educational activities such as attending classes, orientation activities or other post-secondary activities."

Ono added that the university will consult with students, faculty and staff associations and unions regarding the development and implementation of these new policies. He also encouraged those who are still not vaccinated to do so, directing people to the pop-up Vancouver Coastal Health clinic in the Life Sciences Centre.

AMS VP Academic and University Affairs Eshana Bhangu said the AMS was "very happy" with the announcement.

"We've been advocating for a safe return to campus ... since June and this is a big step in making campus safer this fall for all the students who are choosing to call UBC their home," Bhangu said.

She said the AMS would be carefully watching the implementation of these new measures — adding that the student society is still hoping for a full vaccine mandate on campus and testing requirements for the unvaccinated.

But Bhangu called this announcement "better late than never."

"We should have been taking these steps far before and showing the leadership that students expect from a university like UBC. There's still months of relationship-building and community engagement that the leadership needs to do, but we're happy with the steps [that have been taken]."

— With files from Kevin Nan

FEDERAL ELECTION //

Letter from the News Editors: Overwhelmed by yet another election? We're here to help.

FILE ALEX VANDERPUT

Charlotte Alden and Nathan Bawaan
News Editors

Just two years after the last one, a federal election is coming on September 20.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the idea of having to live through yet another election season while a pandemic and wildfires rage across the province, we are too. Luckily, *The Ubyssey*'s news section is here to make this year's election a little more accessible for UBC students.

We won't be covering every intricacy of the election Canada-wide, but we will be covering everything that happens in our local MPs race in the Vancouver-Quadra riding.

Not sure which party or MP you want to vote for? Turn to us for quick and dirty profiles of the local candidates and their platforms. We'll also be aiming to provide you with everything you need to know about the issues students care about: from affordable education to the climate crisis and more.

In the meantime, there are a few important things for you to do before Election Day.

First (and most importantly) is to make sure you are registered to vote. Canadian citizens who are at least 18 years old can register online at the Elections Canada website. This is also where you can double-check your registration status, as well as update your address if you have recently moved. You can choose to register at a polling station, but if you want to avoid added stress or vote by mail, we recommend registering ahead of time.

Next, you should figure out which riding — or voting district — you live in. Again, just go to Elections Canada's website and type in your postal code. You'll be able to figure out which riding you live in, as well as all the candidates who are running. For students living on campus or west of Arbutus, you are a part of the Vancouver-Quadra riding.

Lastly, stay informed! Our coverage will only be centred on the happenings in Vancouver-Quadra, so make sure you look to other credible news sources for updates on what's happening elsewhere — citywide and nationwide — especially if you're a commuter or still taking online classes from home.

If you have a topic you want us to cover or questions you need answered about the election, email us at *news@ubyssey.ca*.

REFUGEES //

Afghan UBC student calls on federal government to grant family refugee status

Caylie Warkentin
Staff Writer

In the streets of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, posters of women are being painted over, their existence erased in swaths of white paint.

Afghan women are being asked to leave their jobs and have their male relatives work in their place, and many have purchased burqas as Taliban rule came into effect forcefully and abruptly just nine days after they first seized the provincial capital Zaranj.

This magnitude of erasure and violence comes in the wake of the withdrawal of American troops from Afghan soil following twenty years of military occupation.

For Shahla, an Afghan UBC student whose last name is being omitted for security concerns, the sudden and oppressive takeover by the Taliban has left her fearing for her family members who are currently residing in the capital.

Shahla is asking the Canadian government to grant her immediate family members refugee status and expeditious transport to Canada through a petition that has garnered nearly 5,000 signatures in less than a week.

Fourth-year geography student and Shahla's friend Sean Roufosse created the petition to call on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau, MP Joyce Murray and MP Maryam Monsef to grant timely refugee status to Shahla's immediate family.

The petition also calls on the government to consider providing those same grants to the immediate family of all Afghans' who are presently living and studying in Canada, and to fast-track them, given the volatile situation in Afghanistan.

Shahla's family is largely female, well-educated and a part of the Shia and Hazara religious and ethnic communities, respectively. They have also participated in Western-backed projects, making them particularly vulnerable to violence from the Taliban.

In a letter published on Change.org, Shahla wrote that given the takeover she fears "her two fifteen-year-old sisters will be banned from school only to be forced to marry Taliban fighters."

"There are videos spreading on social media of Taliban sending someone around in every village and city they take over to count the number of widows and single girls over the age of 15. Then they go house to house and force these girls and women into 'marrying' their fighters," she wrote.

"I get nightmares of the same happening to my sisters."

Given the rapidly escalating violence in the country, Shahla wrote that she has "never been as concerned and scared as [she is] today."

Roufosse said that right now the focus is on bringing as much attention as possible to the petition.

Alongside sharing the petition on social media, he's encouraging people to print out a physical poster promoting the petition and to send a letter template to a relevant MP detailing the situation Shahla's family is in.

Shahla with her two sisters. COURTESY SHAHLA

"We need to get MPs and some sort of governmental organization motivated to do something about this," Roufosse said.

In her letter, Shahla emphasized how imperative it is for a Western governing body to recognize the immediate danger her family is in.

"Now more than ever, we need the help and assistance of the international community. We want our voices to be heard. We want our lives to be valued," Shahla wrote.

"I am calling upon Canada as the country that has offered me higher education to extract my family and grant refugee status to my family so they can escape the immediate danger they are facing and be given the chance to live a normal life and have the right to education and safety."

Sean Roufosse has previously contributed to The Ubyssey*'s news section.*

MENSTRUAL EQUITY //

New menstrual map connects students with free period products

Free Periods Canada envisioned a menstrual map to create "a more centralized system at UBC." ISABELLA FALSETTI

Caylie Warkentin
Staff Writer

Menstrual products on campus are now more accessible thanks to a menstrual map created by Free Periods Canada, a group that began as an AMS club and is now a non-profit that promotes menstrual equity.

Through partnerships with universities like UBC, Free Periods Canada hopes to combat menstrual inequity by providing menstruating people with access to period products and addressing gaps in accessibility for these products.

Deyvika Srinivasa, advocacy and policy coordinator for Free Periods Canada, said that a survey was conducted at UBC in 2019 to determine the difficulties UBC students faced in obtaining menstrual products on campus.

"A lot of people said that they had been in a position where they needed a [menstrual] product between classes and had to skip a class because they didn't have those products."

A 2020 report based on the findings of the survey shared that 66 per cent of menstruators reported that lack of accessibility to period products "negatively affected their ability to participate in extracurricular activities on campus."

To promote awareness about the availability of period products, Srinivasa said that Free Periods Canada envisioned a menstrual map to create "a more centralized system at UBC."

"There shouldn't be any responsibility on students' part to educate themselves about where they can find products. I think that's kind of a basic baseline that we should have at UBC."

The menstrual map was created in collaboration with the AMS and UBC Building Operations and will be displayed on physical posters throughout campus along with a QR code that will direct students to an interactive digital map.

"The map will not only make finding free period products on campus easier, but its widespread adoption will hopefully also help reduce the stigma around periods," AMS President Cole Evans wrote in a statement to *The Ubyssey*.

Alongside this survey, an audit was conducted in February 2020 that determined that many menstrual product dispensers on campus did not work or simply were not available in many washroom facilities.

"There aren't tons of gender-inclusive washrooms and sometimes there are no products," Srinivasa said.

The map will not only detail where to find menstrual products and gender-inclusive washrooms — it will also direct students to facilities that are expected to be fully stocked.

Funding for continuously stocked menstrual dispensers will come from various sources, including UBC Student Housing and UBC Building Operations, the latter of which has installed dispensers in over 300 washrooms across campus.

Srinivasa expects future surveys to be launched to learn how successful the menstrual map is and how Free Periods Canada and UBC can further promote menstrual equity within the university.

"The end goal isn't that students just know where they can find products. The end goal is [that] it's as basic as toilet paper and they don't need to think about anything," said Srinivasa.

"The ability for menstruators to have access to free period products should be a basic right, and we're happy to see this increasingly become a reality at UBC," wrote Evans.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BREATHE WITH NO (CLEAN) AIR //

UBC's HVAC approach leaves questions up in the air about COVID-19 safety

While people primarily transmit SARS-CoV-2 in close range, the BCCDC says smaller aerosols can linger in the air. ISABELLA FALSETTI

Kevin Nan
Contributor

UBC's approach to reducing the risk of airborne COVID-19 transmission follows recommended principles but leaves questions about whether all classrooms are equally protected.

Earlier this month, UBC's COVID-19 heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) working group announced several recommended changes to UBC's campus including increased ventilation, improved filtration, enhanced maintenance and air monitoring.

While people primarily transmit SARS-CoV-2 in close range, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) said smaller aerosols can linger in the air, particularly in crowded and poorly ventilated indoor spaces. Accordingly, recognizing airborne transmission has heightened concerns about HVAC systems in UBC's campus return plan.

The HVAC working group assessed over 900 teaching spaces to determine the ventilation status for each room. According to the evaluation summary, 96 per cent of teaching spaces are equipped with mechanical ventilation and can therefore be used at pre-pandemic capacity.

In addition to flushing air before occupancy, the working group recommended increasing the amount of outdoor air above American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards during operating hours but notes the exact level of increased air will vary for each teaching space. ASHRAE sets the global standard for indoor air quality.

The Harvard School of Public Health recommends the equivalent of four to six air changes per hour (ACH) to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Guidance from the school's healthy buildings program suggests an average classroom pre-pandemic has an equivalent ACH of two to three at ASHRAE design levels.

When asked if UBC has a target ACH or outdoor air rate, John Metras, associate vice-president of facilities, said that "the level of increased outdoor air will depend on equipment design limitations." In contrast, following community advocacy, the University of Toronto equipped all active classrooms at six ACH or greater and posted the ACH rate for each classroom.

As part of the ventilation FAQ, the working group indicated HVAC systems bring in "very little" outdoor air during the winter months to ensure a comfortable temperature indoors. However, when asked what steps UBC will take to improve ventilation during this period, Metras did not address the question.

The second part of UBC's plan centres on upgrading air handling units to MERV 13 or higher filters. Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) reports a filter's ability to capture particles of various sizes. Though UBC's HVAC page said most units were already using MERV 13 filters or have since been upgraded, Metras cautioned that UBC cannot upgrade some units due to system design and environmental limitations.

When asked which buildings could not be upgraded and if portable air cleaners would be installed in lieu, Metras again did not provide this information.

In comparison, the University of Toronto posted the filtration level for each building and the installed location of nearly 300 portable purifiers.

Other notable interventions recommended by the UBC working group include physical inspections of all HVAC equipment and air monitoring in teaching spaces without mechanical ventilation.

CONTINUED COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Although significant concerns regarding ventilation and filtration remain, advocates and experts agreed it is only part of the equation.

Indoor air experts told *The Ubyssey* that vaccines and masks are necessary to reduce the risk of transmission in close contact.

"No amount of ventilation or filtration will remove the possibility of transmission for people in very close contact ... if transmission [is] high, masks would be a more effective approach as masks work regardless of the ventilation status of a building," said Dr. Michael Brauer, a professor at UBC's school of public health.

Dr. Steven Rogak, director of the UBC aerosol laboratory, agreed. "It would be nice to attain six ACH but ... much less important than [vaccine and mask requirements]."

In July, a group of over 200 UBC faculty members called for continued physical distancing and universal masking until vaccine rates on campus match the provincial average.

One of the signatories is Dr. Sylvia Fuller. She has an immunocompromised partner and said she's not comfortable teaching in person with current measures and worries about taking home a breakthrough infection.

"The reality is I'm looking at a full room, with students who may or may not be vaccinated, and may or may not be wearing masks ... good ventilation alone [isn't] a silver-bullet against COVID-19, especially the Delta variant," said Fuller in a written statement.

Eshana Bhangu, AMS VP academic and university affairs, also said UBC's broader response falls short.

"The ventilation upgrades are only a start ... [The AMS] has been pushing hard to mandate masks in classrooms and require vaccines in student residences ... we'll continue to fight for students to ensure a safe return to campus."

The province announced a mask mandate in indoor spaces and a vaccine mandate in student housing on Tuesday, August 24. UBC announced mandatory rapid testing for unvaccinated students on Friday, August 27. But no matter what protective measures UBC takes, Fuller says the campus return plan must be more inclusive.

"How can [students and faculty] participate as equal members ... if coming to campus means risking their lives? We need stronger protective measures ... to ensure people vulnerable to COVID-19 aren't marginalized and excluded."

RETURN TO CAMPUS //

Students, staff worry about immunocompromised students as in-person classes approach

Jasmine Manango
Contributor

UBC students and staff members are voicing concerns around what immunocompromised students can expect from in-person classes, which are set to start in less than two weeks.

In an August 5 tweet, the UBC Zoology Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (ZEDI) released a statement expressing its concerns over the lack of clear messaging for these students and community members.

"The principle of Equity means that UBC should be considering the impacts of its planning on all members of its community, and should be especially cognizant of those who are already at a disadvantage," the statement reads.

ZEDI highlighted the recent rise in COVID-19 cases and UBC's then-refusal to implement stronger mask and vaccine policies. Earlier this week, the Public Health Office announced a new indoor mask mandate and that vaccines would be required for certain activities at post-secondary institutions.

The Ubyssey reached out to ZEDI for comment, but did not receive a response by publishing.

Haley Branch, a UBC graduate student who is five years into her PhD in botany, expressed similar frustrations in an interview with *The Ubyssey*. She said the ZEDI statement covers not only the concerns of immunocompromised students but also those in the disabled community.

"The university and the province really should be looking out for the community members most at risk and be basing the guidelines off of those individuals," she said.

In response to Santa Ono announcing that vaccination and rapid testing clinics would be open on campus, Branch said there should also be easier access to antibody tests because it is difficult for many disabled individuals to know whether they are actually producing antibodies after getting vaccinated.

Branch also noted that long COVID — when a previously-infected individual continues to experience long-term health impacts following their initial infection — is more prevalent among young people.

She encouraged instructors to create alternative forms of participation for students who may not be able to attend class regularly.

"I think that attendance can be actually quite ableist," she said. "We had resources online [last year] and that's another reason why I think we should be pushing for having those resources remain online."

Branch added that members of the UBC community should disclose their vaccination status.

"BC using vague privacy laws to justify a lack of action fails the disabled community that has always had to do that."

In a statement emailed to *The Ubyssey*, Matthew Ramsey, director of university affairs at UBC Media Relations, advised immunocompromised students to explore the UBC course catalogue for online and hybrid courses, as well as contact the Academic Advising Office and the Centre for Accessibility to receive academic accommodations.

"UBC has incorporated significant additional flexibility into teaching and learning activities, using mechanisms ranging from policy adaptations through to individual instructor approaches," he wrote.

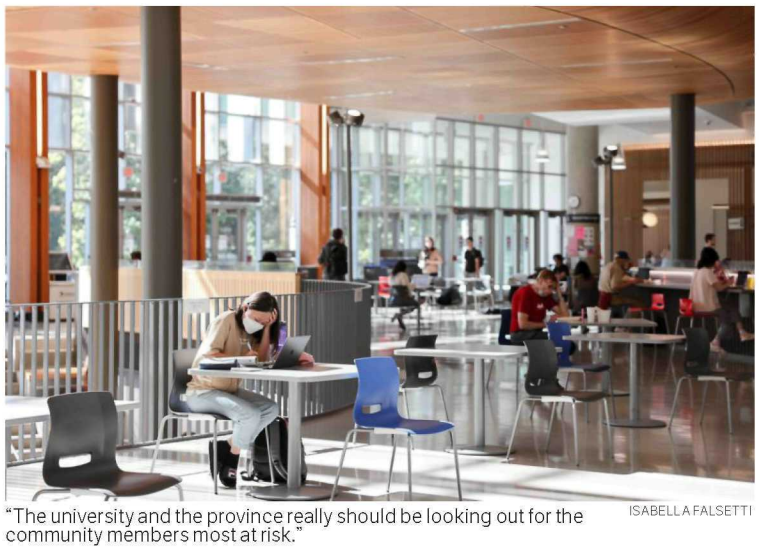
Ramsey listed many accommodations UBC has made to support vulnerable students including how departments and instructors can choose to make some course sections online, how media capture technology has been installed in the majority of general teaching spaces to allow instructors to record lectures, and how the VP Student portfolio will be offering services both in person and online.

Ultimately, Branch believes UBC should enact stricter COVID-19 preventive measures to ensure equity among students.

"In a way, to strive to have everything back in person to create equality ... can backfire in terms of equity because ... certain people will not be safe enough to continue doing the things that they are required to do in order to complete a degree," she said.

"In that case, the only real accommodation we [can] have is our community making sure it's safe for us."

On August 26, UBC announced mandatory testing for those who are not vaccinated against COVID-19.



"The university and the province really should be looking out for the community members most at risk." ISABELLA FALSETTI

JOKE'S ON ME //

Return to campus: One day at a time

Tianne Jensen-DesJardins
Culture Editor

But mentally existing somewhere is a lot different than physically being there.

FILE ISABELLA FALSETTI

It was just a joke.

At the first major Go Global meeting I attended, way back in 2019, COVID-19 was only briefly mentioned — and it was a joke. In the midst of questions about health insurance, one student asked what we would do if the virus made the leap across the pond. Would that strange virus from the opposite side of the globe affect our exchange trips? Most of us laughed to ourselves and then started taking notes about more important things like deadlines and budgets.

No one is laughing now.

Throughout the pandemic, I spent my free time scrolling through Instagram liking picture after picture of downtown Edinburgh, where I would have been if not for a minor global pandemic. With its dark academia vibes, Edinburgh is something out of a fantasy novel. And I'm very familiar with fantasy novels; I spent more time in fantasy realms during the pandemic than I did in reality. But mentally existing somewhere is a lot different than physically being there.

Instead of rain jackets and rain boots, I spent my third year in pyjamas. Instead of learning how to navigate local transit to get to school, my commute consisted of three steps from my bed to my desk. Instead of finally — finally — having my own space, I split my time between my partner's house and my parent's house.

Life was not going to plan.

I've always been a big planner; I get off on colour-coordinated 'To-Do' lists. But there's no way I could have planned for last year.

And now I'm being told to plan for next year. *Which classes are you going to take? Where are you going to apply for grad school? Will you be commuting again?* The answer to all of these questions is I don't know.

And how could I know?

The last time I spent hours researching every possible thing that could go wrong (or so I thought), the little control I had over my life's trajectory was ripped away from me. I had to frantically readjust my plans just to keep myself afloat. Before the pandemic, the future was an exciting chance to try new things and grow, but now, the future is an unpredictable void waiting to swallow me up.

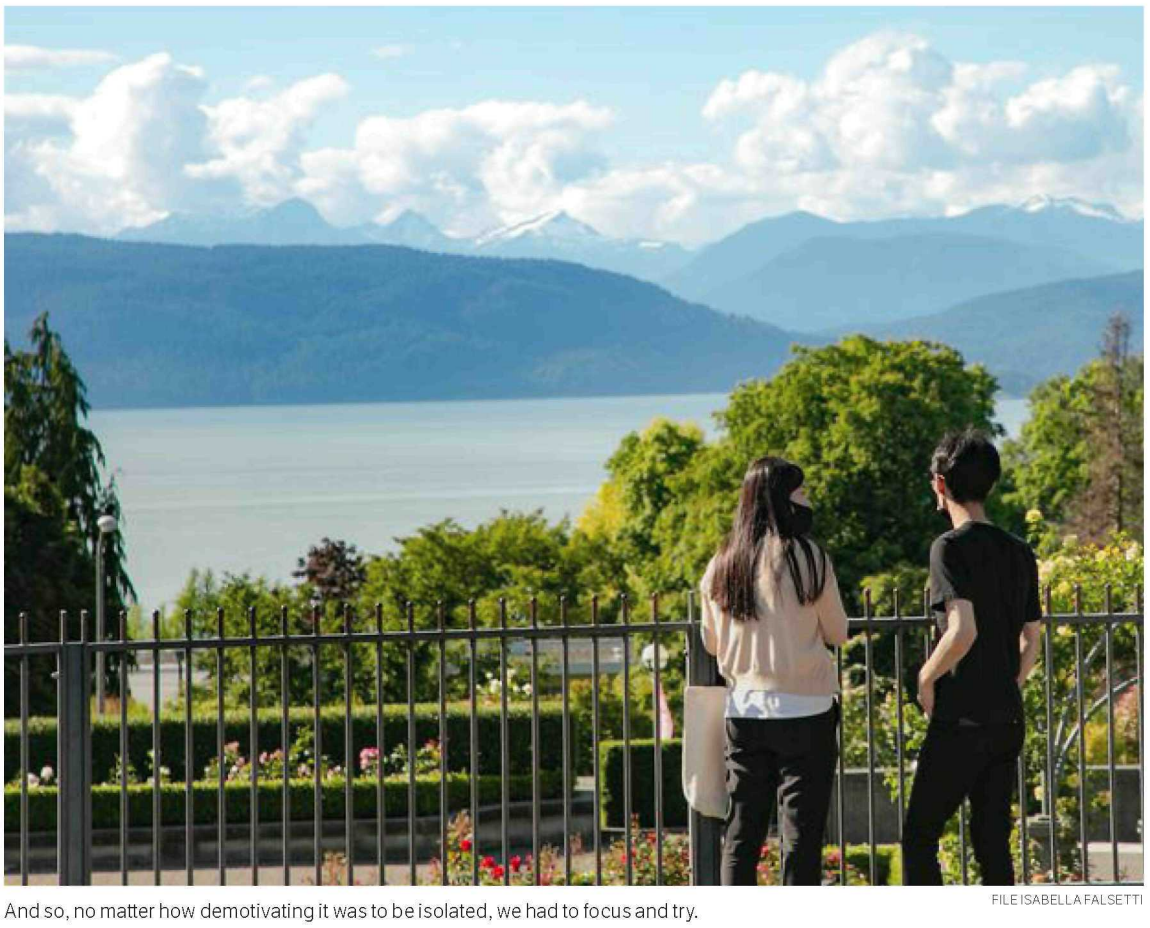
The worst part is, I know the future hasn't really changed — my perspective has. The future is still going to slowly become the present, and I'm still going to need to constantly tweak my life's 'To-Do' list. I might even have to scrap the whole list altogether.

But maybe I'm getting ahead of myself here. Maybe I don't need to think about my life as a series of events and achievements that need to be ticked off until I run out of time. Maybe I need to just think about what I need to do right now. Maybe all I really need is a 'For Now' list.

So maybe I can't control everything, but maybe I don't need to. Maybe I just need to focus on the little things that I can do right now. Maybe I just need to take things one day at a time.

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER //

Return to campus: Togetherness



And so, no matter how demotivating it was to be isolated, we had to focus and try.

FILE ISABELLA FALSETTI

Christina Park
Contributor

When my first year of university started online, classes were made up of a bunch of names listed on a screen. Social interaction was broken down into communications with numbers that corresponded to WhatsApp profiles which, with repeated communication, eventually turned into names.

Anonymity was a shield for students who, if they were afraid of raising their hands in class before, would show their personalities and humour on Collaborate Ultra chats. Professors were moving videos you saw on screen, like Major Francis Monogram conveying messages from a virtual screen to Perry the Platypus.

Everyone knew that in the mornings, any sane person took their class cocooned in blankets on their cozy bed. If the instructor called on you, the most common excuse was, "My mic is not working, for some reason." Yet, in the midst of all this, we knew the people behind the screens were real, and the knowledge we absorbed was a tangible thing, being translated into transcripts which would affect our real, physical lives.

And so, no matter how demotivating it was to be isolated, we had to focus and try.

I was lucky to live in Surrey. My friends and I would visit UBC from time to time, book the study space at Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and study in the pin-dropping silence there. We were all thirsty for the campus experience, but with a nearly-empty campus, we were left parched. In the virtual world we found ourselves in, we resorted to virtual means of connection, making friends online and exchanging pinging Discord chats which consisted of panicking together and motivating each other to get through midterms and finals.

With vaccines rolling out, we are finally returning to campus — and this time almost everyone is returning. If there is one thing to take away from university being online, or how I personally got through it, I would be grateful to say that it is through receiving help and helping others. I think whether 'campus' is off-campus or on-campus, this remains the same. Both are not without struggles, but in the most cliché way possible, we are in this together, whether online or on-site.

With the Olympics fresh in my mind, my thoughts lately have been turning to volleyball. And just as it requires teamwork to score a point, in which a player needs to set the ball, lifting it into the air before another player can successfully smash it, university life can also be seen as a team sport. If everyone were to selfishly focus on their own academics, no useful information would be exchanged, no creativity would be shared and no innovation would happen. Imagine everyone isolated in their dorm rooms, as we were during the onset of the pandemic — not much would be accomplished.

What I look forward to most about being back on campus is the concept of togetherness. Not only 'being together' like we were online, but sharing the same physical space, breathing the same air as the instructor and everyone else in the classroom; being able to see the details of people's faces and their smiles and the nuances of their expressions in real time, not slowed down by slow wifi on Zoom. Sharing life together, going on coffee runs and learning, but more than that, learning about ourselves and others, figuring out how to cook, do laundry and ultimately, learning how to become independent human beings.

With the turn of the autumn leaves comes a new chapter. Even though we faced isolation during online classes, I'm certain that on-campus classes will bring a new set of troubles. But if one thing remains the same, it is our ability to support one another.

I actually look back upon my first year with fondness, as we may never take classes in the comfort of our beds again. Each year, we may face new and different struggles, but in turn, each year also holds qualities we can appreciate.

This is why for my second year on 'campus,' I say: It's going to be a blast.

PLATFORMING INDIGENOUS CREATORS //

Who we are film series embraces representation

Manya Malhotra
Staff Writer

Content warning: This article contains mention of the residential school system, domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

Art and cinema have always played an instrumental role in initiating conversations around representation. To take that conversation even further, and in honour of Indigenous History Month, the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) partnered with the Museum of Vancouver (MOV) to present the *Who we are* film series. The series was available online from June 21 to July 4, 2021 and was created in conjunction with MOV's latest exhibition, *That Which Sustains Us*. The *Who we are* film series was curated by Rylan Friday, Jasmine Wilson and Dr. Sharon Fortney.

The *Who we are* film series was curated by Rylan Friday, Jasmine Wilson and Dr. Sharon Fortney. COURTESY VIFF

THE CURATORS

Friday has filmmaking, curatorial and writing credits to his name, along with being the first openly gay Indigenous filmmaker to work on VIFF's Catalyst Mentorship Program. He currently has several projects in the works, starting with the recently-wrapped short film, *The Sound of You Collapsing*, which he describes as a "visual, poetic narrative." He is also working on *Terror/Forming*, a one-shot horror film. Along with that, he is developing a television series, *Unsettled, Ventures into the Unknown*, which explores the paranormal activity within reservations in the Indigenous communities of New Zealand and Canada. In 2019, Friday produced the feature film *Portraits From a Fire* which is slated for a 2021 Festival release.

Wilson, a UBC alum, currently works as the Indigenous programs and community engagement coordinator at the MOV. She has been front and centre on projects such as the museum's Indigenous Artisan Workshop series and now also assists with the expansion of reconciliation training initiatives hosted by the museum.

Fortney is a woman who wears many hats; she is a researcher, writer and curator. With a PhD in anthropology from UBC, she became the MOV's first curator of Indigenous collections and engagement in 2017. Her interest in oral tradition and how it functions in regards to memory and identity seems to shine through in the films selected for this film series.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The intent behind the series was to celebrate Indigenous voices and authentic storytelling by shifting the narrative away from stories of trauma and suffering that usually dominate films centred around the Indigenous community.

"We are much more than our past, we are our resiliency and we are not steeped in trauma-based narratives," Friday said in an interview with *The Ubyssey*.

Having grown up watching Indigenous peoples reduced to stereotypes in popular films like *Pocahontas* and *Indian Undercover*, Friday felt slighted. He now strives to accurately and prominently represent both the communities that he is a part of – the Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities – in all of his upcoming projects in a way that is uplifting and compassionate. In the same vein, Rylan explained that the *Who we are* series was created for Indigenous people to acknowledge their past, reflect on their legacy and lived experiences and move forward on a path towards healing.

"[M]y philosophy right now is that I am being the person I needed when I was a teenager . . . [I'm] making sure that there are safe, accessible places within the film industry for both BIPOC, Indigenous, and Queer and LGBTQ2+ identifying individuals," Friday said.

THE FILMS

The series presented five films: *Boy*, (Taika Waititi, 2010), *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (Elle-Maija Tailfeathers, Kathleen Hepburn, 2019), *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (Jeff Barnaby, 2013), *Fire Song* (Adam Garnet Jones, 2015) and *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (Zacharias Kunuk, 2001).

Boy

Boy is a coming-of-age story about a young Maori boy who uses his imagination to create a larger-than-life persona for his estranged father which slowly disintegrates as he comes face to face with reality. *Boy* is subtle in its humour and refreshingly unique, making it the only film in the series that can be touted as a family entertainer. Speaking about the film, Friday talked about how "it takes a very different take on what toxic masculinity is, and what male role models should be, and how that impacts the future generations."

The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open

The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open features a young, impoverished First Nations domestic abuse victim and her interactions with an Indigenous woman from a stable household who wants to help her but doesn't always go about it the right way. Friday describes the film as a "timely, hyper-local story that is so visceral." The film is intimate, bold and a silent heartbreaker. Its realism is both astounding and effortless.

Rhymes for Young Ghouls

Rhymes for Young Ghouls follows the story of a First Nations teenage girl as she exacts revenge on the Indian agent that imprisoned her in a residential school, where she and other children endured years of rape and abuse. Friday describes the film as a "revenge fantasy" but also highlights the film's important insights about how to go about seeking reconciliation. The film is gritty, unnerving and wildly entertaining. It looks at the residential school system through a new perspective in which the characters aren't just victims but also unyielding and audacious survivors. It doesn't discount the traumatic experiences of Indigenous people, but it also doesn't fixate on them either, instead using the experiences as fuel for the characters to avenge their treatment at the school and gain back control of their lives.

Fire Song

Fire Song tells the story of a Queer, Indigenous boy and how he copes with his sister's suicide while coming to terms with his own Queer identity. Grief plays a central role in the film, almost as if it is a character on its own. However, grief is not the only emotion present in the film; the characters also experience love, heartbreak, frustration and so much more. As Rylan eloquently describes it, the film is primarily about "finding your identity."

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner recreates an ancient Inuit legend, orally passed down through centuries. As the only film told entirely in its Indigenous language – Inuktitut – watching this film felt like stepping inside the legend and watching it unfold right in front of you.

REAL REPRESENTATION

"For me, it's all these experiences of various ages and different lived experiences as Indigenous, Métis, Maori or Inuit people that shape who we are," said Friday.

The characters of these films are not heroes or villains, they are believable and relatable. The film directors refrained from unnecessary glorification and avoided unidimensional stereotypes in order to portray Indigenous peoples as just that – people. The films talk about powerful and critical issues such as mental health, exploring one's sexuality/gender identity and coping with traumas, but throughout the series, themes of healing, joy and community are highlighted.

"I hope this curation helps jumpstart the conversation of what reconciliation and true allyship is," said Friday.

To learn more about Indigenous cultures being represented in films, Friday suggested some of his personal favourite films: *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre, 1998), *Dance Me Outside* (Bruce McDonald, 1994), *Once Were Warriors* (Lee Tamahori 1994), *After the Apology* (Larissa Behrendt, 2017) and the short film *Two Cars, One Night* (Taika Waititi, 2004).

LOOKING FORWARD

The *Who we are* film series is a step in the right direction towards platforming Indigenous storytellers and giving them the space to reconstruct the misguided narratives established about their cultures.

"Indigenous people are not objects to further the narrative; our experiences further the narrative, and we must do it in a way that is healing and prominent," said Friday.

'YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAFETY ON YOUR CAMPUS'

UBC students' return to campus may mean a return to illicit substance use

IMAN JANMOHAMED

Content warning: This piece contains references to drug use and overdose.

It's been 18 months since you were at your last party. It's the weekend before school starts and for the first time in a long time, things feel normal. Or at least as close to normal as they can get.

You're with your friends having a good time — you think that nothing can go wrong. It never has before. You're invincible.

But this week is different. Your friend stops breathing. They're overdosing. What do you do?

Students have been awaiting the return to in-person classes, campus activities and, let's be honest, parties since March 2020. But since then, the toxic drug crisis has not disappeared because of COVID-19 — it's actually worsened. Vancouver's street drug supply has become more contaminated with fentanyl, a highly potent synthetic opioid.

"Vancouver's drug supply is really adulterated and it only got worse during the pandemic. This can really create risks for students because you might not know exactly what you're taking [and] the potency of drugs you take," said Samara Mayer, a UBC PhD student and the chair of the Vancouver Chapter of Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSDP).

Fentanyl is the drug often blamed for the toxic drug crisis. Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid that is prescribed by doctors for pain relief. But occasionally it is combined with other illicit substances such as cocaine, ketamine and other powder drugs as it tends to be cheaper.

But the toxic drug crisis is not UBC's top priority in terms of student safety in residences.

"COVID and alcohol [consumption] are the two things that [Student Housing and Community Services (SHCS)] has a stronger focus on. Not to say that [illicit drug] consumption is not on our radar. It certainly is, but it is probably third in terms of our levels of concern," said Andrew Parr, associate vice-president of SHCS.

With the return to normalcy, illicit drugs will find their way on campus. Students who haven't used substances during the pandemic may no longer be in the habit of carrying naloxone, testing their substances or maintaining their tolerance. And, advocates say UBC seems to be lacking in services for students.

A CASE OF COMFORT

UBC's hands-off approach to helping students navigate the overdose crisis is evident in on-campus housing.

Alex, a Totem Park residence advisor during the academic year of 2019/20, made their way to Shoppers Drug Mart to obtain a naloxone kit following their RA orientation. Alex's name has been changed to protect their identity.

"We were given a brief presentation in our advisor orientation of what it looks like when someone is overdosing," said Alex. "We're always told to call 911 for emergencies and in terms of administering naloxone, it was always if you felt comfortable."

Naloxone is a medication used to temporarily reverse the impacts of a drug overdose. Even when naloxone is used, 911 must still be called.

Residence advisors, according to Alex, were not provided with mandatory naloxone training or a naloxone kit. Alex had to obtain harm prevention training and tools by themself with no help from UBC SHCS. Naloxone is provided by SHCS at the front desks of student residences but you must prove you are overdosing or at risk of overdosing to gain access.

"There's already a lot of stigma that comes with drug use. So when you're creating questions that need to be answered in order to access services, that might create a barrier," said Mayer.

Mayer said that students should be able to access services completely anonymously and that there should be options for them to be provided by peers. Though RAs are students and could be viewed as peers, SCHS does not require them to administer naloxone.

"We don't make [administering naloxone] mandatory for our RAs because the expectation is not that they become the administerer of naloxone, but it's actually there for the community to use," said Parr in an interview with *The Ubyssey*.

Residence advisors are now required to go through harm reduction training but this does not include naloxone training, according to Parr.

Parr is more concerned about students using illicit substances outside of student accommodations than within residences.

"Where things do concern me a bit is not so much the parties within residence but the parties in — and I don't mean to put them in bad light — with the parties that sometimes occur in the fraternity village," said Parr.

Parr highlighted that SHCS is working towards creating a community that allows residents to feel comfortable speaking to their residence advisors and life managers. But Alex thinks strong rules around substance use in the residence contract increase the stigma around illicit drugs which can prevent residents from communicating about substance use.

"There is a certain amount of hesitation people have in telling their RA, 'Oh, I'm doing this drug' because they don't want to be written up for having paraphernalia in their room," said Alex.

But it's not just RAs that are being left in the dark. The student residents are, too.

"I remember reading [in *Connect* magazine — an SHCS magazine included in the move-in packages of students in residence], as a first year, things about drugs, overdosing and the fentanyl crisis, but there really isn't that much information given to residents about [harm reduction]," said Alex.

AN EPIDEMIC WORSENED BY A PANDEMIC

In 2020, an average of 144 people died a month from an overdose in BC. From January 2021 to May 2021, the average went up to 170 people a month. The BC Coroners Service reported that 85 per cent of illicit drugs that led to deaths in 2021 contained fentanyl — meaning on average about 144 people per month died of overdoses caused by fentanyl in 2021.

"The addition of fentanyl to drugs, specifically when the person taking the drugs doesn't know fentanyl has been added, can be harmful because you don't know the strength or the composition of the substance you are consuming," said Mayer.

In March 2020, there were 112 deaths. In March 2021, there were 166 deaths — making it clear COVID-19 has had an impact.

Fifteen per cent of overdose deaths in 2021 so far were people between the ages of 19 and 29.

"It's this combination of low or no tolerance, being back at school [and the] increasingly adulterated drugs supply that can create some risks for students," said Mayer.

Risks for students are rampant when it comes to substance use, whether that's health or educational risks like receiving academic repercussions due to your substance use.

Presently, CSSDP Vancouver is working with CSSDP Okanagan to establish a medical amnesty policy at both of UBC's campuses - which does not currently exist.

A medical amnesty policy, as explained by Mayer, is like the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act. "This would ensure students don't face academic or institutional repercussions [for substance use] and they seek help during emergencies related to drug use," said Mayer.

In a statement to *The Ubyssey*, Matthew Ramsey, director of university affairs at UBC Media Relations, outlined that the Student Health and Wellbeing team leads campus substance use, health and safety and harm reduction initiatives for the student body.

These programs are continuously evaluated for their effectiveness because "the dangers of substance use and overdose are clear," said Ramsey. When *The Ubyssey* asked who evaluated UBC's substance programs and policies, Ramsey did not provide an answer.

When asked if UBC is doing enough to promote safe use and prevent overdose on campus, Mayer kept it short: "No. I don't think that enough has been done."

'YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAFETY ON YOUR CAMPUS.'

Though UBC doesn't have infrastructure that allows peer-to-peer naloxone and harm reduction training, the AMS does.

AMS Peer Support, the result of a merger of AMS Vice and Speakeasy, offers free harm reduction workshops for UBC students, groups and community members. But the AMS is trying to do more to keep students safe.

Saad Shoaib, AMS VP external, is currently working alongside Eshana Bhangu, the AMS VP academic and university affairs, and student services, to create a harm reduction campaign for this upcoming fall.

As VP external it is Shoaib's job to lobby the government to make policy changes in the student interest — this includes policies around the toxic drug crisis.

"Students and young people are going to be taking part in large-scale gatherings and party scenes, so as a result, [the AMS is] going to continue to work with all the stakeholders that we can work with to ensure that the concerns around the toxic drug supply are being voiced and acted upon in an appropriate manner," said Shoaib during an interview with *The Ubyssey*. Stakeholders include the provincial government.

As of April 2021, the provincial government has budgeted $330 million for treatment and recovery services for people who use substances. Of that $330 million, $152 million is dedicated to the opioid crisis.

"We think that the province should definitely increase its funding towards overdose prevention and harm reduction initiatives," said Shoaib. "For us, it's essential that … not only UBC, not only just the affiliated colleges, but that post-secondary institutions across BC provide students with access to naloxone kits."

When asked about the resurgence of the UBC party scene and Greek life, Shoaib expressed that his portfolio would work with all campus groups and AMS members to ensure access to naloxone kits. He did not provide a timeline.

"I think that for us it's making sure that all students have that access to the right resources and education when it comes to overdose prevention and harm reduction," said Shoaib.

Noah Jassmann, the current president of the Interfraternity Council (IFC) is also concerned about the amount of educational resources provided to students.

"Our largest concern would be that there may not be enough educational programs available [at UBC] to deter people from using illegal substances, or how to use them as safe[ly] as possible," said Jassmann.

The IFC holds an annual naloxone training session that is mandatory for the health and safety executives of UBC Fraternities. This training is optional for the rest of the fraternity community.

Besides the naloxone training, the IFC is planning to implement educational programs on substance use for new members.

"Although the ideal solution would be to have nobody using illegal substances, we recognize that some people make this choice. As a result, the IFC is taking many steps in order to ensure we do our part in educating our community on substance use," Jassmann wrote in a statement to *The Ubyssey*. However Jassmann did not specify what steps the IFC has been taking.

Jassmann said that the IFC does see that the AMS and UBC do provide some resources, such as workshops, AMS Peer Support and free naloxone in residence, but he does think there could be improvements.

In response Shoaib said, "In terms of improvement, we're going to be focusing on advocacy. The AMS is going to continue to make sure that our province is working towards providing students with the right resources and the right type of education on harm reduction and overdose prevention."

In terms of specific action from the AMS outside of advocacy, Bhangu announced at the August 25 AMS Council meeting that the society is trying to get fentanyl testing strips on campus. She also said the AMS has been meeting with external bodies on bringing more fulsome drug testing to campus. Bhangu said the university expressed interest in a drug testing site but lacked the capacity to bring one to campus for September.

"We're dedicating a lot of our capacity towards making sure that this return to campus is done in a safe and swift manner. We think that this is something that is not only just important to us, but to every single student. As any student, you have the right to safety on your campus," said Shoaib.

SAFETY WHEN LEFT TO YOUR OWN DEVICES

Testing your substances is integral to ensuring your safety.

According to the Government of Canada, only a few grains of fentanyl can be enough to cause an overdose.

The nearest drug checking facility to the UBC Vancouver campus is on East Hastings street and at the Insite supervised consumption site run by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). Spectrometer drug checking, clean injection equipment, injection booths and professional medical staff are available on site.

Fentanyl testing strips are also available at Insite and at other supervised consumption sites across the Lower Mainland. Test strips cannot detect all types of fentanyl, like carfentanil. Even if your test comes back negative for fentanyl, VCH recommends carrying naloxone and to never use substances alone.

To learn more about how to recognize and prevent an overdose, visit VCH's website.

NALOXONE SAVES LIVES

One day, naloxone could save your life.

So, this week's party didn't go as planned. Your friend stopped breathing. They were overdosing. What did you do?

You called 911, administered naloxone and waited with your friend until help arrived.

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provided you with legal protection from charges for possession of a controlled substance because you called for help.

Since you reacted quickly and called for help, both you and your friend are okay.

DESIGN | **MAHIN E ALAM**

ACCESSIBILITY //

Letter: UBC's Centre for Accessibility and its outdated policies fail students

Lonnes Leloup
Contributor

When I wrote to the UBC Centre for Accessibility in 2020 to ask for help with a special accommodation, I ended my email with this sentence: "I invested a lot of time and effort in my studies, and I don't think this mistake is representative of that." Almost a year later, I realized that this was no mistake at all. The blame is not on me; it is on my disability, and how it affected my permanent academic record.

The centre's purpose is to provide "Accommodation to promote human rights, equity and diversity, and to comply with its duty under the British Columbia Human Rights Code to make its services and facilities available in a manner that does not discriminate," as per its official policies.

While no one disputes the good work the centre has done to ensure equal and safe access to education for students living with long-term disabilities, it is time we talk about some of their policies and how the enforcement of these policies reflects an outdated system.

I was a student at UBC from fall 2018 to winter 2020, when I had to go on an academic leave for financial reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being a transgender woman has never been especially easy since I have three long-term disabilities, including clinical depression and generalized anxiety.

In 2018, because of my unique situation, I was advised early on to get in contact with the centre to make sure I could utilize its accommodations during my studies. I did, and the centre provided some very helpful support.

Until it didn't.

In fall 2019, I failed a 200-level class. The class was Introduction to Writing for Graphic Forms. I had never failed a class before, and I never failed one after either. I went on to be admitted into UBC's Creative Writing Program, scoring A+'s in 400-level classes. Obviously, I did not fail the class because I was a terrible writer. I failed because I was sick.

I have extensive documentation, including medical documents from UBC's Student Health Services and the Centre for Accessibility itself, proving my mental state was, at that time, the worst it had ever been. My GPA suffered immensely. It was so bad, in fact, that I was rejected by a law school due to my lower-than-average GPA.

I reached out to the centre in October 2020 to get this grade removed from my official transcripts. The official policies read that "Students are encouraged to make contact with the centre as soon as reasonably possible to ensure it has sufficient time to properly review Accommodation requests and to coordinate any necessary arrangements." I interpreted that to mean that the centre does not have a time limit for such requests. I've never heard of any instances in which the centre removed a grade from a transcript before, but I believe that it should be possible. In the end, October 2020 ended up being the first time I felt healthy enough to inquire about it.

Students with long-term mental disabilities will fail a class for no reason other than their illness. FILE ZUBAIR HIRJI

The centre is supposed to "provide reasonable Accommodation to Students with Disabilities to the point of undue hardship;" (article 3.1.4) and "if the Centre determines that a Student requires an academic concession for reasons related to a Disability, the centre will notify the relevant faculty or school of such requirement" (3.4).

To my knowledge, Arts Advising was never contacted about my situation. If it was, I was never informed of their decision, which made it impossible for me to even appeal it. The centre did write me a letter for "special circumstances," but my request to drop the class grade was still denied.

The centre is known around campus to be slightly better at accommodating people living with physical disabilities than people living with mental illnesses. Students with long-term mental disabilities will fail a class for no reason other than their illness. Our pain and struggles might not be always apparent to others, but they are real.

Both people with physical disabilities and mental ones should be as heard and valued as students at the same level. I followed the procedures outlined by the centre when it came to mental disabilities, yet I ended up being turned away with a weak letter, proving that the same centre that was created to protect my rights as a mentally ill person had failed me.

The centre "determines" accommodations, and when the people making these decisions do not fully understand the extent of mental disability, it means students with invisible illnesses, like me, will always be discriminated against. One way to change this would be to directly invite students living with these illnesses to consult on shaping new and better policies for the centre. In the meantime, allowing mentally disabled students to withdraw failed classes from their official transcripts, provided they have medical documentation of their hardship, is the first step towards meaningful change.

Lonnes Leloup is a former student of UBC's creative writing program.

ASK IMAN //

Ask Iman: Among Us in real life

I always like to remember that I was admitted to UBC for a reason. MAHINE ALAM

Iman Janmohamed
Columnist

Dear Iman,
In classes this past year, I constantly doubted myself and felt that I didn't belong. There are so many bright people in my classes, I don't stand a chance next to them. I'm worried that in-person classes will make this impostor syndrome even worse because I'll have to face all of these people in my classes who are smarter than me.

Any advice on how to deal with that feeling?

This feeling? It sucks. But in the spirit of Ask Iman, I need to remind you that everyone experiences the same thing — we're all trying to get by, together.

Let me set the scene for you. You're officially a UBC student and you're sitting in your first class ever. The professor starts lecturing and it seems like everyone in this class already knows everything, and you? Well, you feel like you know nothing.

If that sounds familiar, I'm here to help you see that you belong here — if it doesn't, well, I blame that on never having attended an in-person class before.

Impostor syndrome is real and feeling like an impostor (cue the Among Us jokes... am I too late?) is difficult, but it is a harsh, sucky reality that many of us will face.

I like to remember three things when I'm facing my own impostor syndrome: I belong here, I can ask for help and everyone is in the same boat.

I BELONG HERE

I always like to remember that I was admitted to UBC for a reason — and so was everyone else. Though it can be a hard thing to grasp, you deserve your spot in that classroom. Sure, other students may seem like they're better than you, but you're all UBC students.

Feeling like you don't belong is really difficult, and trust me: I've had my fair share of experiences where I've felt like an impostor, but at the end of the day, reminding myself that I'm here for a reason has always left me with a little bit of hope.

I CAN ASK FOR HELP

That's it. You can ask for help and there is no shame in doing so.

Throughout high school and the first little bit of university, I was scared to ask for help, but it's important to do so. Whether it's asking a professor how to write a better thesis or asking a friend how they balance their time so well, the perspectives of others can 1) be interesting and 2) be helpful.

Everyone needs a little help every now and then, so take advantage of your resources and ask.

It's not embarrassing to struggle. It's not embarrassing to need help. It's normal.

EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME BOAT

There, I said it! EVERYONE'S IN THE SAME BOAT!

I can almost guarantee that if you have a question in class, at least one other person has that question too. You're not the only person facing impostor syndrome and there is — at least for me — a little comfort in knowing that I'm not the only one

TLDR: You may feel like you don't, but you belong here. You can ask for help. Most of all, you're not the only 'impostor.' I mean, Among Us is a multiplayer game, after all!

You're doing great. Keep it up!

Need advice? Send your questions, queries or problems to advice@ubyssey.ca, or submit anonymously at ubyssey.ca/advice!

CITY LIFE //

Places for Vancouverites who have never been to Vancouver to name-drop to prove they are Vancouverites

Tait Gamble
Contributor

This September, thousands of students who have been attending UBC for a year, but may have never stepped foot on campus — let alone Vancouver — will descend on the city.

Generally speaking, one finishes their first year at UBC with a few courses under their belt, not to mention a grip on the city's geography. However, online school has made this impossible to fully realise for many first-year students. Unless, of course, one spent as much time on Google Maps as Canvas and Piazza combined.

So, in no particular order, here are some locales to check out (or just name-drop) to prove that you are a Vancouverite, despite never living in Vancouver, when you first arrive in the city.

Breka Bakery. Breka is open 24/7 and is the perfect study spot. Earl Grey cream puffs, éclairs, cream cheese brownies — you name the baked good, they have it. You can visit them in Kits, Davie Village or downtown proper.

Explore **Main Street**. Peek into book and craft stores, such as Urban Source or Regional Assembly of Text. Grab a snack at 49th Parallel or Coco et Olive, and stop to thrift.

For those who are 19 and older, visit **The Fringe Cafe** at Broadway and Balaclava. It may be your local pub, but it's certainly an above-average one! They have great nachos and even better student deals on beer!

Cartems Donuts. You can't leave the city limits without consuming at least half a dozen.

In cherry blossom season, wander **Queen Elizabeth Park** and the **Bloedel Conservatory**. Flowers, skylines and birds galore, what more could you ask for?

Vancouverites love the beach and mountains — which you know of course, as a Vancouverite. Stop by **Jericho Beach** for seals and picnics, **Kitsilano Beach** for tourists & great sights and **Wreck Beach**, only several flights of stairs off campus.

The Eatery! From the outside, it looks more like a club than a sushi restaurant, but why not have the best of both worlds?

Go kayaking! Rent a kayak, rain or shine, at Jericho Beach! I was once trailed by a seal while kayaking, and I hope the same for you.

Eat plant-based, like many Vancouverites do, which you know as a Vancouverite. Visit **Chickpea** on Main for delicious vegan eats and mostly their fries, **MeeT** on Main or in Yaletown for the vegan mac n' cheese, **The Acorn** on Main and **the Naam** in Kits, which is a Vancouver institution.

Here are some locales to check out to prove that you are a Vancouverite FILE SAM BARRINGER

Explore the **Vancouver Art Gallery**. It's 'pay what you can' (minimum $5 donation) Tuesday nights from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Salmon n' Bannock is "Vancouver's only Indigenous owned and operated restaurant." They will serve fresh fish, game sausages, bannock, people watching and the warmest service.

Travel to **Lighthouse Park** for a truly West Coast experience!

Get acquainted with the **Arbutus Greenway** via walk, hike or bike.

Best of luck in your race to beat those first-years to Vancouverite status!

COVID-19 VACCINE //

PSA: How to access your BC vaccine card if you were vaccinated outside of BC

Nathan Bawaan
Web News Editor

Starting September 7, vaccine cards will be your ticket to get into restaurants, student residence, gyms and other non-essential places at UBC — in the rest of BC, this will take effect on September 13.

But what if you were vaccinated outside of BC or Canada? Here is what you'll need to do ahead of the new restrictions.

First, you'll need to register with the province's Get Vaccinated system — the system used to schedule vaccine appointments. The online form will ask for your personal health number (PHN), which is located on the back of any form of BC ID. If you don't have a PHN, you will need to register by phone at 1.833.838.2323 or at 1.604.660.2421 if you are outside Canada.

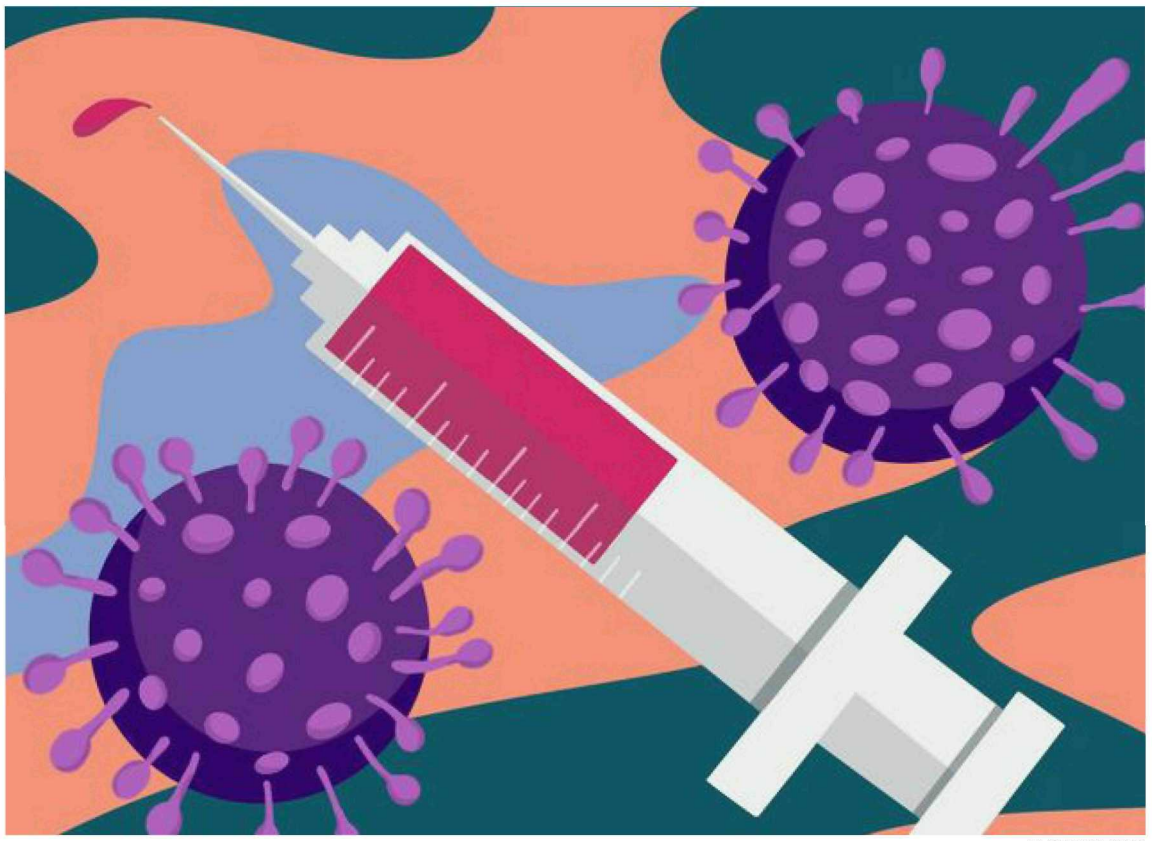
You'll then receive a registration number — like if you were trying to get vaccinated for the first time — but you won't need to set up an actual appointment.

If you are an international student that has not applied for BC's Medical Services Plan (MSP), you may need to wait 30-45 days to receive a PHN. Until then, you can use the proof of vaccination you used to enter Canada and your passport.

Along with registering in the Get Vaccinated system, you will also need to submit official proof of COVID-19 immunization to the Provincial Immunization Registry. The form is easy: upload a picture of your immunization records (a vaccine card, document from a doctor's office, etc.) and enter the dates you were vaccinated.

"Once entered in the Provincial Immunization Registry you can access your immunization record online through Health Gateway," the online form reads.

Your records will be updated in two to three weeks, so be sure to fill out these forms as soon as possible. September 7 is only a week away.


First, you'll need to register with the province's Get Vaccinated system. FILE LUA PRESIDIO

COVID BABIES //

Growing up in a pandemic: Why your immune system needs viruses

Christine Seo
Contributor

For parents, the pandemic presents health implications beyond the threat of contracting COVID-19 itself.

Public health policies that have been implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have also limited exposure to commonly encountered viruses and bacteria. Experts, including UBC Professor of microbiology and immunology Dr. Brett Finlay, aim to address the potential consequences of this "immunity debt" in children and their developing immune systems.

PAYING BACK YOUR (IMMUNITY) DEBT

Over the past year and a half, COVID-19 prevention measures have become "the new normal." To mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus, policy changes span the globe — and our classrooms.

Updated health and safety measures from the provincial government for the 2021/22 school year have included non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) like daily health checks, teaching children to wear masks and wash their hands, discouraging the touching of shared items that may be put in the mouth, practicing social distance measures and the regular disinfection of shared surfaces.

In a review published earlier this year, the Pediatric Infectious Disease Group (GPIP) in France defined "immunity debt" as "the lack of immune stimulation due to the reduced circulation of microbial [species] and to the related reduced vaccine uptake."

Microbial species, or microbes, include viruses and bacteria, and exposure to these agents is believed to help bolster the innate immune system (our body's first line of defence against pathogens) to allow for more efficient immune response when future pathogens are encountered. This process is known as "trained immunity."

The "training" of the immune system is particularly important during childhood as microbial exposure tends to be more frequent during this period. The GPIP wrote that kids who were exposed to viral infections early in life exhibited a "more effective" development of trained immunity compared to those who experienced these viral exposures as adults.

The authors of this self-acknowledged "opinion piece" aimed "to discuss various situations that could lead to larger epidemics when the [NPIs] imposed by the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic will no longer be necessary."

They claim that the development of "susceptible populations" due to a lack of immune stimulation could pose a risk for future epidemics. This perspective is not unique to the GPIP: a PNAS research article from last December predicted future large-scale epidemics due to the NPIs put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The authors suggested that these outbreaks stemming from susceptible populations could further burden the health care system.

SICK OF GETTING SICK

In an interview with *The Ubyssey*, Finlay echoed this concern of increased illnesses following the pandemic, especially for "COVID babies."

"I think everyone has been deprived of the normal colds and stuff we see. So I'm sure once COVID [lets up], there's going to be a massive outbreak of colds and flus and [respiratory syncytial viruses (RSVs)] and all the standard ... diseases we get because we haven't got them for the last couple of years," he said.

"While getting colds is not fun, this actually serves a good purpose in keeping our immune systems active."

We're seeing evidence of these trends now. An outbreak of respiratory illnesses, including RSV, in New Zealand saw 46 children hospitalized — many of whom were infants. This development follows a 98 per cent reduction in RSV cases last year, with this year's number of RSV infections "dwarfing" that of previous years.

RSV is a virus that causes infections of the respiratory tract that often cause mild cold-like symptoms in adults, but can result in pneumonia and bronchiolitis (the inflammation of the lungs) in some children, especially premature babies, babies less than six months of age and children with weakened immune systems.

Similar RSV outbreaks were observed in the Southern United States and were reported an official health advisory by the CDC. Cases for this disease usually spike in the winter, making these summer outbreaks unusual.

"We're seeing big outbreaks of RSV which is a major problem in younger children, because they're immune naïve," said Finlay. "They haven't seen this thing for two years ... These are new things for these new immune systems. And so it's not equipped to handle these."

No outbreaks have been observed in Canada, but a recent report suggested that a resurgence of RSV may still be on the horizon.

According to the GPIP, "the longer these periods of 'viral or bacterial low-exposure' are, the greater the likelihood of future epidemics." They explained that there is now a larger pool of individuals at risk because they have not been able to build up immunity to common viruses and bacteria.

The first year of life, especially the first three months is "really, really critical" for the development of the immune system, according to Finlay. He explained that due to COVID-19 prevention measures, newborns may not be getting the necessary exposure to microbes for proper immune system development, which may lead to longer-term consequences, such as asthma, allergies and other immune diseases.

MANAGING YOUR MICROBIOME

Though microbes have gotten a bad rep over the course of this pandemic, our bodies are home to numerous different types of viruses, bacteria and other microbial species that make up our "microbiome." The microbes that live in our gut, skin, reproductive organs and other regions play important roles in the proper functioning of our bodies and our health.

"While getting colds is not fun, this actually serves a good purpose in keeping our immune systems active." FILE LUA PRESIDIO

According to a paper by Finlay and colleagues published earlier this year, the decrease in exposure to microbes and reduced microbial diversity in our bodies is part of a pre-existing trend compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The concern is that the "immunity debt" brought by the pandemic may have lasting impacts associated with alterations to the microbiome. The human microbiome is implicated in many diseases not traditionally associated with microbes and the immune system; thus, Finlay explained, this dysregulation of our body's microbes could have various health implications.

"We and many others have showed that microbes ... play a major role in programming our immune system to be normal," said Finlay.

"In the last decade, we realized that microbes [have] an amazing amount of effects on human health and disease. They affect obesity, they affect asthma, they affect autism, they affect Parkinson's, they affect Alzheimer's disease ... [Of] the top ten reasons why you're going to die, only one of them is officially microbial: pneumonia. But nine of the ten actually now have strong microbial links."

UNPRECEDENTED PARENTING

So what can parents do for their children in the midst of this "immunity debt"?

Finlay suggested a healthy diet (or breastfeeding for newborns), having a pet in the house, keeping vaccinations up to date and getting kids outside to playgrounds.

Parents could also consider sending kids back to sports clubs and community centres when it is deemed safe to do so by their local health authority.

Extracurricular activities are "being overseen with guidelines around keeping kids as safe as possible given the circumstances," said UBC Associate Professor Dr. Mariana Brussoni last fall during the Growing up in a pandemic: Health and resilience in kids webinar hosted by the UBC Faculty of Medicine.

Given these guidelines, Brussoni called these extracurriculars a "viable option," and said "parents need to make their own decisions around what they're comfortable with."

Regarding outdoor play, Brussoni noted that parents should ensure their children have safe and stimulating spaces outdoors to play in, along with time to play outside every day and freedom from adults.

"Playing in and of itself is quite critical for kids to be able to work thorugh their stress and anxiety," she said.

"Some of the best ways to do this is actually to provide loose parts, things like sticks, stones, mud, crates, tarps, those sorts of things [children] can move around and allow their imagination to shape the play."

Brussoni also suggested the parents form a social bubble with other families. "Being with other kids is quite an important part of play," she said.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

At the moment, the immune implications for children raised in a pandemic remain elusive.

Medical conditions such as allergies and asthma often do not manifest until children are four or five years old. "So even if they're being affected during this last year, you're not going to see this increase in allergies till three to four years from now," said Finlay.

Although further consequences of the pandemic on developing immune systems are expected, it is too early to tell what those consequences will be and when they will be revealed.

Finlay and his colleagues outlined many questions that have yet to be answered in their paper. According to Finlay, these unprecedented times present an "amazing" research opportunity.

"Part of the reason I wrote that paper was just to point out that this is one of the most amazing experiments humanity's ever going to do. And you can't go back and repeat it," he said.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH CARE //

UBC, drone company to deliver COVID-19 medical supplies to First Nations community

Deliveries to the Stellet'en First Nation community will begin in September. UNSPLASH/JASON BLACKEYE

Alicia Kuo
Contributor

As part of UBC's Remote Communities Drone Transport Initiative program, Drone Delivery Canada (DDC) has been selected to deliver COVID-19 medical supplies to the Stellat'en First Nation community.

In a January 2021 press release, UBC's faculty of medicine announced it had received a $750,000 grant from the 2020 TD Ready Challenge to "deploy drone technology to fly necessary health care supplies into rural and remote communities of British Columbia during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Upon selecting the Stellet'en First Nation community for the pilot study, drone technicians and representatives from UBC's Faculty of Medicine, First Nations Health Authority and the Stellat'en First Nation community have been working together on the project.

FLYING BEYOND THE BARRIERS

Communities geographically isolated from large health centres are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing primary, specialty and emergency health care, according to a press release featuring Dr. John Pawlovich, newly appointed rural doctors' UBC chair and head of this drone delivery project.

In an interview with *The Ubyssey,* Pawlovich explained that the pandemic has made it more difficult for people and physical supplies to travel in and out of remote communities.

"[These] communities and the citizens in those communities just don't have basic access to things like a COVID test," he said. "That's a gap in our health care system."

Conversations around Stellat'en's potential involvement in the pilot study were prompted by a general practitioner working in the community during the summer of 2020. This dialogue was pushed forward by the chief and council before Economic Development Officer Adam Patrick took over ground-level operations around April.

Patrick acknowledged how drone delivery can circumvent barriers, saying that "trauma from colonial institutions" has made it difficult for elders to enter health care institutions.

"So, saving people from that [trauma] by delivering them the health care that they need in their community with someone that they know and trust ... is obviously an enormous benefit," he said.

As he heads this project, Pawlovich aims to close gaps in "access to delivery" and advance people's understanding of how technology can "strengthen" and "augment" health care delivery for remote communities across BC.

He said that he believes the project will transform care for everyone by "intentionally creating the capacity [and] the infrastructure to allow ... [for] access to care."

According to a May 2021 press release from DDC, the company had plans to start building drone-related infrastructure this summer — deliveries will last for one year beginning in September 2021. This will be DDC's fourth First Nations project and its first in BC.

Chief Robert Michell also discussed the importance of drone delivery in addressing the needs of the Stellat'en community.

"Based on the isolated location of our community and the needs of our residents, drone transport may enhance our access to COVID-19 testing and medication without traveling and endangering other members of our community," he said in the UBC faculty of medicine's January 2021 press release.

INNOVATION AHEAD

Though the pandemic has posed a challenge, it has also highlighted the resiliency of these communities and the value of the integration of technology and health care.

Following provincial health leadership, monthly community meetings and other in-person communications shifted online in March 2020. Although it was "difficult" to quickly make that shift, Patrick is proud that "[the] community has really stepped up" and "embrace[d] technology." As a result, Stellat'en had only one confirmed case of COVID-19 as of July 14, according to Patrick.

Pawlovich believes the program's next steps are to gain a "better understanding of the local needs" and incorporate "the voices of communities." As the technology matures, he hopes to eventually reach and translate the knowledge gained through this pilot study to remote communities across Canada.

Pawlovich and Patrick are "excited" by the project's potential to benefit rural communities. Patrick emphasized the opportunity to open doors to youth in the community by letting them "engage with emerging science and technologies."

However, Pawlovich stressed that there is much to be done to address the health care inequities that remote Indigenous groups face, including access to broadband internet for telehealth initiatives and education, access to speciality technologies and future delivery programs.

"I really want to emphasize this is a first step. This is not the step, it's not the end of the steps. It's just a small [step that] empower[s] rural communities to help with the movement of medical supplies, but also a lot of other things that potentially could benefit rural communities," Pawlovich said.

SWEET VICTORY //

Pandemic gold: UBC Thunderbots celebrate victory at RoboCup

Bridget Meehan
Contributor

Robots have 'taken over' the victories that UBC has to celebrate this summer.

Despite challenges present due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UBC Thunderbots placed first in the Small Size League Lower Tournament at RoboCup earlier this summer. *The Ubyssey* sat down with the team captain to chat about how to go from "prohibition-era UBC" to gold.

TRAINING FOR SUCCESS

Following their first ever win in 2019, the most recent competition until this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Thunderbots defended their title at Robocup. This victory follows what UBC Thunderbots Captain Chantal Sousa described as the "super incredible" commitment of her team.

"I think one of the things that really shocked me was just the amount of work that we were still able to get done," she said, regarding the progress her team made despite the pandemic restrictions.

Though the majority of their work was delivered online, rather than the usual in-person meetings, there was still a strong team atmosphere. According to Sousa, the team remained consistent in their weekly team meetings to ensure the whole team, which consisted of about 60 students, remained on track for the competition.

"There wasn't a moment where there wasn't a few members ... working on stuff," she said. But it wasn't all a grind — she explained that they regularly hosted online team socials and events to maintain team engagement and morale.

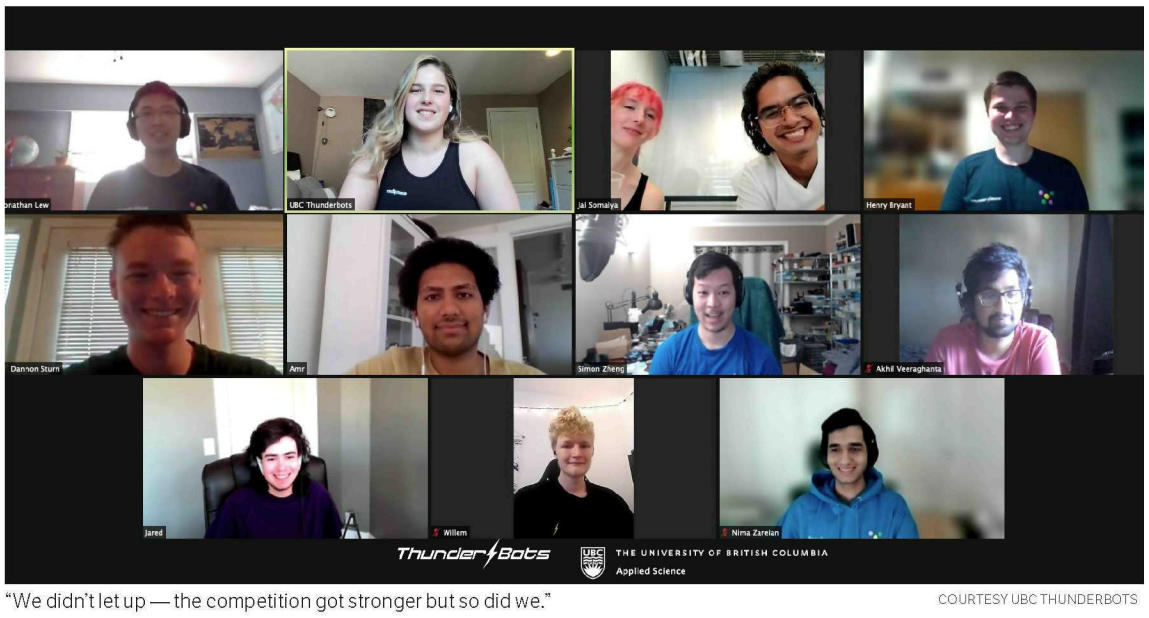
"We also tried to implement more online social ... things because obviously you lack a lot of that social engagement when you're working from home alone," she said. Sousa explained that the team socials extended beyond technical updates, "so that it felt like they were hanging out with friends as well."

GOING FOR GOLD

This year's competition was unique given how the remote nature of the event affected the composition of the robots. Sousa explained that the league created a "very accurate physics-driven" simulation to host all of the games, meaning they were competing using artificial intelligence.

"The league worked really hard on trying to differentiate ourselves from the simulation league this year, and I think they did a really good job," said Sousa.

In order to make the game as realistic as possible, teams had to submit information such as the acceleration rate and weight of the robots, so that they could function within the simulation. The simulation even incorporated glitches that would have been anticipated in real gameplay.



"We didn't let up — the competition got stronger but so did we." COURTESY UBC THUNDERBOTS

For Sousa, this win further established the reputation of UBC Thunderbots in the league.

"It just felt really good to solidify the fact that we really did deserve that first win," she said. "We didn't let up — the competition got stronger but so did we. And so we were able to persevere and maintain our position, which is really positive for us as we're looking to progress into the higher division in the next year or two."

In light of this victory, Sousa encouraged anyone interested in robotics to join UBC Thunderbots as they near recruiting season. She stressed that you do not have to be an engineer to join the team — just to be willing to learn and stay committed.

Applications will be posted on their website in early September.

Sousa explained that it was "really rewarding" to see her team pull through despite the challenges of a COVID-19 year.

"I think in that sense it was really rewarding to see that, despite a COVID year we're still able to come together," said Sousa. "And it's a different kind of happiness, but nonetheless, rewarding that we were able to pull through together and kind of like reaffirm our position within the organization and ... the RoboCup community."

With two RoboCup wins, the future looks bright for UBC Thunderbots.

REMINISCENCE //

Strength in Numbers: How team dynamics defined a turnaround season in women's soccer

Brendan Smith
Staff Writer

Jesse Symons is passionate about coaching. You can tell in the way he talks about his team. The UBC women's soccer coach speaks with a quick pace like a forward chasing down a ball, dives into details like a fearless defender into a tackle and his excitement grows when talking about his players as if his team were on the counterattack.

Last year, *The Ubyssey* conducted an interview with Symons over the phone about the upcoming season. His team was fresh off their national championship run and the team looked poised to repeat their success with most players returning.

The program has done it before. In 2003, the T-Birds won nationals for the second straight year after being crowned champions in 2002. The program would go on to win another national championship in 2006, making it three banners in a five-year span, and their seventh national championship in 2019 gave UBC women's soccer the most national championships in U Sports history.

"Just to match that level of standard and expectation is important," Symons said, referring to the teams from the 2000s. "But we also haven't won a Canada West championship now in three seasons so that's another thing that is definitely motivating for the team."

"We did win [nationals], but we also weren't as successful in every aspect of the season — there's a lot more motivation still to go."

GOING FOR GOLD

About to enter his fifth season, Symons knew that winning nationals would be difficult and winning it two straight years would be even harder. His team would have to play more consistently and play with more intensity since other teams would be motivated to knock off the defending champions.

"It's been interesting hearing from older players after winning [nationals] and getting to that level," he told me. "They sort of experienced both sides of it now and know how difficult it is to get to those stages."

"They're really pushing even now in preparations for, hopefully, this upcoming year."

By the time of that interview, with universities switching to web-oriented courses and travel restrictions being imposed, it was likely that fall sports, such as soccer, were going to be put on hold. Less than a month after Symons's interview, the 2020 season was cancelled.

Additional interviews that he did with the players from the 2019 team were starting to shed light on how UBC's women's soccer team was able to win nationals after a disappointing 2018 season.

The 2018 season had ended with UBC losing in the Canada West consolation final. It was the second time in as many seasons that the T-Birds did not qualify for nationals and the second straight year the team did not advance to the Canada West final. As a program with six national championships, losing in this way was questionable.

Was it inexperience and nerves? Were there issues within the team? Was there a lack of will to win?

Since Symons took over in 2016 as head coach, the performance of the team had wavered. In his first season, he coached the T-Birds to a Canada West title and finished second at nationals. But his second and third years were less successful and the program appeared on the decline.

Meanwhile, their rivals were improving. After beating the Trinity Western University Spartans in the Canada West title game his first season, Symons had lost to the Spartans in the Canada West semi-final, his second season, and did not beat the Spartans in his third. His third season also included losing in the Canada West semi-final to the University of Calgary Dinos, a team that had beaten UBC twice that year and a program that was on the rise.

TEAM DYNAMICS

Talent was not an issue. The T-Birds were recruiting and featuring some of the best scorers over the past couple seasons, including former U Sports women's soccer player of the year Jasmin Dhanda, despite the team failing to reach their goals.

As his team prepared for 2019, Symons realized changes were needed and reached out to fifth-year player Amelia Crawford during the off-season.

Before coming to UBC, Crawford had played for Fusion FC in the BC Soccer Premier League. The Richmond native was in her last year of high school when a former UBC assistant coach saw her play.

"After one of our games, I remember one of the UBC coaches at the time, Mark Eckerle, came up to me after the game and was like 'Oh are you Amelia Crawford?' and gave me the whole speech," she explained in a phone interview with *The Ubyssey* last year.

She then went on a campus tour and was offered a spot on the team. Crawford signed on and her first year with the T-Birds could not have been better. After an early season loss, the team went on a 17-game winning streak where they finished atop the conference in the regular season, won the Canada West title game and ended the year by winning nationals.

"In first year, it was really exciting because we hosted nationals so we had a huge crowd for every game," she recalled. "I feel that because I was in my first year I was a bit naive about what was even happening. I was like 'Oh, this is what happens with this program,' like 'Oh, this is what university soccer is.'"

Her second season started with Symons replacing Marisa Kovacs as head coach. Despite the coaching change, the team managed to win the Canada West title again and earn another berth at nationals, reaffirming Crawford's beliefs about the program.

"I was like 'Oh, again UBC,'" she said with a laugh.

Crawford admits that her third- and fourth-year made her realize how difficult it was to qualify for nationals, as the team failed to advance past the Canada West final four.

"They sort of experienced both sides of it now and know how difficult it is to get to those stages." LUA PRESIDIO

Entering 2019, her final year at UBC, Crawford was now the last player remaining from the 2015 championship team.

It was expected that the team would carry three fifth-year players in 2019 since there were other fourth-year players in 2018, but Crawford was the only fourth-year who returned, as others eligible to return did not.

When asked why players had left early, a player said in an interview with *The Ubyssey* that some players "weren't as committed to doing a full student-athlete load."

"They were interested in other things rather than soccer and school," she said. "In the end it was maybe better for the team [to have] people being fully committed and [who] wanted to be there."

"And that's nothing against them at all, it's just if you want to be there then be there."

Between graduation and players leaving early, a total of ten players left the program following the 2018 season. While the team carried 27 players in 2018, the roster for 2019 was down to 24 with a third of the players having not played a game for the T-Birds.

"It was a bit tricky [because] we had a lot of turnover with the program," Crawford said.

"I think initially everyone was kind of concerned about that because [there were] a lot of open positions that were kind of left after that happened."

SHIFTING POSITIONS

With players leaving and positions left open in the lineup, Symons was searching for players able to fill those roles.

"There [were] definitely a couple questions in terms of our starting eleven," Symons said. "We [were] wrestling a bit with fullbacks and who to play in those sort of positions — one who could do the defensive job and also go forward when needed."

He asked Crawford about switching to fullback.

"He actually called me before [the] preseason started, I think it was July," Crawford recalls. "He's like 'How do you feel about playing defense?'"

Crawford thought Symons was joking at first. Throughout her time at UBC, she played mostly as forward and not fullback. Later, Crawford realized that her responsibilities in her new position were similar to her responsibilities as forward.

Symons described that this fullback position required a player who "could do the defensive job and also go forward when needed" while playing in the 4-4-2 diamond formation.

A quick Google search, or an afternoon playing FIFA, will show that the 4-4-2 diamond formation contains two strikers, or centre forwards, up front with two fullbacks and two centre-backs that form the backline.

The formation gets its name from the middle. Instead of the four midfielders forming a horizontal line, the midfielders form a diamond shape. At the top of the diamond there is an attacking midfielder and at the bottom there is a holding midfielder. The sides of the diamond are formed by wingers who play below the attacking midfielder and above the holding midfielder.

The formation is generally viewed as one suited for athletic teams that are attacking-minded. For example, what makes the diamond formation threatening is that it capitalizes on athletic fullbacks who can go up and join the attack. When this happens, the 4-4-2 diamond turns into a 3-5-2 with the fullback playing alongside the midfielders, on the attack, which can confuse opponents.

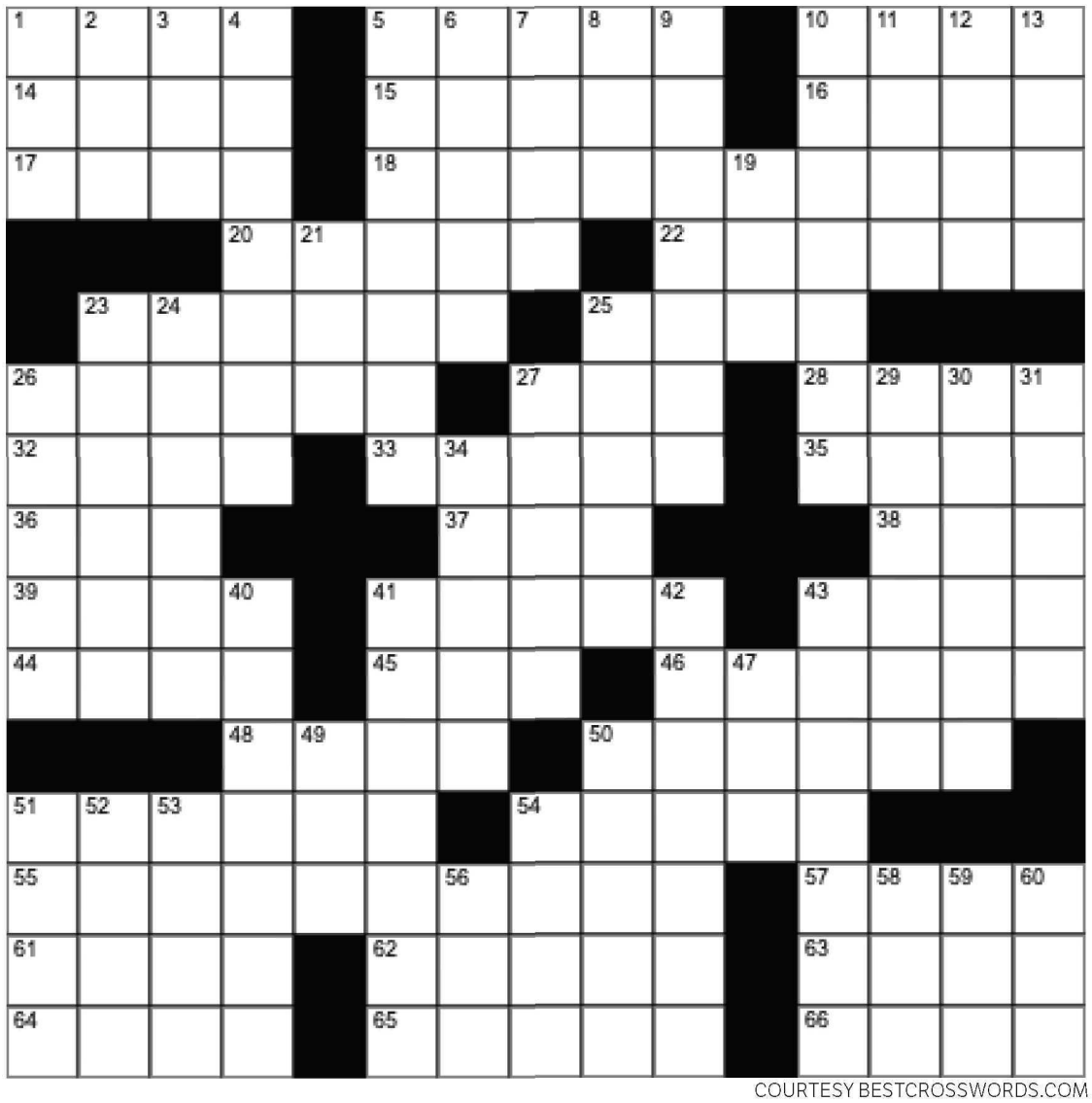
The key to the formation is its reliance on communication and coordination. For instance, often midfielders will rotate throughout a game and miscommunication between these players, or other players rotating, can lead to quality scoring chances for the opposing team.

The nuances of the 4-4-2 diamond might explain why most teams in the Canada West use the basic 4-3-3 formation. While the 4-3-3 formation is relatively straightforward in its shape, the diamond requires learning the role of different positions and Crawford admitted that the diamond can "be a bit frustrating" if you don't know where to be or get lost in the diamond.

As a fullback, Crawford was responsible for preventing such lapses. She said that the formation was introduced in past years, which allowed her to adjust to her new position while her younger teammates adjusted to playing in the 4-4-2 formation.

"If one person doesn't press or go to a position they are supposed to be in at certain times then the whole thing can break down," she explained. "Or if someone steps too soon, when they are not supposed to, then it can affect the whole system defensively."

This is part one of a four part series.



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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Boutique
5. Copper and zinc alloy
10. Pipe
14. Drachma replacement
15. Actress Taylor
16. ___ impasse
17. Short dog, for short
18. Office of a bishop
20. Autocrats
22. Irish prelate and scholar
23. Pretended
25. Immensely
26. Fix beforehand
27. ___ Marie Saint
28. Repeat
32. Grub
33. Hang in the air
35. Crowd sound
36. Mus. slowup
37. Title for Anthony Hopkins
38. Grazed
39. Of course!
41. ___ voce (softly)
43. Mlle-, across the Pyrenees
44. Suggestive look
45. Slangy suffix
46. Entertained
48. Hoar
50. Less fresh
51. Richards of *Jurassic Park*
54. Invoice word
55. Variety of melon
57. Suffix with buck
61. Years in old Rome
62. Ancient region of Asia Minor
63. Unfeeling
64. It may be compact
65. Conductor Dorati
66. Prefix with dextrous

DOWN

1. Calendar abbr.
2. Color shade
3. TV planet
4. Emily Dickinson, e.g.
5. Width
6. Dupe
7. Black cuckoos
8. French possessive
9. Worldly
10. Bartender
11. Beehive State
12. Soak leather in base solution
13. Steven Chu's cabinet dept.
19. Barcelona bear
21. Go after, in a way
23. Commendation
24. Parlour piece
25. Ward off
26. Jeopardy
27. Patti LuPone role
29. Rough
30. Seller of Stetsons
31. Mountain nymph
34. ___ Mio
40. Unpredictable
41. East African nation
42. Breakfast choice
43. Seedless raisin
47. Month after avril
49. ___ pig's eye!
50. Brown pigment
51. Mil. school
52. Rajah's wife
53. Roadside stops
54. Litter's littlest
56. Suffix with ball
58. Grog ingredient
59. Fed. fiscal agency
60. Kimono accessory

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