

FALL/WINTER 2023

A MODERN EDUCATION

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

STUDENT STRESS

The University of British Columbia

MAGAZINE

Today's
students,
tomorrow's
leaders

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Editor's Note



ZOOM LENS

Each generation of students is shaped by the unique historical context and social conditions of their time. In turn, their prevailing traits, values, and preferences leave a distinct mark on the post-secondary landscape.

Born between 1997 and 2012 (the years vary a little depending on whom you ask), Generation Z now accounts for most students at UBC. For many of them, by far the most influential factor affecting their university experience was the onset of COVID-19.

Beyond depriving them of an on-campus life among their peers, COVID-19 had many other repercussions for Gen Z students. Social isolation amplified levels of anxiety and depression already prevalent within this age group. And the economic ramifications of a global pandemic have meant a higher cost of living, along with a less-than-certain financial future and employment landscape.

But some of the traits that have been observed in Gen Z are helping them to tackle these disadvantages, along with the support of their universities. A greater willingness than previous generations for talking openly about emotional and psychological issues, for example, has helped to reduce the associated stigma. Gen Z have made mental health a priority, and many universities including UBC are acknowledging this by increasing the resources available to them (see page 22).

In terms of their financial health, Gen Z are reported to have significantly stronger entrepreneurial inclinations than other age groups. In recognition of this, universities are increasingly providing students with the opportunities and support to chase their ideas (see page 16).

Gen Z also have a reputation for being savvy consumers of education, with high expectations for their tuition dollar. The growing array of educational options available to them, and the emergence of alternative and less costly paths to desirable employment, have given them some leverage. Studies show they are more likely to favour universities that authentically reflect their generation's predominant values of social equality and responsible stewardship of the environment. Over the past five years, many universities in Canada and other countries have developed robust policies around equity, diversity, and inclusion, and student activism is persuading growing numbers of them to divest from fossil fuels.

It's clear that Gen Z are already leaving their mark on universities, but decades from now they will probably be mostly remembered as the students who not only endured a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, but also lived through the equally disrupting early years of generative AI (see page 8). Immersed from birth in a fully digital world, Gen Z are now on the cusp of a revolutionary period in teaching and learning. It's less than 10 years until Generation Alpha starts to come of age, but the university experience of this youngest generation is destined to be radically different from what has gone before.

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You have to hand it to our students.

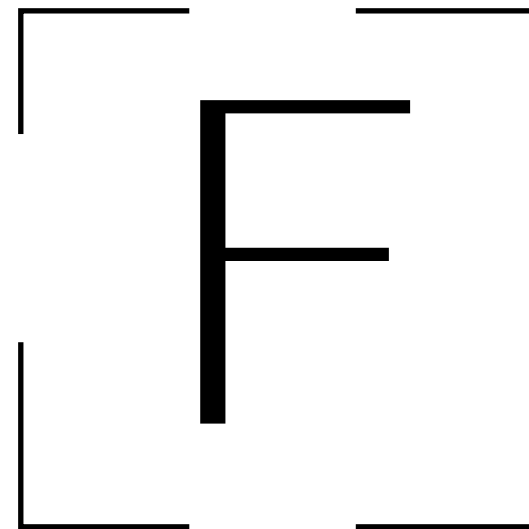
Gen Z at University

Most of today's university undergraduates were born in the 2000s. Like every generation before them, their formative years are being influenced by a distinct set of social conditions, significant events, opportunities, and challenges. What's it like to be a student today? What do Gen Z want from university? And how are universities helping them prepare for their (and our) futures?

The Gen Z Effect

Advances in technology, a global pandemic, and the steep cost of living are shaping Gen Z's experience of university – and they, in turn, are leaving their mark on campus.

BY JARED DOWNING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF LISTER



FROM A FIRE hydrant to a keg of beer, UBC has a rich history of joke candidates running for student president. Esmé Decker carried on this tradition in the 2022 elections by running as “Remy the Rat,” inspired by an infamous viral video of a rat in a campus eatery. To Decker’s surprise, Remy placed second, so in this year’s elections she ran as a serious candidate on a dual platform of climate action and food security. Remy remained as her running mate, and they adopted the campaign slogan: “Serving Rat-ical Ideas!” Decker won the presidency after a record voter turnout. (The eatery, it should be said, has since been given a clean bill of health by authorities.)

Decker isn’t surprised her Gen Z classmates responded to the rodent-themed campaign. It hadn’t been long since their return from a long and lonely period of virtual learning. Remy/Decker offered everything her generation craved: creativity, fun, individualism, and, most of all, a passion for issues that were bigger than the campus itself.

“I was a joke candidate, but I ended up putting together an actually serious campaign,” says Decker, who was supported by the student activist group Climate Justice UBC. “We were just trying to bring in big imaginings of what the Student Union could look like if it really pushed for some big, social justice-centered ideas.”

University campuses have always been hotbeds of activism and progressive ideas. But Decker and her fellow Gen Z students – those born sometime in the

late 90s or 00s who use words like “rizz” (short for charisma) and “sus” (short for suspicious) – are unlike the Millennials and Gen Xers that came before them. They are more connected and globally-minded. They have more avenues of communication and self-expression. They have their own notions of issues like mental health, gender equality, and institutional racism. They spent some of their formative years in an unprecedented global crisis. And now that they’re back on campus, they are reinventing the concept of university life.

Ainsley Carry has been working with students in American and Canadian universities for 25 years, most recently as vice-president, Students. He says the difference between Gen Zers and students of previous generations is in what Gen Zers feel their university owes them.

“When I went to university, when my parents went to university, we had fewer expectations on what the university should provide,” Carry explains. He says when he was in school, universities were responsible for dispensing education, and how students survived while gaining that education was, by and large, their own responsibility. But for many of the students he works with today, things like housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and even childcare are not seen as privileges, but rights.

“We have a lot more students who arrive now with this idea of, ‘I am paying tuition. I am a consumer. Therefore, the university must provide these things.’” But, continues Carry: “I don’t know if that’s a Gen Z trait, or if that’s just the new economy.”

After all, the old archetype of putting yourself through school by living frugally and working a part-time job is a bit out of date. Most university students have jobs on the side, but in a 2022 survey on the wellbeing of Canadian students conducted by Angus Reid, nearly half of the respondents reported feeling significantly stressed by education costs. This is compounded by rising housing costs – Vancouver being a prime example. Total student debt in Canada rose to \$22.3 billion as of 2020, according to the Canadian Federation of Students, with the average undergraduate borrower owing \$28,000.

If students are going to invest a small fortune in their education, they want more in return.

Carry also notices clear differences in the Gen Z worldview. They display a heightened interest in social justice, for example, having spent their teenage years amid movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo. They also place a greater emphasis on mental health and personal well-being. Finally, Gen Z students are more cognizant of their personal background and how it affects their education.

In light of this, Carry and his colleagues think about “new theories of student development,” which places greater emphasis on “pre-enrollment experiences” and “pre-enrollment trauma” – meaning the significant conditions or events that students carry with them onto campus. These range from watching one’s parents go through a difficult divorce, to experiencing racism, to fleeing your home country as a refugee.

“New theories of student development means thinking comprehensively about helping students adjust mentally, about healthcare needs and wellbeing. Student health is much more amplified today than it was in the 70s, 80s, and 90s.”

COVID-19, with its accompanying lockdowns, was a major event affecting both the mental health and educational experience of today’s students.

Dr. Neil Armitage, a UBC sociologist specializing in social change who lectures roughly 800 undergraduates a year, sees a clear line between pre- and post-pandemic Gen Z students. Gen Zers who were in college during and after the pandemic have a somewhat different view of the world – a world of Zoom meetings and virtual classrooms.

“Anecdotally, when I talk to my colleagues, we realize that there’s been a negative impact of COVID. Two, three years online, a lot got missed,” he says. During the pandemic, classrooms became bedrooms and kitchen tables. Students knew their classmates as floating heads in Brady Bunch-style box grids (to use a cross-generational reference). At any moment, students could play games, scroll social media in another window, or simply turn off their cameras and wander off. It’s no wonder, Armitage argues, that they struggled to stay connected. Although in-person classes have resumed, the struggle continues.

“This is the first time in my career that if I’m going to do group activities with my students, I actually have to set up rules and protocols for how to do them – because they’re so unfamiliar and uncomfortable, sometimes, with just starting a conversation or making those connections. That’s slightly alarming,” Armitage says.

Armitage, a former learning strategist at the Centre for Student Involvement and Careers, says the rise of high-tech learning may have permanently changed how Gen Zers think of education in general. Students can attend a lecture from a treadmill at the gym or from a beach in Cancun. They can conjure up tailored selections of journal articles for any topic in seconds and then use ChatGPT to write detailed research summaries.

“They’re very much a quick access, on-demand generation. There is this idea of, ‘If you just allow me to access the information, then I will learn it,’” Armitage continues. “Whereas, there is also a social model of learning where you learn from your peers in a shared space.”

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Esmé Decker agrees that her first year in a pandemic-era, virtual UBC was an isolating experience. But she arrived on campus ready to make up for lost time. In fact, part of why she ran her gag candidacy for Student Union president was to get people more interested in campus society. She immediately threw herself into clubs and organizations, including Climate Justice UBC and UBC Climate Hub.

As an English major, she describes herself as a “climate storyteller.” To her, climate change is the defining Gen Z issue. “We’re growing up in a world where we’re not only worried about climate change but also seeing the effects of it. Around the world, all the time.”

Likewise, no generation has been as equipped to rally around such a massive, global issue, Decker argues. After all, student pressure played a large part in prompting UBC’s 2020 commitment to fully divest its assets from fossil fuels by 2030.

“I would think that Gen Z has an especially global mindset just because of the access to information and connectivity. The world is more connected, but because it’s so big, it makes you feel small, right? You’re connected to so much, taking in so much information all the time. To grow up like that, there’s just more awareness of what’s going on. Each person is dealing with their own struggles, but we’re more connected to this global struggle as well.”

Working with the new wave of undergraduate students, Ainsley Carry has also observed a stronger connection between Gen Z students and the world outside their campus – as well as an eagerness to get out in it. Students are working on their careers the moment they step on campus, taking on internships as early as their first or second years.

Neil Armitage has observed the same eagerness to get out into the world, but it gives him pause. It may mean that students are more likely to view university as a stepping stone rather than a rewarding experience in and of itself. For many students, what has traditionally been a journey of self-reflection and self-discovery has become a series of boxes to check on the way to their next stage in life.

He thinks this reflects a consumer model of education and a preoccupation with getting a return on their investment. “Students can be like cost/benefit analysts,” he says, adding that this is likely driven by uncertainty about the future.



“They want to play it safe and stay ‘on the right track.’ They want everything itemized, listed, and easy – to be given steps from one thing to the next thing, to the next thing.” He calls this phenomenon “education by Lego.”

That said, Armitage says Gen Z has been challenging universities to change for the better, shaking faculty “out of our ruts” and redefining the concept of higher education.

“In Arts especially, students sometimes get tired of us talking pessimistically, and not having any theories of change or action. As academics, we’re very good at explaining the issues but not always good at addressing them. We can delve more deeply into issues than students do in their everyday lives, but they’re not just looking for understanding – they’re also looking for change.”

He believes their passion for activism and positive change will also help them discover and fight for solutions to rising education costs.

“I’m glad that there is an activist voice there,” he says. “There’s a more political force within Gen Z.”

▼
Esmé Decker, AMS President, in the students’ building, affectionately known as the “Student Nest.”

If any student embodies this passion, it is Esmé Decker, who is keen to lead change on campus. She is also eager to get out into the professional world, but only once she has finished a teaching program. Motivated partly by British Columbia’s teacher shortage, she plans to spend her career in a classroom as a secondary-level English and language teacher. “I want to support more students along the path to wherever they want to go in life. And I think engaging with storytelling and communication is just such an important part of that.”

Decker’s time at UBC has not been merely a stepping stone or a box to tick. Rather, her involvement in campus life, including her unexpected vault into student politics, has helped shape her goals and passions. She hopes to implant in future generations the same sense of responsibility, creativity, and passion she shares with her classmates – though not necessarily as Remy the Rat.

A LEARNING RENAISSANCE

Potent new technologies are redefining education,
offering both exciting possibilities and daunting challenges.

BY CHRIS CANNON | ILLUSTRATION BY BEATRIX HATCHER

WHAT IF SHAKESPEARE were infinite?

What if, instead of suffering a limited inventory of plays and sonnets, we could commission a digital bard to generate entirely new works on demand – a tool that can access the whole of his published works, the historical records of the period, the centuries of literary criticism since, and principles from adjacent academic domains such as theatre, psychology, and communications, and then synthesize that information to relate in perfect iambic pentameter an alternate ending where Romeo and Juliet live happily ever after?

Where would these equally masterful works fit in the canon – and in the curriculum?

For some, this is a terrifying deviation from traditional forms of knowledge. For others, it’s a grab bag of opportunities to learn beyond what is taught, even to redefine knowledge as not just a collection of facts, but, as Bruce Lee put it, “a continuous state of inquiry without conclusion.”

MASTERING THE TOOLS

Welcome to the rapidly changing classroom, where generative artificial intelligence (AI) is just the latest in a quick succession of technological changes that have redefined the day-to-day operations of the learning space, remaking the classic trio of reading, writing, and arithmetic into querying, coding, and data analysis.

Whether this growing cadre of machine-driven classroom tools will serve our existing educational model or create an entirely new type of inquiry is only beginning to play out. But as the rate technology adapts to us begins to outpace the rate we can adapt to it, the Gen Z classroom is becoming less about processing information and more about learning the tools that process information for us.

“All of us are required to be continually learning because the tools themselves are changing at a pace that it’s almost impossible to keep up with,” says David Vogt, who teaches *Ventures in Learning Technologies* for UBC’s Master of Educational Technology program. “But I think that toolbox is

stimulating what I would call a New Renaissance. All of these students having access to all of these tools is going to unleash a flood of creativity such as we probably have never seen before in the history of humanity. That’s a very exciting, but daunting, world to live in.”

Today’s students have to do more than learn these tools; they have to maintain a critical mindset when using them. Their parents and grandparents had no cause to worry about the ethical implications of punching keys on a calculator or typewriter, but as Gen Z endures the first wave of generative tools – machines that synthesize and create rather than just catalogue and connect – they have to be more than tech literate; they have to be tech-critical as well.

Just as the rise of the synthesizer in the 70s turned every pianist into an orchestra, AI in the 2020s is turning every student into a polymath.

“I feel an obligation for students to have an understanding at least in a broad sense of what kinds of technologies will be pertinent to their careers and what kinds of technologies might affect their clients, and am trying to introduce them to the ways that automation might be relevant to legal practice,” says Kristen Thomasen, professor at UBC’s Allard School of Law. “What is really significant here? What’s actually different compared to all the technologies that we’ve grown up with and that we’re used to?”

Whether it’s pushing a cog or preparing a legal brief, automation redefines the purpose of a workplace from one of craft to one of assembly. As intellectual tasks are increasingly offloaded to machines, today’s students are preparing to be tomorrow’s workers, learning less about the technical minutiae of their profession and more about how to oversee the

machines that will be performing those tasks for them.

In her course *Law, Robotics, and Society*, Thomasen explores how this new wave of intellectual automation requires students to understand the promises and pitfalls of smarter tech, a concept Gen Z – as the first crop of digital natives – seems to have been preparing for their whole lives.

“This generation of students has a very nuanced understanding of new technology,” says Thomasen. “Students recognize the importance of being adept in using new technologies. But I also think having grown up with social media in a way that other generations did not, they are very attuned to the individual and political consequences of ever more pervasive tech.”

INTEGRATING THE TOOLS

Today’s classroom serves as a living laboratory to experiment with these sea-changes in technology, with students often leading the way. About the same time Gen Z found themselves sidelined by the pandemic and diving into remote learning, they were gaining access to early versions of ChatGPT – the “deep-learning” artificial intelligence that uses layered neural networks to process and learn from vast amounts of data. Just as the rise of the synthesizer in the 70s turned every pianist into an orchestra, AI in the 2020s is turning every student into a polymath.

“In 2020 the technology was ready to be integrated in a coursework setting, but it was mostly spearheaded by students,” says Ioan “Miti” Isbasescu, head of Software Systems in the UBC Engineering Physics project lab. In his course *Machine Learning for Robotics*, Isbasescu asks students to

use these tools to create a literature review on a topic of their choice. He was surprised by the breadth of interests his students were able to exhibit once they had access to these digital personal assistants.

“Students discussed topics as broad as how to establish the location of exit doors in a cinema to prevent a stampede, to deep fake generation and detection of political figures, to generating never-ending videos of landscapes, to creating music when you don’t have any musical abilities, to discovering new properties of materials, and even how to attack neural network systems to undermine someone’s use of them. And large language models are just one tool students are exploring – their toolbox is growing and overflowing with new tools.”

Upending the traditional fear that students will use AI to help them with their homework, Isbasescu has accepted its inevitability. Instead of putting the onus on students to avoid using generative tools to write assignments, he changed how the assignments are evaluated. He traded graded homework for weekly interviews, ensuring that students can communicate what kind of code they developed and how deeply they understand its function.

This year, Isbasescu is experimenting with an AI teaching assistant, using it to explore core concepts of the class and to provide code that would normally be written by the students, such as generating mathematical functions to govern repetitive tasks. “I knew that going into the workforce after they graduate, they would be using these tools,” adds Isbasescu. “And I thought, okay, this is a very good opportunity to get a taste for the tools, and it’s also a good springboard for us discussing all these ethical implications of them.”

To his surprise, Isbasescu discovered a human teaching assistant was needed to oversee the artificial one – a “handler” of sorts who is an expert in the subject matter being taught. The handler spots mistakes made by the AI, and then uses these errors as teaching moments, giving

students opportunities to understand the subject matter even more deeply by recognizing and correcting these mistakes themselves.

“There’s this whole idea of AI alignment,” says Isbasescu. “In the beginning, the AI will be aligned with the truth, or what we perceive as being truthful. But then further and further into the curriculum, it is probably going to start diverging from the truth in most classrooms, because AI outputs are not aligned with telling the truth as much as they are aligned with keeping the audience engaged in the conversation. This is where an expert needs to weigh in on the accuracy of the statements, so the AI has to be supervised by an expert in the domain.”

KEEPING UP WITH THE PACE

While this new wave of game-changing technology puts a great deal of power into the hands of the student, it isn’t as democratic as it might seem. As in any classroom, students who master the tools have an easier time mastering the work. Since the tools of generative intelligence cut across all academic fields, the best-performing students will be the ones who can keep up.

“The technology development is accelerating, and there is a real problem that many of the students will be left behind,” says Isbasescu. “The top students are becoming fluent at integrating these tools in their work, benefiting dramatically, while other students are feeling overwhelmed.”

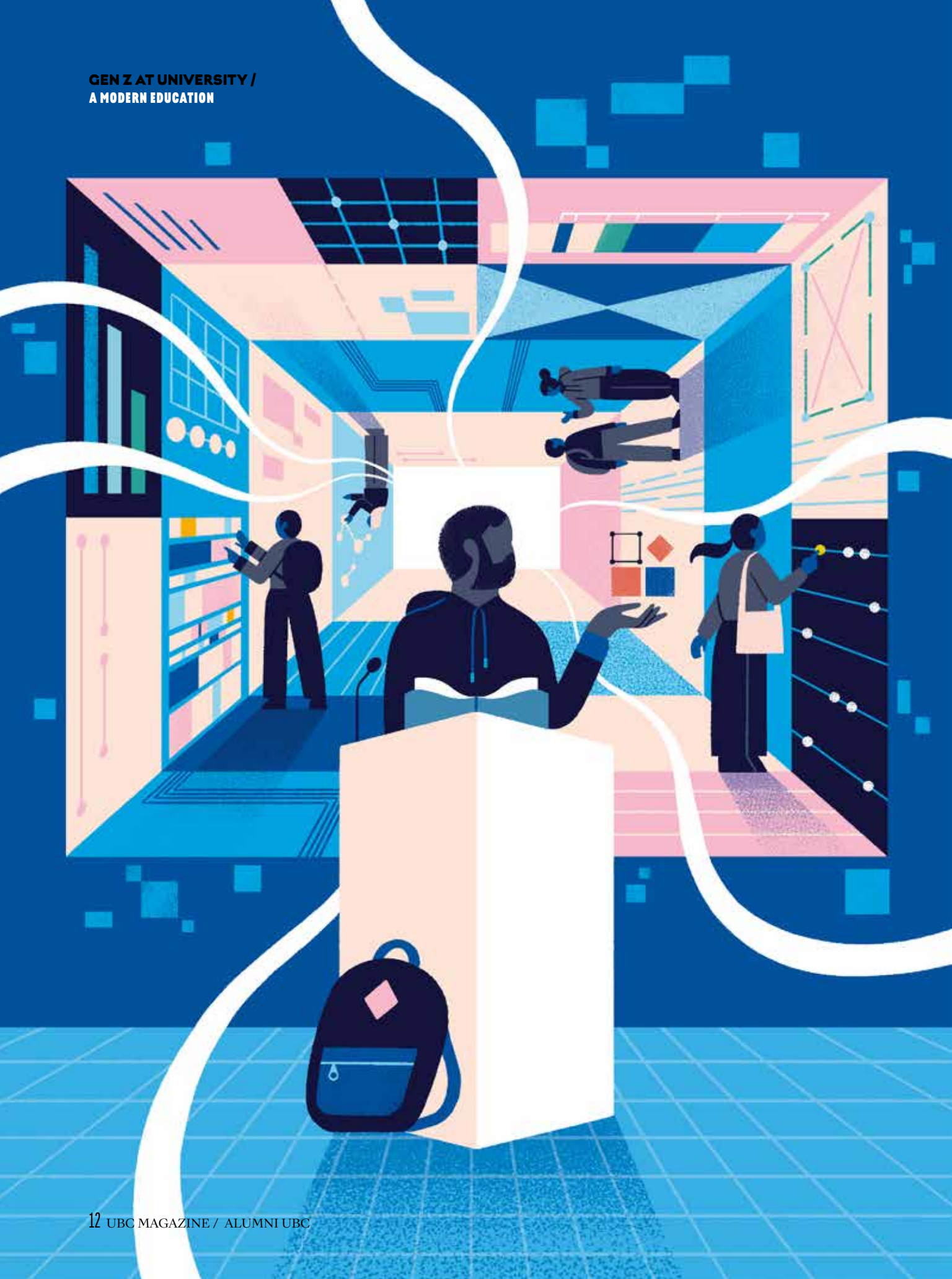
It’s not a stretch to imagine a near future where the traditional classroom does not exist at all, the education system itself replaced by a less costly and more productive model of “algorithmic deans” that create personalized educational experiences for each student based on their interests and societal needs.

But whatever scenario is coming, it’s coming at us almost too fast to process, and it’s easy to overlook how much technological turnover Gen Z has already faced compared to previous generations. Though we’re more than half a century into

the internet, only in the past decade has the classroom moved beyond using it as a reference work and towards its potential as an immersive experience, ranging from virtual reality tools to personalized learning platforms to the sudden shift to remote learning brought on by the pandemic.

It has also been about a decade since microchip technology, the accumulation of digital information, and open-source sharing have been brought together to catapult artificial intelligence to the forefront of education – a change that even digital natives might not be prepared for.

“My experience watching many generations engage with emerging technologies is that every new generation tends to embrace the technology of the day, but this doesn’t necessarily build any propensity for them to embrace the next generation’s technology,” says Vogt. “We need to remember there were earlier, less-intense precursors of ‘digital’ generations with home computers, calculators, and even television and radio. I don’t expect that a generation immersed in social media will automatically adopt or demand AI because of that immersion. They’ll be just as existing-technology-bound as previous generations. This is where Gen Z, like every preceding generation, will feel left behind in the technological dust.”



DEMOCRATIZING THE LECTERN

Today's students are not passive recipients of knowledge.
They are active participants in their own education.

BY CHRIS CANNON | ILLUSTRATION BY BEATRIX HATCHER

ANY WELL-CREASED academic will tell you that changes in pedagogy move at a glacial pace. For thousands of years, students have learned by sitting at the feet of a master – chiseling, writing, or typing notes into a tablet – memorizing facts in the hope that they may, one day, find themselves on the power side of the lectern. There was a brief moment in ancient Greece when someone suggested replacing monologues with dialogues, but the conversation did not end well for him.

Is this a gross oversimplification? Yes. Is it really that far from the truth? No.

There have, of course, been teachers and schools over the years that valued interaction over the lecture method. But only in the current century have practices arisen like the “flipped classroom,” “cooperative exams,” and “ungrading.” These methods empower students to shape their own curricula, collaboratively tackle real-world problems, and receive continuous feedback rather than letter grades – turning traditional education spaces into laboratories for student-led learning.

“We have a lot of faculty at UBC Okanagan who are taking a scholarly approach to their teaching,” says Peter Arthur, founding director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at UBC’s Okanagan campus. “So that’s delving in, consulting the literature, and using evidence-based practice. They’re asking, ‘What does the research say about how students learn best, and consequently, how can I best teach?’”

In this environment, the curriculum places less emphasis on memorizing facts and more on critical thinking and problem-solving, bringing about more interactive,

hands-on, and student-centered approaches to teaching and learning. Instead of passive receivers of knowledge, students are becoming partners in its creation.

Seen through the eyes of a generation that grew up surrounded by the greatest expansion of technology and “interconnectedness” in human history, this shouldn’t be a surprise. The modern student has the world at their fingertips – no longer an empty bucket to be filled by a guru, they have gained some control over the spigot. “The teacher role has changed from ‘holder of knowledge’ to ‘facilitator of learning,’ which is very different,” adds Arthur. “Instead of the instructor being the sage on the stage, they are the guide on the side.”

In a sense, this is a democratization of the lectern. The digital age has given Gen Z broader access to other perspectives and unparalleled control over their own voices compared with previous generations of learners, so they come into the classroom with expectations of teaching methods that give them a sense of responsibility for their world and their place in it.

“Most of these initiatives like flipped classrooms were in progress long before Gen Z,” says Celeste Leander, professor of teaching in the departments of Botany and Zoology in the Faculty of Science. “What I noticed immediately with Gen Z is that they tend to be less tech-focused (ie, don’t need to have the latest phone), are concerned about their world in a proactive way, and are engaged. I think their collective, relatively responsible nature makes things like ungrading easier.”

On the ground, this plays out as a move from lecture-based learning to project-based learning, where students actively

solve real-world problems or explore real-world questions, often working in teams, integrating multiple subjects, and learning their tools as they go.

So how do teachers assign grades in these complex and interconnected team environments? Often they don't.

"The minute there's a point or a grade attached to something, that's what students focus on," adds Leander. "Why did I get this point off? What's my grade? And that's what they're after, rather than being internally motivated by learning the thing that they're there to learn."

"Traditional ways of grading don't measure what we think they're measuring, and they don't necessarily promote learning in the way that we think that they do. The community of educators is venturing away from the traditional sit in a seat, take an exam method, and moving into more of a student-based participation in their assessment. I think it gives students a lot of power back. They feel like they have agency in their own educational journey, which I think is important."

The modern student has the world at their fingertips – no longer an empty bucket to be filled by a guru, they have gained some control over the spigot.

Leander is five semesters into her self-grading experiment for her 3rd-year course *Integrative Biology Laboratory*, which she changed when students returned to classrooms after the pandemic. Most had been learning online for the previous two years and had never set foot in a college lab, so she wanted to give them "a safe place to land" by letting them evaluate their own work and assign themselves a grade based on a thoroughly written self-evaluation.

That evaluation is now a 25-page course reflection. Each student has to go through each of their class

projects in detail, evaluating what they could improve, what they learned, and what they did well, then suggesting the grade they should receive for the course.

The pedagogy is centered around these self-evaluated projects, which this semester include studying environmental conditions in a salmon stream, writing a report for the City of Vancouver, conducting a seafood forensics investigation, authoring a detailed paper on their research procedures, and creating a team project from scratch and writing their results in a course journal.

Although Leander discusses grade suggestions with students who may be missing the mark, she has found the students pretty fair with themselves – and happier with the class. "They say that they're more motivated to learn without grades," says Leander. "They say that they work harder, which we do think is true."

For a host of reasons, there will still be the need for some form of quantitative evaluation of students, whether it comes in the form of traditional standards-based testing, self-assigned grades, or competency evaluations. But just as we downloaded penmanship tasks to the typewriter and math tasks to the calculator, we are on the cusp of downloading memorized data to artificial intelligence for storage and synthesis, freeing us to spend more time flexing our higher thinking skills – and, of course, learning these new tools.

"Do we really need students to learn how to memorize X, Y, and Z?" asks Arthur. "Or do we need them to be able to find X, Y, and Z and apply it in an authentic way? Because after we credential them and they're out in the real world, they're going to continually need to learn how to learn because their context will constantly be changing. They need to be lifelong learners. So we need to prepare them for that."

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL POWER TO THE INFORMED



Young Entrepreneurs

Raised in the digital age, independently minded, and faced with an uncertain financial future, many Gen Zers aspire to establish their own ventures.

BY RICHARD LITTLEMORE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAI JACOBSON

STATISTICALLY AND ANECDOTALLY, Generation Z seems to be rising on the bubbling tide of entrepreneurialism – a mostly modern mix of business discipline and optimism. And the team behind the entrepreneurship ecosystem at UBC is working across the institution to ensure that the entrepreneurial ethos and skillset, which are hard to teach, are nevertheless easy to learn.

Statistically, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports that the number of Canadians involved in entrepreneurship has increased by more than 50 per cent over the last decade; in 2021, about 20 per cent of the adult population was either planning or actively starting a new business. GEM also found in 2020 that individuals aged 18 to 24 were more entrepreneurially inclined than any other age group.

Anecdotaly, Fraser Pogue (BSc’04, MBA’15), a lecturer, entrepreneur-in-residence, and entrepreneurship leader at the Sauder School of Business, says that trend is well reflected at UBC. As an undergrad in the late 1990s, he says, few of his fellow students expressed any intention of creating a job in their spare time. “But now, I ask who has tried a side hustle, and a third to a half of the class put up their hands.”

It shouldn’t be a surprise, Pogue says, in part because advances in computing and technology make many kinds of innovations easier – “you have rapid prototyping and rapid software development.” But Pogue finds the gathering enthusiasm for making their own way in business also has a specific social component. “Younger people have so much access to influencer channels, on social media and even on television (*Dragon’s Den*, for example). They see people like themselves in entrepreneurial roles, and they begin to see it as a viable option.”

Pogue acknowledges the challenges of the current job market but says the students he sees are not being forced into the entrepreneurial space; they’re embracing it. “Students want something more exciting than a job you drag yourself into the office for every day. They want to create something unique, something the world hasn’t seen. It’s about financial autonomy, but it’s also about fun.”

Pogue teaches the COMM 280 course at Sauder, simply called *Entrepreneurship*. It’s a hands-on introduction to the entrepreneurial essentials such as creating viable opportunities; building a team; strategic planning; going to market; fleshing out your organization; and looking ahead to business’s future requirements, and to the complications of the entrepreneur’s evolving role.

At a higher level, Pogue also teaches *New Venture Design*, a 4th year course offered between Sauder and the School of Applied Science, which regularly attracts more than 240 applications for its 82 seats. The course matches business and engineering students who work together on actual ventures. Pogue describes it as a safe space to learn entrepreneurial skills: “Even if your business fails, you still get the school credit and move on – but you’ve learned about the entrepreneurial mindset!” As well, the engineering students receive a capstone credit for any prototype that they build.

NEIL MITRA, 19

DEGREE PROGRAM: Biomedical Engineering (Presidential Scholar)

COMPANY NAME: Mitra Biotechnologies

ELEVATOR PITCH: Mitra seeks to create the world’s first point-of-care test to detect heart attacks, using nanomaterials to greatly accelerate the speed of conventional blood tests.

BACKGROUND STORY: A serial science fair over-achiever (he’s won Gold in the Canada-wide Science Fair and in the international Inspo Research and Innovation Competition), Neil Mitra began his venture when he was in Grade 10, after a favourite aunt was felled by a heart attack. The teen quickly insinuated himself into his hometown post-secondary leader, the University of Waterloo, studying and interviewing faculty, post-docs, physicians and cardiologists, boldly looking for the answer to a problem that big biomedical firms such as Roche and Abbott have already spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to solve. Now 19, he’s heading into second year and managing a company that includes a full-time researcher and former executives from both Novartis and Abbott.

WHERE NEXT? In five years, Mitra would like to complete patient trials and regulatory approvals and to see his test available in every ambulance and emergency room on the continent, enabling first responders and doctors to make the time-critical treatment decisions necessary to save thousands of lives.

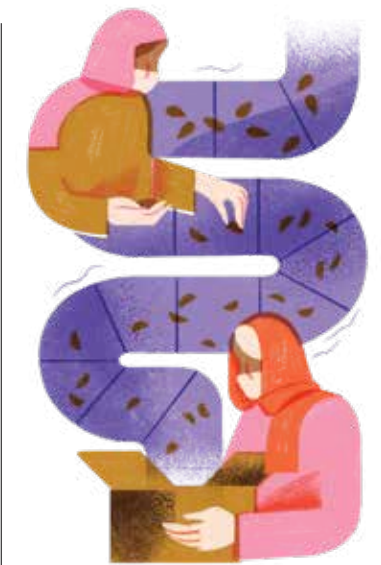


Outside the classroom, Pogue is a venture activator for entrepreneurship@UBC (e@UBC), a service that provides UBC students, recent alumni, researchers, faculty members, and staff with the resources, networks, and funding they need to succeed.

e@UBC has a range of programs that support new ventures and help those involved build their entrepreneurial experience and skills. For example, the Institute for Computing, Information and Cognitive Systems (ICICS) Hatch Venture Builder is a late-stage accelerator for technical and social innovations that have already demonstrated their commercial potential. In addition to a full array of supports from e@UBC, Hatch also offers maker-space or wet lab space for testing, developing, and launching innovative products, as well as office space and access to custom developed boardrooms or conference rooms for start-ups.

For earlier stages, e@UBC offers a 16-week intensive incubator program that concentrates first on getting customer validation for new business ideas. Pogue says the program “flips the usual university approach upside down.” In traditional circumstances, he says, university researchers are inclined to develop something innovative and then go looking for a market, rather than identifying a compelling problem and a specific customer segment. Pogue stresses that this is in no way a criticism of any part of the university’s innovation infrastructure: “The world needs inventors and great inventions, but a great invention doesn’t automatically translate into a commercial success. Entrepreneurship is a mindset. We say, ‘Let’s get out of the building and check with the customers.’” The incubator is

“They want something more exciting than a job you drag yourself into the office for every day. They want to create something unique, something the world hasn’t seen. It’s about financial autonomy, but it’s also about fun.”



Illustrations: Vanessa Lovegrove

KHATIRA DARYABI, 20

DEGREE PROGRAM: BA/Master of Management

COMPANY NAME: Batour

ELEVATOR PITCH: Batour creates job opportunities for Afghani women – mostly single mothers – whom the Taliban government generally denies the right to work. They clean and process organic fruit, nuts, and rice for sale internationally.

BACKGROUND STORY: A high-profile girls’ rights advocate in Afghanistan (from age nine, she was teaching other girls to ride bicycles), Daryabi began facing threats and abuse. This escalated when she was away attending a summer camp in New York City in 2018, aged 14. Fearful of going home, Daryabi made her way, alone, to Canada. Living here in foster care, she recruited her father, an experienced exporter, to help her make jobs for at-risk women by creating a female-only workplace designed to protect worker anonymity. Batour currently employs four in Kabul to process food products that might otherwise be wasted, and Daryabi is connecting with women’s groups in other developing countries to reproduce the model.

WHERE NEXT? By 2033, Daryabi says she wants to “empower and positively impact the lives of 100,000 women in developing countries through job opportunities and education, fostering gender equality and measuring progress based on increased employment rates and educational attainment.”



CONNOR ROSE, 26

DEGREE PROGRAM: BA (paused to pursue start-up)

COMPANY NAME: IRLY

ELEVATOR PITCH: Rose and his partner Laura Rollock have created an online dating app that promotes interaction and relationship building through interactive games.

BACKGROUND STORY: Tired of superficial dating apps that let people present a false image and, even then, don't produce an actual date more than 90 per cent of the time, Rose and Rollock created an app with an early, low-risk option to meet by video online. Beta testing indicated that people particularly liked the games IRLY had included as conversation starters and relationship builders, so the team retooled and relaunched, focusing on the games. They caught the interest and partnership of Cameron Dallas (an influencer with 24 million followers) and raised more than \$500,000. Rose says, "Attraction is built over time." IRLY allows it to happen.

WHERE NEXT? In five years, Rose would like to bump the likes of Bumble, Tinder, and Hinge off the dating app podium. He says, "I want to build something that has impact – a tool to help people meet." Asked (in the context of Match.com's \$10-billion valuation) if he's also interested in making some money, Rose laughs and says, "Hey, I'm not gonna lie!"

also available to people at every stage in their academic career, often giving Gen Z students a chance to test their entrepreneurial skills early.

The incubator program is free (another boon for Gen Z aspirants) and, unusually in this field, doesn't require applicants to commit an equity share in any ultimately successful venture. Running it twice a year, e@UBC generally fields 40 applicants per cohort, accepting 15 (but often inviting the others to regroup and try again on the next round). In addition to helping with market validation, they also provide a full slate of support services, including one-one-one interactions with up to 20 mentors experienced in everything from sales and marketing to raising money, hiring, or creating culture in a new business. Venturers that prove their potential through the first round are then invited to work through an extended period of support, a one- to two-year "process of creation" that includes weekly meetings with the same array of mentors and subject-matter experts – as well as arranged pitch sessions with investors.

Students who have benefited from the incubator program are effusive in their gratitude. Khatira Daryabi, who is launching a company aimed at creating safe opportunities for Afghani women to make money by participating in an organic food export market, says the e@UBC program gave her a taste of "how it looks to live in a business world. It was a beautiful experience." And that no matter how busy they were, Daryabi said that Pogue and others on the team were always there to help. "Not once did I hear, 'No, go figure it out.'"

Connor Rose, another member of the most recent cohort agrees, saying that when the first release of IRLY, his proposed dating app, seemed destined for an early failure, Fraser helped IRLY retool, quickly changing from an unpopular video-meeting platform to a promising games model, and also set Rose and his partner up to raise a new round of financing to build and release a second version.

The very range of business proposals they see every year reinforces what Pogue points out as one of the fundamental challenges in the entrepreneurial world: "There is no template. The environment is not structured; it's chaotic."

Neil Mitra, a biomedical engineering student and health products innovator, agrees with his mentor. "Entrepreneurship is difficult because there are no right answers," he says. "It's not like a physics problem; it's nondeterministic. The engineering and science are easier to deal with."

Looking at the history of UBC spin-off companies, including leaders in engineering (Westport Innovations), high-tech (D-Wave Systems), and biotech (from QLT to Abcellera), it's clear the university has long had an entrepreneurial inclination. Even great ideas don't get to market by themselves. But with an expanded entrepreneurial ecosystem and a generation of students determined to make market connections – and change the world for the better – the stage is set for a new surge in technical, biomedical, and social innovation.



STAY INFORMED >



Anxiety and depression are widespread among today's students. Campuses are helping vulnerable students find healthy ways to cope.

BY ROBERTA STALEY | ILLUSTRATION BY ASIA PIETRZYK

OLIVIA LUNDMAN'S FIRST year at UBC was a struggle. For the first time in her life, the kinesiology student was living on her own and felt overwhelmed by social anxiety. As a presidential scholar, she felt pressured to achieve top grades, and as a member of the Thunderbirds Track and Field team and Olympic hopeful, she felt compelled to improve her race walking times. "I would go to classes and then go to training," says the self-confessed perfectionist.

On weekends, Lundman was a near-recluse, hunching over textbooks instead of socializing. She continually compared herself with others. "I felt I wasn't doing as much and didn't know as much as them," she says, and observing her peers make friends and ease into university life only fed her sense of isolation and depression.

In her second year, Lundman made a concerted effort to socialize more, until the stress of midterms caused her to spiral again. "A mess," Lundman called her mom, who urged her to connect with a physician and therapist. Following multiple counselling sessions, Lundman ended up "in a much better head space."

Today, she is president of the UBC chapter of Jack.org, a charity that trains young leaders in advocating for mental health and revolutionizing care. "We mainly focus on awareness and education for mental health support," explains Lundman. "We educate students on how to support others who might be struggling with their mental health, and we show them how to be there for themselves and how to be there for others."

Mental health is as precious as physical health, but can be particularly precarious for students due to the Hydra heads of study pressures, holding down jobs to cover the high cost of rent and food, being away from family, and the more anti-social aspects of social media.

"Students at university are at the stage in their life where they're experiencing huge changes as well as being placed under a lot of stress," says Lundman. "And it's also a stage when individuals want to impress their peers, which tends to cause them not to express their struggles to others for the fear of appearing weak."

She also notes the effects of starting university during the pandemic. "I think a lot of students suffered academically and mentally because those social connections that you normally make in your first year were hampered."

Dr. Daniel Vigo, an assistant professor in UBC's Department of Psychiatry and School of Population and Public Health, says students are showing "widespread

psychological distress and a high prevalence of mental disorders, particularly anxiety and depression." This isn't necessarily bad, says Vigo, as long as they remain below a certain threshold; sometimes, elevated stress, anxiety or sadness is expected, and, if managed adequately, can help students adapt to extreme circumstances like COVID-19. However, mental disorders can also become disabling, he adds.

Vigo, who is a psychiatrist and clinical psychologist, spearheaded the Student E-Mental Health Project, funded by Health Canada. Starting in 2019, just before the pandemic, a weekly online survey was sent to a randomized selection of students from UBC, University of Toronto, McMaster, and SFU. Due to the timing, researchers had a "weekly photograph of how the mental health and substance use of students evolved during the pandemic," Vigo says.

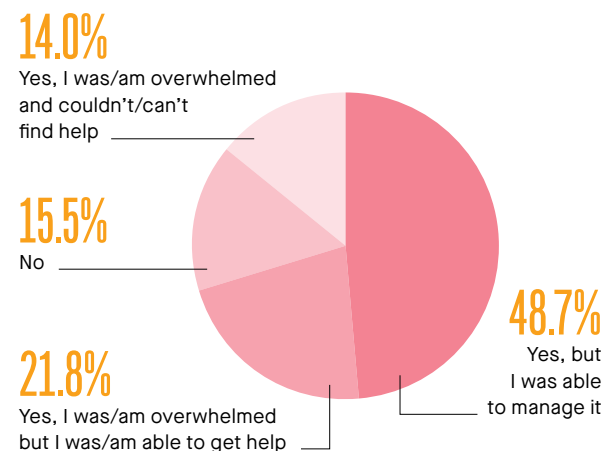
An important finding of the survey was how resilient students are. The majority coped well with COVID-19. However, a "vulnerable" minority of about 14 per cent showed debilitating anxiety, distress, and suicidal thoughts, and were unable to access help. Some young people cope with stress by turning to alcohol or drugs, but others aren't able to cope at all; Statistics Canada reports an average of 775 suicides every year among youth aged 15 to 29.

That statistic is partly why Lundman is so passionate about helping students who are struggling. "It makes me sad and angry that we're losing all these lives due to our inability to address and advocate for everyone's mental wellbeing," she says. "There are so many different reasons why someone might make that choice, but I think there's also a lot of things we can do to help reduce that statistic."

Vigo's research found that "suicidality," which refers to thinking about, planning, or attempting suicide, seems to follow the academic calendar and is highest during final exams. His findings informed the development of an app called Minder, which was co-developed with UBC students and provides evidence-based interventions for psychological distress and substance use, including self-guided tools, connecting students with trained peer coaches, and immediately matching students mulling suicide with a counsellor at UBC.

Vigo estimates that nearly two per cent of UBC students meet criteria for stimulant use disorder in their lifetime, involving prescription stimulants, cocaine, methamphetamine or crystal meth. He is concerned about the

HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING?



availability of street drugs possibly contaminated with deadly synthetic opiates like fentanyl and carfentanil, and the risk these pose for accidental overdoses. The Minder app provides information on substance use while UBC's Wellness Centre provides free fentanyl test strips as well as training in the use of naloxone, which reverses accidental overdoses.

On a more positive note, the survey found a majority of Gen Z is quite open to admitting mental health struggles. Lundman is a good example. Although she initially dismissed her angst as "normal school stress," and pretended everything was fine, she eventually reached out to others who may have been facing similar anxieties by posting about her feelings on social media. On her Instagram page – "beneath.the.surface.x" – she shares her own mental health experiences alongside those of others she has encountered.

"My main goal is to increase awareness, because I think the more stories you read, the more de-stigmatized mental illness becomes, and the more you become accepting of those around you," she says. "If we don't talk about the pressure and the status of our mental health, then everyone's going to just keep it all bottled up inside and continue to deteriorate on the inside."

For UBC students needing help with day-to-day pressures, or those facing unexpected challenges, assistance is close at hand, with counsellors located at Brock Hall and embedded in faculties and programs across campus, says psychologist Dr. Kirby Huminuik, the director of Counselling Services at UBC. Students can book a remote or in-person session, often that same day, and they can get help to navigate the wide range of supports and services that are available. Mental health supports include self-directed resources, educational and interpersonal workshops, group therapy, individual counselling, and

PREVALENCE OF MENTAL DISORDERS

Lifetime = met criteria for disorder at any point of their lives
12-month = met criteria for disorder within the past 12 months

STIMULANT USE DISORDER	MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER	GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER OR PANIC DISORDER
1.7% lifetime	21.7% lifetime	10.7% lifetime
0.6% 12-month	18.4% 12-month	8.9% 12-month

Source: Student E-Mental Health Project (2019-present), led by Dr. Daniel Vigo. These results are based on a representative sample of UBC students.

medical and psychiatric care. The counselling department has also launched an Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing initiative that supports Indigenous students in culturally appropriate ways.

Counselling, says Huminuik, helps students identify their strengths, sources of support, and inherent resilience, allowing them to navigate the pressures of school and life with confidence.

In addition, the extensive research undertaken by Vigo has provided a foundation for the Department of Psychiatry's online resources, which he says will be available in the near future. And the effectiveness of the Minder app for decreasing psychological distress was recently proven through a randomized controlled trial including 1,500 UBC students. It is currently being adapted for implementation in various Canadian universities and across secondary schools in BC.

Now in her third year of studies, Lundman faces even more pressure this school term; she is prepping for an Olympic qualification race in April to determine if she makes the Canadian race walking team going to the Summer Olympics in Paris. She is grateful she sought counselling last term. "I was struggling with my mental health far longer than I was willing to admit. In the end, getting help enabled me to be happier and healthier, and allowed me to train at an even higher level than before."

UBC students in need of mental health support can call 604 822 3811 or visit students.ubc.ca/counselling-services

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, call Talk Suicide Canada at 1-833-456-4566 / Quebec: 1-866-277-3553 / Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868. If you're in imminent danger call 911 or go to Emergency.

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FORWARD >>



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These UBC students are
shaping a better world.

BY JARED DOWNING

OCEAN CHAMPION

BODHI PATIL, 21

Studying oceanography, climate justice, and business

Oceans have always been a big part of Bodhi Patil's life. Indonesia, Qatar, Hawaii, and Vancouver are among the coastal environments he had lived in by the time he entered university.

"My love for the ocean came from always living in, on, and around the water," says Patil, who studies oceanography, climate justice, and business. "The ocean is something beautiful and powerful. The blue heart of our planet. And I decided I would dedicate my life to protecting it."

Patil was only a sixth grader when he launched his first organization, a social enterprise called InnerLight that organizes workshops and conferences to help young people cope with the trauma of the climate crisis and inspire them to action. "It's something I'm still refining at UBC. Being in a university setting is helping me give a more intellectual backing to my business and brand," he says.

Now in his third year, Patil has been busy. In addition to InnerLight, he manages Ocean Uprise, a climate education and advocacy organization he founded during his gap year in Oahu, Hawaii. Recently, he organized a delegation of eight UBC students to join him for IMPAC5, the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress, which was held in Vancouver. That team championed a ban on harmful deep-sea mining of rare minerals, which was recently implemented by the Canadian Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries.

In addition to concrete policies and solutions, Patil's work focuses on mental health and inspiring optimism amid what he sees as Earth's bleakest hour. He believes collective action begins with a collective mindset, and so far the climate movement has been focused on the causes, rather than the solutions, of the climate crisis. But now is the time for positivity, he argues.

"The time of 'solutionism' has come," he says. "For every 'no,' there is a 'yes.' This is something that my professor Dr. Naomi Klein taught me in our environmental justice class: By saying 'no' to, for instance, a fossil fuel development, we also need to have a 'yes.' A 'yes' to a new source of energy. A 'yes' to renewables. Solutionism is all about being a part of the solution to a healthier environment."

This winter, Patil will travel to Dubai for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28), where he will join a group of 15 Indigenous wisdom keepers from around the world to discuss climate justice for Indigenous peoples.

After graduating from his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Management dual degree program, Patil plans to pursue a PhD in the intersection of ocean science, policy, and finance, specifically around coral reef community resiliency.

"My school and my work and my life's purpose overlap," he says. "My chosen courses are directly related to my life mission, which is helping a generation discover their inner light."



Credit: @lge_photographer

PROGRESSIVE LEADER

CADE DESJARLAIS, 21
Studying political science



Photo: Becca Evans

When Cade Desjarlais ran as a candidate for the New Democratic Party in the 2021 federal election, he knew he would not win. It wasn't because he was only 19 at the time, but rather that he was a staunch liberal in Kelowna Lake Country, which was staunchly conservative.

Yet his run wasn't about winning; it was about gathering a community of like-minded people to support what they believed in – liberal economics, resources for poor and vulnerable communities, and protections for Indigenous peoples. “I wanted to make sure someone I believed I could vote for was on the ballot. And when I didn't see that person, I decided to put my name forward,” Desjarlais says.

Now, as president of the UBC Okanagan Students' Union (SUO), Desjarlais has finally turned his progressive principles into progressive policies. He and his colleagues helped increase student coverage for mental healthcare from \$500 to \$1000, and they pushed for more accessibility in Okanagan public transportation, resulting in three new planned accessible routes for students. At the SUO EXPO event, they raised around \$15,000 for the campus food pantry.

Overall, it has been a more positive experience than his first political outing, during which his support for vaccination and mask mandates elicited online harassment against him and his family. But those experiences did not quell his passion for making a positive impact on his community – a passion he will bring with him to law school when he finally graduates from UBC Okanagan.

“My guiding principle is that what you put into something is what you're gonna get out of it. I think that if you can actually advocate for people and listen to their needs, then you not only make that positive change, but in turn will guide your own view of the world.”



Photo: Ardalan Ghazizadeh

INNOVATIVE HEALER

ANJALI MENON, 22

Studying biomedical engineering

Anjali Menon's medical career was motivated by the five hours she spent in an emergency room seeking treatment for a family member, whose Crohn's disease (an autoimmune disorder that affects the digestive tract) was causing paralyzing spasms of pain. When the pair finally got an audience with a doctor, he said he wasn't equipped to deliver the required treatment.

“At that point, I was like: Okay, if a doctor isn't going to help, then what can? A new technology that I could innovate?” Menon recalls.

That experience led Menon to co-found the MEDIC Foundation, a research and advocacy organization that champions new technologies and treatments for chronic illnesses. MEDIC (which stands for “Medical Engineering Students Designing Innovations for a Cause”) is not a UBC organization, although Menon collaborates with faculty and students to raise awareness for chronic diseases and champion new technologies and treatments.

Now in her fifth year as a biomedical engineering student, Menon and her colleagues have worked with the Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre to help develop potentially novel treatments for Parkinson's disease. They are also working with UBC's Artificial Intelligence in Medicine Lab to develop a cancer diagnostic search engine. Another project aims to develop a new type of insulin pump to be distributed in Sri Lanka, the home of MEDIC co-founder Madhini Vigneswaran.

Menon herself is from Mumbai, India, and she says MEDIC is particularly focused on overlooked or underserved communities, be they developing nations like Sri Lanka, or victims of lesser-known ailments like Crohn's disease. So far, they have relied on resources and partnerships from within UBC, but as she prepares to graduate, Menon is already planning to grow MEDIC beyond the confines of campus. Perhaps one day, for Menon and her colleagues, nothing will be out of reach.

STELLAR STUDENT

ALYONA GLAZYRINA, 19

Studying aerospace engineering

If you ask Alyona Glazyrina why she decided to pursue aerospace engineering, she will say “Star Trek.” She had wanted to be an archaeologist, but after discovering the cult TV show, her life changed.

“I started watching the original series, and I was like, ‘You know what? I want to work on a starship. But those don't exist yet, so I guess I need to learn how to build one.’”

She was only 15 when she entered university to pursue this goal, thanks to an accelerated program co-run by UBC, the Vancouver School Board, and the BC Ministry of Education. “Fortunately I was pretty tall for my age and could blend in,” she says.

As she matured, so did her passion for the technologies of tomorrow: Glazyrina is now in her fourth year at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, specializing in aerospace. She is also captain of UBC Mars Colony, a student design team focused on developing technology to support a future colony on the Red Planet.

Glazyrina's studies blend technology, science, and humanities. In one class, for example, she learned the principles of social engineering – ie, how to improve the places we work and live. How can sidewalks be more traversable? How can train stations feel more secure? How can interplanetary bases be more hospitable for the people living there?

The latter question falls within the purview of the engineering students at Mars Colony. “At UBC Mars Colony, we focus not on a specific product, but on any technology that can be used in the colonization of Mars,” Glazyrina explains. During her time as captain, Glazyrina has overseen the completion of a “Sabatier reactor,” which can turn hydrogen and carbon dioxide into water and methane – the former necessary for human survival, and the latter for rocket propulsion.



Photo: Kai Jacobson

Last year, the team presented their device at the International Astronautical Congress in Paris.

Like any Trekkie, Glazyrina is equally interested in the moral and philosophical questions of space exploration. What will interplanetary diplomacy look like? Who can mine on the moon? “There are a lot of big conversations we need to have, as

humanity, regarding rules, regulations, and laws,” she says.

After she graduates, Glazyrina will continue to tackle the biggest problems in space travel, both technological and philosophical, at graduate school in Europe. In the meantime, she likes to end conversations with a blessing from that future: “Live long and prosper.”



HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE

JAMES ACHULI, 20

Studying international relations

This summer, James Achuli travelled from his home in the Okanagan to the refugee camp in Uganda where he used to live. There, he met a teenager who fled his home in war-ravaged South Sudan, joining the endless flow of refugees on their way to Uganda. The boy slept on the road, begged for scraps, and at times ate leaves and twigs just to fill his stomach.

Speaking to the boy, Achuli didn't have to imagine what it had been like. He had lived it.

"That's very similar to how I came to Uganda from South Sudan," Achuli says. "Just following a moving crowd and not knowing where I was going."

Achuli's childhood in Sudan was severely affected by war and violence, and he spent most

of it in an internally displaced persons camp. He was fascinated with the UN helicopters that brought in food and supplies, and his father told him that he could fly one if he got something called "education." Thus, he threw himself into "this education thing," attending a school near a military barracks and always carrying his collection of textbooks in a waterproof backpack.

When his school was caught in a surprise attack, Achuli barely managed to survive and shortly after was forced to become a child soldier by government forces. He managed to keep his bag of textbooks, clinging to it even when he leaped into a river to escape the army

and walked more than 500 perilous kilometers to neighbouring Uganda. He kept up his studies in a Ugandan refugee camp and through sheer determination and tenacity eventually won a scholarship to attend an International Baccalaureate high school program in Armenia. From there, he won a highly competitive scholarship to study international relations at UBC Okanagan. Despite the Canadian chill, he has learned to love his new life. He is close with his host and loves to cook them dishes from home.

Achuli's story has a happy ending, but for many of the nearly 2.5 million

people who have fled ongoing violence in South Sudan – 65 percent of whom are under 18 – the future remains uncertain. Achuli can never lose the painful memories of his past, but he is using his experience helping young refugees, particularly through education. While visiting the refugee camp this summer, he spoke about the power of education and helped students understand the educational resources available to them. "When I talk about my journey, I think a lot of people get inspired and try to give it a shot as well."

He also keeps in close contact with seven other South Sudanese teenagers who were able to attend his same school in Armenia. "It's really important to keep in touch because if we want to make an impact, it's not just going to be about me, right? I can't do all that on my own. But if we come together and work as a team, we can do something significant." One of these collaborations served the needs of women and girls, who tend to be a majority in refugee communities, Achuli explains. Last summer, he and his cousin coordinated with various aid organizations to purchase and distribute feminine hygiene products, which are too often in short supply, "a huge challenge that makes them miss their exams or important lectures."

In addition to his camp visit, Achuli was invited to speak at this year's North America Refugee Health Conference in Calgary, where he shared the stage with Nobel laureates and the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. When he graduates, Achuli plans to pursue a master's and then continue his work as an advocate for refugees, either abroad or for those who have resettled in Canada.

"There are 2.5 million refugees from South Sudan, but all these figures and data, they don't describe emotions. They don't tell us what it is like to be a refugee," he says. "So whether I decide to stay in Canada or go back to East Africa, I want to do what I can to help change their lives."

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INSIDE

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The Yellow Concrete Staircase: A happy pop of colour in the Student Life Building, which used to be the SUB (Student Union Building).

Photo: Paul Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

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FROM VICTORIAN TO VICTORIOUS

Téa Braun is winning the fight against antiquated colonial laws that perpetuate the abuse of human rights.

BY RACHEL GLASSMAN, BA'18, MA'20

A FEW YEARS after graduating from UBC, Téa Braun was living what most people would consider an eminently successful life as a young lawyer. She'd held a prestigious clerkship at the Supreme Court of British Columbia and was running a thriving commercial litigation practice in downtown Vancouver.

Braun loved her job and her colleagues, but she was restless in a way she struggled to name. Something "vague," she says, "was stirring in my mind." Geography seemed to her to have something to do with it; the prospect of a lifetime spent in the city where she was born was beginning to feel stifling. She longed "to really experience the world and contribute to it in some way."

In search of that wider world, Braun put her career on pause and travelled for nearly a year around the US, Europe, the Middle East, and East Africa. It was a formative time: "That period really opened my eyes to the wider issues in the world, the wider experiences of different people in different geopolitical contexts." Reflecting on the experience, Braun could see clearly how the law defined people's fundamental rights and freedoms and decided to devote the rest of her career to advancing those rights.

She eventually settled in the UK to earn a master's degree in international human rights law.

Braun's transformation from a young, restless lawyer into a passionate advocate for equality has continued to take her into the wide world beyond Vancouver. She's advised governments and litigants across Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. "I certainly couldn't have predicted it," Braun reflects. "I've worked on everything from the way girls are trafficked for labour exploitation, to the ways Indigenous peoples in Africa are discriminated against in their access to their ancestral lands, to women's human rights in the South Pacific."

Today Braun is chief executive of the Human Dignity Trust, a London-based organization that "uses the law to defend the human rights of LGBT people globally." Across the world, the Trust supports local activists – many of whom put their safety on the line to fight unjust laws – by offering expert legal assistance in mounting constitutional challenges, as well as advising and assisting governments on law reform. Their goal is to eradicate laws criminalizing or marginalizing LGBT people, with an emphasis on

dismantling the ugly legacies of British colonialism.

In the 1800s, the British Empire exported sexual-offence laws across the colonies, many of which endure today in their original form. As experts in human rights compliant sexual offence laws, Braun and her team are well positioned to help challenge the discriminatory aspects of such laws as they exist across the globe.

Despite the passage of time, contemporary penal codes still reflect an imperialist Victorian mentality. They are often "quite horrific to read," Braun says. "Even the language is very Victorian. It criminalizes 'buggery,' and 'carnal knowledge against the order of nature,' and 'gross indecency' between males or between females." Sexual offence laws often harm women and girls as well as LGBT people, according to Braun: Many laws stipulate that it is not an offence for a man to rape his wife, and they assign girls a younger age

of legal consent than they do boys. Persons with disabilities are referred to as "idiots" and "imbeciles."

The legal results are wide-ranging and often violent. Braun is driven by the urgency of her team's mission and the potential for serious and lasting change. While the Trust is clear that a host of cultural changes must accompany legal reforms, they view the law as a crucial mechanism for achieving them. On the Trust's website, one anonymous activist states: "I know the hardships that I face as a gay man in Africa. But to understand the legal implications means that I can talk to my government in the very language they use to oppress me."

It's this potential for either liberation or oppression through law that fascinates Braun. As well-acquainted as she is with the violence the law can wreak, to her it still holds liberating promise. Speaking about what she loves about her work, she brightens and becomes almost poetic. For her, the law is as intricate as it is powerful; a "mechanism" that, when crafted just right, provides desperately needed "structure" and "clarity." Studying the

**Téa Braun,
BCom'91, LLB'95**



**Human rights
CEO**



Next challenge:
To dismantle the
discriminatory
laws that still
criminalize LGBT
people in 65
countries globally

law's minutiae and meticulously shaping arguments contain their own pleasures, even in the fraught circumstances in which she works. "That piecing together of an intellectual puzzle has always been really appealing," Braun says. She's motivated by the knowledge that if she can manage to arrange the puzzle pieces just right, it will make someone's daily life better; indeed, with the removal or introduction of laws that affect a whole class of people, thousands or millions of people's lives and dignity can change overnight.

The wins, when they come, have been significant. As of 2023, the Trust has helped win 15 court cases around the world to decriminalize LGBT people and protect their fundamental rights. Most memorable for Braun was the historic case she worked on to decriminalize homosexuality in Belize, the first of its kind in the Caribbean. The pressure was intense, and Braun's team worked for years to prepare. The case culminated in a climactic four-day-long hearing that Braun describes as "a very heated, court-room-drama sort of environment." Opponents surrounded the courtroom "with placards citing passages from Leviticus," and public debates on the issues in the case featured daily on prime-time TV and radio. The judgment took a further three years of deliberation. After all the suspense, Braun says, "We got an absolutely brilliant judgment that found in our favour on all grounds." The win in Belize led to a historic "domino effect" in the region, with Barbados, Saint Kitts, and Antigua following suit to decriminalize homosexuality in court cases Braun and her team supported.

Just recently, in October 2023, that series of judgments helped win another case on the other side of the world in Mauritius, which decriminalized homosexuality 185 years after the colonial law was first imposed. Braun had been working on it since 2015. This building of a global web of case law around the common law world is another example of the legal puzzle that Braun revels in constructing.

It's moments like this, Braun says, when the long days and years of hard work seem worthwhile: "Seeing the way that people just breathe lighter after they get these victories, the way they feel validated and feel humanized – that is hugely satisfying."

Photo: Anett Posalaki / Raccoon London



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REWIND

FOR DECADES, UBC'S Point Grey campus had no swimming pool. It wasn't until 1954, when the university hosted swimming events for the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, that a pool first appeared. Located outside the War Memorial Gym and named the Empire Pool in honour of its grand beginnings (Prince Philip had presided poolside), its waters quickly became the site of more motley splashing. The pool was the backdrop of sun-soaked summer days for generations of students and Vancouverites. It also hosted just about any aquatic activity you can think of – canoe lessons, Aqua Lung demonstrations, synchronized swimming, lifeguard trainings, and, according to *The Ubyyssey*, the first competitive game of water polo ever played in Vancouver.

The Empire Pool saw its fair share of shenanigans too. Larry Fournier (BCom'61) told this magazine (then called TREK) that on Halloween night in 1955, pranksters dragged a speedboat into the pool. The boat's owner – an accounting student – had a sense of humour: when he hauled out his boat, he took it for a spin, "motoring down the pool and leaving a nice wake."

Besides the pranks and summer camps, the Empire Pool was the site of serious athletic feats, and UBC's reputation for formidable swimming quickly grew.

By the 1970s, the seasonal Empire Pool was struggling to keep up with demand: Thunderbirds and community members alike wanted year-round swimming. With additional indoor facilities, the Aquatic Centre opened its doors in 1978, and the two pools ran concurrently for decades. They helped produce dozens of Olympians including Bill Mahony and Wendy Cook, Paralympians like Walter Wu, and world-record breakers like Annamay Pierse. In the famous "Decade of Dominance"

The Empire Pool: A lengthy reign

For much of its 60 years, this beloved campus landmark dominated recreational life at UBC.

BY RACHEL GLASSMAN, BA'18, MA'20



The Empire Pool in its early years. *UBC Archives (UBC 1.1/13121)*

(1998-2007), the Thunderbirds won ten consecutive men's and women's national championships. Eventually the outdoor facilities, though beloved, started to seem quaint. The Empire Pool "meets no standards whatsoever," Chris Neale, then facilities manager of the Aquatic Centre, told *The Ubyyssey* in 2004. "She's too shallow, she's basically at the end of her life, she leaks, and the return inlets from the pool push you into the second and third lane, so it's quite disruptive when you're swimming lengths in the outside lanes." A filtration issue spelled the end, and the Empire Pool closed on its 60th anniversary. The Aquatic Centre, facing its own

set of maintenance issues, met with a similar fate a few years later. UBC's new Aquatic Centre opened in 2017 and is able to accommodate almost 1,000 swimmers. It has a 50-metre competition pool, a 25-metre multi-purpose pool, a leisure pool (with a lazy river), two diving boards, a rope swing, a sauna, a steam room, and a 34-person hot tub. The \$39M building combines splendour with sustainability, recycling rainwater to save 2.7 million litres of water each year. While its sleek interiors might never inspire the same widespread affection as the well-worn Empire Pool, it's a more-than-worthy 21st century successor.

Q

COLLECTIVE WISDOM

One pressing question. Multiple expert perspectives.

Should we be excited or worried about the rise of AI?



AI is an extension
– and a reflection
– of us

LIANE GABORA

Professor of Psychology

We should be cautiously excited. AI will overtake jobs, but innovation has spurred job elimination since the dawn of civilization, and the first jobs to go will be those involving tedious, repetitive work. AI may open up niches for more fulfilling positions, including the development of pharmaceuticals, and sustainable methods of building, travelling, and feeding ourselves. However, because AI makes everything easier and more accessible, it will magnify all catastrophic risks we now face: climactic, nuclear, pandemic-related, etc. It makes our world even more complex and fragile.

I do not fear that AI will dominate humans anytime soon because, unlike humans, AIs are not autonomous, self-preserving agents; they are tools, extensions of us. Some fear that AI will outshine us creatively, but what distinguishes human creativity from that of machines is that human creativity reflects the current structure of someone's self-organizing worldview. AIs do not forge autonomous worldviews; they reflect our collective worldviews back at us. No AI can put your uniquely creative stamp on this world and experience the therapeutic benefit of such self-expression.



We still need
human agency

WENDY WONG

Professor of Political Science
(UBC Okanagan)

AI has been running in the background for a number of years helping to facilitate mundane tasks, from detecting credit card fraud to completing texts to figuring out who is in our photos. In many ways, it's already integrated into the everyday. But more recent AI products like ChatGPT and DALL-E are beginning to mimic humans in a much more seemingly complete way. This invites dialogue around "human vs. machine."

What worries me isn't that a machine is going to take over the planet and kill humanity, but that we'll be seduced by a narrative that takes human agency out of the equation by favouring automation and the logic of the computer. If we start treating AI, which is based on human ingenuity and data about humans, as superhuman, we're doing something wrong. AI technologies can detect and calculate in ways that we humans cannot, but that does not mean we should be replaced. Our political decisions and social frameworks should be based on emphasizing human rights values such as autonomy, dignity, equality, and the importance of community.



AI is a
Trojan horse

ALAN MACKWORTH

Professor Emeritus of
Computer Science and
co-author of *Artificial
Intelligence: Foundations of
Computational Agents* (2023)

Disruptive technologies – fire, electricity, and now AI – transform human life, work, and play. Generative AI does create significant value, but it is a dangerous Trojan horse, stuffed full of risks and harms. It comes with theft of intellectual property, bias, deep fakes, misinformation, disinformation, false promises, fraud, and massive manipulation. As we have learned, imperfectly, to exploit and control fire, we must do the same with AI.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is a morality tale. Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity. Zeus punished that theft of technology and knowledge by sentencing Prometheus to eternal torment. Shelley's use of fire as a metaphor for nascent AI is a salutary lesson.

The Anthropocene has been aptly called the Pyrocene. A key benefit of AI will be its use in computational sustainability, to mitigate some of the harms of fire, the gift of Prometheus. However, reining in the many harms of the AI Trojan horse is the urgent task facing us.



AI could
impoverish
human
relationships

MADELEINE RANSOM

Professor of Philosophy
(UBC Okanagan)

We should be excited about the prospects of AI for helping us achieve better health outcomes. It is already changing the way we conduct health-care research and how early we diagnose disease. However, we should be worried about the social impact of AI.

There is a risk AI companion bots will impoverish human relationships. Sophisticated versions of sexbots, and carebots for the elderly, will be incredibly enticing to many. They will appear to be great listeners, aim to please, and won't have any (genuine) wants of their own. One danger for us is that we come to "prefer" the company of these bots – or become addicted to them – and so lose our desire to interact with other humans.

Another danger is that we lose our capacity to interact with other humans meaningfully. Having a relationship that allows us to be the only one with needs, frustrations, and desires is a recipe for narcissism and stunted self-growth. Social media has already impoverished friendship, and AI has the potential to further erode our gloriously messy human relations.

Illustrations: Margie Tillman

FOR MORE RESPONSES, SEE:
magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/rise-of-ai



Photo: ROBYN BECK/AFP via Getty Images

We gave \$7,500 to people experiencing homelessness – here's what happened next

BY **JIAYING ZHAO** (Associate Professor of Psychology)
ANITA PALEPU (Professor of Medicine)
DANIEL DALY-GRAFSTEIN (PhD student in Statistics)

THE CONVERSATION
 This article was originally published in *The Conversation*:
theconversation.com/we-gave-7-500-to-people-experiencing-homelessness-heres-what-happened-next-212960

HOMELESSNESS IS A deeply misunderstood and complex issue. When people hear the term, they tend to associate it with mental illness or problematic substance use. Individuals experiencing homelessness are heavily stigmatized, dehumanized, and perceived to be less competent and trustworthy. But the reality is far more complicated than these perceptions.

A 2020 count by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association in Metro Vancouver found there were 3,634 people experiencing homelessness; among them, 1,029 unsheltered and 2,605 sheltered. Only about half had mental health challenges or substance use issues. This count did not include the hidden homeless: people who might couch surf or sleep in their cars.

The longer someone remains homeless, the more likely they are to face trauma, problematic substance use, and mental health challenges. This often leads to worse health outcomes in the long term.

Present approaches are failing, as evidenced by the rapidly increasing number of people experiencing homelessness. Relying on short-term shelters has been shown to be more expensive than providing stable housing. It is therefore imperative to try something else.

TRYING SOMETHING NEW

In 2016, we teamed up with Claire Williams, co-founder of Foundations for Social Change, to create a new solution.

We gave a one-time cash transfer of \$7,500 to people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver. This lump sum, equivalent to the 2016 annual income assistance in British Columbia, provided people the financial freedom to pay rent and meet other living costs. The cash transfer also represented a dignified way to empower people to escape homelessness.

It took us two years to galvanize support from partner organizations and donors. We first established a policy agreement with the BC government to let cash recipients keep the \$7,500 while still being eligible for social assistance. We then worked with credit union Vancity to provide free chequing accounts where people could receive their funds.

In 2018, we launched the world's first pilot randomized controlled trial to examine the impact of the cash transfer on people experiencing homelessness. Our goal was to start with people who recently became homeless at a time when they needed cash the most to avoid being trapped in homelessness.

OUR PARTICIPANTS

Our team visited 22 shelters in BC's Lower Mainland to screen people who were homeless for less than two years, were Canadian citizens or permanent residents, were between the ages of 19-65, and who did not have severe levels of substance or alcohol use and mental health problems. Our sample represented 31 per cent of the shelter population in Vancouver.

A total of 229 people passed the screening. They had no knowledge about the cash transfer. But when we tried to reach out to them again to conduct the baseline survey, we were unable to reach half of them because they didn't have a stable address, phone, or email. Despite our best efforts, we couldn't reach

114 people. So we ended up recruiting 115 participants into the study.

Fifty were randomly assigned to a cash group and 65 to a non-cash group in the randomized controlled trial. The 50 participants in the cash group were informed about the cash transfer only after completing the baseline survey. The 65 in the non-cash group were not.

We tracked participants for a year to assess the effects of the cash transfer. We lost contact with around 30 per cent of participants during this time while some relocated away from Vancouver.

We provided a workshop and coaching to a subset of the participants as additional support. The workshop consisted of a series of exercises to help participants brainstorm ways to regain stability in their lives. Coaching consisted of phone calls with a certified coach trained to help participants achieve their life goals.

Since a study like this has never been done before, we had little evidence to guide our predictions on the impact of the cash transfer. But following best practices, we came up with a few hypotheses on short-term wellbeing and cognitive function based on previous cash transfer studies. Unsurprisingly, none of the hypotheses turned out to be true.

WHAT WE FOUND

What astonished us was the significant positive impacts of the cash transfers. Cash recipients spent 99 fewer days in homelessness on average over one year.

That led to net cost savings of \$777 per person per year. That means the cash transfers actually saved the government and taxpayers money. Cash recipients increased spending on rent, food, transit, and things like furniture or a car.

Importantly, they did not increase spending on alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes. That challenges the stereotype that people in homelessness would squander money they receive on alcohol and drugs.

Between 2018 and 2020, the housing vacancy rate in Vancouver was

around one per cent and the wait to get into housing could be up to one year for someone living in a shelter.

However, around 50 per cent of participants in our study moved into housing just one month after the cash transfer. This goes to show how prepared they were to get back to stability. All they needed was the cash support to do so.

But what we didn't see was substantial improvements in food security, employment, education, and wellbeing. This might be because \$7,500 was still a relatively small amount of money in an expensive city like Vancouver.

The average personal annual income among participants was \$12,580. So the cash transfer represented a 60 per cent boost. But despite that, they were still below the poverty line and nowhere close to meeting the living costs in Vancouver.

We also found that neither the workshop nor coaching had an impact on the participants. One reason was compliance; most participants didn't take part in the workshop or coaching after the first month. Another reason was a possible mismatch between the support on offer and participants' needs. The support provided was aspirational, designed to clarify life goals and boost their self-efficacy.

But what our participants needed was instrumental support, like getting identity documents, completing resumes, and applying for jobs. These instrumental needs could not be easily met by completing a few workshops or coaching.

This study adds more evidence to a growing body of cash transfer studies around the world that demonstrate the need to raise the income floor of marginalized people.

This study is a promising start, laying the groundwork for future research and policies. Governments and experts should explore cash transfers as a way of supporting unhoused and marginalized people.

Ryan Dwyer, a senior researcher at the Happier Lives Institute, co-authored this article.

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Congratulations to This Year's Recipients



ALUMNI AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Parmjit Bains
BSc(Agr)'79

Parmjit Bains co-founded Westberry Farms in 1997 and developed it into a leading blueberry operation. His passion for farming innovation and knack for collaboration have helped advance BC's agri-food industry and strengthen its climate resilience.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD
Dr. David Brand
PhD'85

Dr. David Brand launched New Forests in 2005, which has grown into one of the world's largest forestry investment firms. This certified B Corporation has initiated carbon projects and investment programs in forestry plantations, conservation areas, and timber processing.



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD
Dr. Laura Yvonne Bulk
MOT'14, PhD'21

Dr. Laura Yvonne Bulk draws upon her experiences as a blind scholar, educator, and advocate to advance the inclusion of disabled healthcare professionals. This has included cofounding the Occupational Therapy in Low Vision and Blindness Network within the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists.



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD
Judith Fairholm
BSN'72, MEd'96

A champion of violence prevention, child protection, and gender equality, Judi Fairholm directs the Canadian Red Cross' RespectEd program, addressing child abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, and violence. She has supported similar efforts in more than 30 other countries.



RESEARCH AND INNOVATION VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD
Lindsay Gordon
BA'73, MBA'76, LLD'23

Lindsay Gordon is one of UBC's most valued and longtime supporters. As chancellor, he helped lead major fundraising campaigns and co-established the Centennial Indigenous Scholars Award. His many social contributions include co-founding the Children with Intestinal and Liver Disorders (CH.I.L.D.) Foundation.



HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD
Dr. Chit Chan Gunn
CM, OBC, MD, FRCP

After discovering a groundbreaking approach for addressing chronic musculoskeletal and neuropathic pain in the 1970s, Dr. Chit Chan Gunn developed the Gunn Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS) treatment. This dry needling technique unites Western medicine and traditional Chinese acupuncture.



RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AWARD
Dr. Steven Narod
BSc'75, MD'79

Dr. Steven Narod co-discovered BRCA1 and BRCA2, the hereditary genes that lead to breast and ovarian cancer. His focus on early detection, diagnosis, and treatment has contributed to the current standard care for hereditary breast cancers and saved thousands of lives.



FACULTY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
Dr. Linda Warren
OBC, MD'68

Dr. Linda Warren is the principal clinical architect and founding executive director of the Screening Mammography Program of BC, which launched in 1988 and is largely responsible for reducing breast cancer mortality in BC to Canada's lowest rate.

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São Paulo, Brazil



▼
Avril Espinosa-Malpica poses for a photo in *Beco do Batman* (Batman's Alley). Every inch of wall in this alley, named after a painting of Batman appeared in the area in the 1980s, is covered with colourful street art.

Avril Espinosa-Malpica (BA'18) is a Vice-Consul and Trade Commissioner for the Consulate General of Canada in São Paulo, and has been living in Brazil's most populous city since January of 2022.

WHAT THREE WORDS BEST DESCRIBE SÃO PAULO?

Endless, vibrant, bustling.

HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE IN SÃO PAULO?

In my job as a diplomat, we get to specify some cities where we would like to be posted next. Since I work in international trade, I wanted a city that was an economic driver in its region, had a rich culture, and would challenge me to learn a new language. São Paulo had an opening and checked off all my interests. I applied and luckily was selected for a three-year position in this great city.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT LIVING THERE?

The warmth and openness of São Paulo's residents. From Uber drivers to coworkers, everyone is eager to chat and help me feel welcome. São Paulo is the first city I have ever lived in where, only a month after arriving, local colleagues invited me to join them on a trip. It's a place where I'm warmly greeted by the waiter of a nearby restaurant every time I pass by, even if I don't go in. As a foreigner who did not know anyone when I first moved here, the warmth I experienced made it easier to settle in and get to know the city through the people I met.

DESCRIBE YOUR FAVOURITE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

I enjoy walking around Vila Madalena, a vibrant neighbourhood full of colourful murals, local shops, and stands full of trinkets, and where chatter and music emanate from its lively bars. There are countless opportunities to try something new every time you visit the neighbourhood and you'll inevitably come across some event or other animating its streets.

Vila Madalena is also where the locals go, particularly on the weekends, when its sidewalks are packed with people as parties often flow out into the streets. You don't even have to be inside a bar or restaurant to get served – as long as you're in the general area, you can enjoy a drink even if you're outside.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT SÃO PAULO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

The level of security in the city. Unfortunately, the issue of safety is a well-known concern in São Paulo. However, as long as you remain aware and take precautions, this should not deter you from visiting.

WHAT MIGHT SURPRISE A VISITOR ABOUT SÃO PAULO?

Its diversity. São Paulo was built by immigrants and people from every region of Brazil over many generations. The city has the largest population of descendants from Italy, Japan, and Lebanon outside of their respective countries and has also attracted numerous residents from every continent. (Brazil itself has the largest population of people of African descent, outside of Africa.) As with Canadians, I've learned that Brazilians are just as multicultural, and their diversity is what has created such a vibrant city, one known for its wide-ranging cultural and gastronomic offerings.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE HIDDEN GEMS OR ACTIVITIES THAT ONLY LOCALS KNOW ABOUT?

On Sundays and holidays, many of the main streets close partially to become exclusive bike routes, which take you past the city's main attractions. You can rent a bike for a couple of hours from one of the many orange Bike Itaú stands via the company's app. Fun fact: this

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT

February/March during Brazil's annual Carnival celebrations. The weather is also more pleasant as this is our summer season.

BEST PLACE TO STAY

Vila Madalena.

BEST VIEW

The rooftop at Vista Restaurante Ibirapuera.

BEST CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Live music! Year-round bars like Bar do Baixo and Casa de Liège are great, and during Carnival season, be sure to partake in *blocos* (street parties).

BEST STREET FOOD

Pastel de Queijo, a type of Brazilian cheese pastry.

COOLEST STREET

Beco do Batman (Batman's Alley).

MARKS OUT OF 10 FOR TRANSIT

8/10 for the metro. (I haven't used other forms of public transit as getting around via Uber is fairly easy.)

bike-sharing system includes technology from the Quebec-based company PBSC Urban Solutions, so there's a little bit of Canada on every street in São Paulo!

WHAT'S THE MOST OVER-RATED TOURIST HOTSPOT?

Paulista Avenue. I like visiting this area for specific things, such as the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP) and the SESC Paulista, both of which I recommend. (SESCs, which in the singular stands for *Serviço Social do Comércio* – or Social Service of Commerce – are a merge between cultural and community centres.) However, I don't quite get the hype of walking down the entire length of Paulista Avenue. I think it might be because I've gotten my share of big streets and tall concrete buildings, so I would rather take a walk in one of São Paulo's parks, like Ibirapuera Park, than venture along this long and busy avenue.

HOW EASY IS IT TO MEET NEW PEOPLE?

People tend to be quite open to connecting and chatting. Brazil is a relationship- and people-driven culture. Be patient, however, when

making plans – the hustle mentality of this metropolis and the slightly less strict time-keeping of Brazilians mean that events and meetups might not always start on time. Also don't be surprised if people you've just met ask for your Instagram handle or WhatsApp number to stay in touch – these tend to be seen as less private means of communication than in Canada.

WHAT IS ONE LOCAL CUSTOM THAT EVERY VISITOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

People don't usually eat food with their hands. To be polite, either wrap your sandwich in a napkin before grabbing it, or use a fork and knife to eat your pizza.



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UBC Welcomes New President

Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon began his five-year term on November 1.



Photo: Paul Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

This July, UBC named Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon as its 17th president and vice-chancellor. He began his five-year term on November 1.

"I am delighted to welcome Dr. Bacon to UBC," said UBC Board of Governors chair, Nancy McKenzie. "Dr. Bacon brings outstanding leadership qualities, vision,

experience and a strong relationship-based approach to engagement with students, faculty and staff, and the broader post-secondary community. We are excited to work with him to realize UBC's vision of inspiring people, ideas, and actions for a better world."

An accomplished researcher and teacher, Dr. Bacon has

a remarkable track record as a senior administrative leader at major research universities in Canada. He joins UBC from Carleton University in Ottawa, where he had been president and vice-chancellor since 2018. Dr. Bacon previously served as provost and vice-principal (Academic) at Queen's University and as provost and vice-president (Academic Affairs) at Concordia University in his hometown of Montreal. At Carleton University, Dr. Bacon was recognized for many accomplishments including significant increases in student success, research funding and fundraising, as well as marked progress in Indigenous initiatives, wellness, sustainability, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. As a result, the university has experienced a sharp rise in its national profile and reputation.

He holds a PhD in neuropsychology from the University of Montreal and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

Dr. Bacon's research is in the field of neurophysiological and cognitive bases of visual and multisensory perception. Sharing his own lived experience, he also advocates nationally for open conversations about mental health and substance use. These efforts have been recognized with a Transformational

Leader Inspiration Award from the Royal Ottawa Hospital, and the honorary presidency of the Canadian Psychological Association.

"I am very honoured to join The University of British Columbia, a truly world-leading institution," said Dr. Bacon upon his appointment. "UBC is deeply committed to serving the public good through academic and research excellence, to advancing on the path of Indigenous reconciliation, and to addressing today's most pressing global challenges such as health and wellness, social inequalities, and climate change. I very much look forward to working with the entire community to develop and realize a shared vision for a bright future."

Dr. Bacon was selected following an international search by a 15-member committee comprising faculty, staff, students, alumni, senate and board members from the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses, advised by associate vice-president, Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Arig al Shaibah. Chaired by UBC chancellor, the Honourable Steven Point, the search committee sought input from the university community to identify the experience and qualities they wished to see in the university's next leader.

"I am very pleased that Dr. Bacon will be joining the university as its new president," said Chancellor Point. "Dr. Bacon's passion and commitment to moving forward on priorities for the university and his approach as an individual and university leader are inspiring."



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A Robot's Touch

New sensor makes machines more capable and more lifelike.

THE RESEARCH:

UBC and Honda have developed a soft sensor that mimics the properties of human skin, providing touch sensitivity and dexterity for prosthetics or robotic limbs.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

The sensor enables tasks that have previously been difficult for machines, such as picking up soft fruit without bruising it, and can make interactions with humans safer and more lifelike.

The smart, stretchable, and highly sensitive sensor is primarily composed of silicone rubber and can be applied to the surface of a prosthetic arm or robotic limb. It is soft to the touch and creases with movement, much like real skin.

"Our sensor can sense several types of forces, allowing a prosthetic or robotic arm to respond to tactile stimuli with dexterity and precision," says study author Dr. Mirza Saquib Sarwar, who created the sensor as part of his PhD work in electrical and computer engineering. "For instance, the arm can hold fragile objects like an egg or a glass of water without crushing or dropping them."

Much like touchscreens, the sensor uses weak electric fields to sense objects, even at a distance. But it can also detect forces into and along its surface, which is key for robots that are in contact with people, says senior study author Dr. John Madden, who leads the Advanced Materials



UBC engineers collaborated with Frontier Robotics, Honda's research institute, to develop a soft sensor "skin" for applications in robotics and prosthetics. Photo: UBC Applied Science/Paul Joseph

and Process Engineering Laboratory (AMPEL) at UBC.

The UBC team – who developed the technology in collaboration with Frontier Robotics, Honda's research institute – say the sensor is simple to fabricate, allowing for the coverage of large surface areas and the manufacture of large quantities.

While sensors and artificial intelligence are making machines more capable and lifelike, there is still a lot of room for improvement, says Madden.

"Human skin has a hundred times more sensing points on a fingertip than our technology does, making it easier to light a match or

sew," he notes. "As sensors continue to evolve to be more skin-like, and can also detect temperature and even damage, there is a need for robots to be smarter about which sensors to pay attention to and how to respond. Developments in sensors and artificial intelligence will need to go hand in hand."

VIRUS DETECTIVES

THE RESEARCH:

UBC and Michigan State University (MSU) scientists have invented a system that can quickly and inexpensively detect airborne viruses, using the same technology that enables high-speed trains.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

In addition to serving as an early-warning system for pandemics, the team's new technique could also help health officials and epidemiologists better track and trace exposure to viruses in public settings.

Engineering professor Sepideh Pakpour from UBC's Okanagan Campus and Dr. Morteza Mahmoudi from MSU's Department of

Radiology and Precision Health Program showed that a technique known as magnetic levitation – or maglev – can be used to easily collect and concentrate viruses from air.

"This could help identify that an environment is contaminated before a pandemic happens," says Pakpour.

The system first collects air samples, then injects the sample into a fluid where maglev separates viruses from other particles. The isolated and purified viral contents are then passed along to other standard analytical techniques for identification in a matter of minutes. The approach is so straightforward that it could be used by nonexperts in a variety of settings such as clinics and airports, the researchers say.

The researchers started their project in 2018, applying maglev to respiratory viruses. By 2020, when it became apparent COVID-19

was an airborne virus, they knew they had to redouble their efforts. The team used a deactivated version of the coronavirus responsible for COVID-19 in their proof-of-concept report, along with H1N1 influenza and a virus that infects bacteria known as bacteriophage MS2.

The researchers also are working to heighten their technique's sensitivity and detect viruses in air at lower concentrations.

Still, the team is excited by what it was able to accomplish in its initial work and by what it may enable other researchers to do.

"This could help identify that an environment is contaminated before a pandemic happens."

They are now taking the first steps toward commercializing the technology while working to improve it at the same time. Although downstream techniques can identify which viruses are in a sample, one of the team's future goals is refining the maglev step to distinguish between different viruses on its own.

"Using maglev for disease detection and purifying viruses is brand new, and it could open up applications in many different fields," Mahmoudi says. "This opens up a fundamentally new direction in analytical biochemistry."

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PODCASTS

From Here Forward shares stories and ideas about amazing things UBC and its alumni are doing around the world. It covers people and places, truths, science, art, and accomplishments with the view that sharing better inspires better. Join hosts Carol Eugene Park and Rumneek Johal, both UBC School of Journalism grads, in exploring solutions for the negative stuff out there – focusing on the good for a change, from here forward.



magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/podcasts/here-forward



CAMPUSES OF THE FUTURE: AN INSIDE LOOK AT CAMPUS PLANNING AT UBC

Discover fascinating changes coming to UBC's campuses – from a deepening commitment to Indigenization to groundbreaking sustainability initiatives – with Ben Johnson, director of Campus Planning for UBC Okanagan, and Michael White, associate vice-president of Campus and Community Planning and the university's chief planner. Whether you're a passionate planner or simply curious about the future of UBC, this episode reveals what it takes to build world-class campuses.

DR. GAIL MURPHY: ON THE FRONTLINES OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AT UBC

Carol and Rumneek speak with Dr. Gail Murphy, vice-president of Research & Innovation, about UBC's evolution into a world-class research powerhouse over the past quarter century. Dr. Murphy highlights several recent projects that reflect UBC's innovative and collaborative approach to research, and shares her top tips for thriving in both leadership and researcher roles.



WILDFIRES, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE FUTURE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

The hosts dive deep into the world of wildfires with award-winning UBC researcher, Dr. Lori Daniels (MSc'94). From the phenomenon of "zombie fires" to the fascinating paradox of using fire to suppress fire, Dr. Daniels explains what's behind BC's increasingly severe wildfires, how climate change is adding fuel to the fire, and what UBC researchers are doing, in close collaboration with Indigenous communities, to increase the resiliency of BC's forests.

WEBCASTS



Learn from the experts.

magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/webcasts

REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Language is essential to cultural identity. The health of the Nsyilxcn language is linked to the wellbeing of the Okanagan Syilx people – and in healing from colonization. That's why Dr. Jeannette Armstrong (LLD'06) has dedicated herself to recovering and improving access to the wealth of language knowledge in oral stories. She also helped to create UBC Okanagan's Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency, which marks a first for Canadian universities. Learn about the inspiring accomplishments of Dr. Armstrong and how they illustrate how we can ensure encouraging futures for Indigenous languages, cultures, and people.



CAREER WEBCASTS

Enhance your work life.

ADVANCE YOUR CAREER WITH CHATGPT

Searching for employment on your own can be tough, but ChatGPT is changing the game. Jeremy Schifeling, a former LinkedIn insider and ChatGPT power user, will show you how to combine human creativity with AI assistance to boost your job hunt. Find out how you can harness the potential of ChatGPT to explore your next career steps, write ideal letters and profiles, prepare for interview questions, and much more.

THRIVE AT WORK WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is becoming essential for leadership excellence, organizational development, recruitment and retention, product innovation, and customer experience. This keynote talk by world-renowned expert Dr. Martyn Newman explains the science and benefits to having strong EQ. Dr. Newman introduces you to essential EQ skills and explains why they're critical for success in the workplace.

CAMPUS SEEN

At the original entrance to Main Library (now part of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre), look up to see two carved stone figures: a monkey with a scroll reading "evolut" and a bearded man holding a tablet inscribed with "funda." Crafted in 1925 by George Thornton Sharp, they commemorate the Scopes trial of the same year – a Tennessee courtroom clash between evolutionists and fundamentalists.

John Scopes, a high school teacher, challenged the state's ban on teaching evolution. Although initially found guilty, the verdict was later overturned, ultimately paving the way for the acceptance of modern science in American classrooms.

Almost a century on, attacks on evidence-based learning persist, with some US states obstructing educators from teaching climate change facts. Even in the 21st century, the fight for academic freedom is as vital as ever.



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THE SCOOP

Rockstars, rankings, and ruminants

1. A UBC-LED TEAM WAS THE FIRST TO SUCCESSFULLY SEQUENCE A GENOME, AND HELP TO ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VACCINE, FOR WHICH DISEASE?

- a. Tetanus
- b. HPV (Human papillomavirus)
- c. SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)
- d. Cholera

2. WHAT MUSICAL ARTIST DID THE UBYSSEY DENOUNCE, CALLING THEIR STYLE OF MUSIC "A CREEPING ROT?"

- a. Elvis Presley
- b. The Beatles
- c. Chuck Berry
- d. Bob Dylan

3. IN 1973, THE UBC MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM BECAME THE FIRST WESTERN HOCKEY TEAM TO PLAY IN WHICH COUNTRY?

- a. Vietnam
- b. Iran
- c. Cambodia
- d. China

4. WHAT URBAN LEGEND DID SOME 2005 UBC RESEARCH HELP TO DEBUNK?

- a. The Ogopogo
- b. Cow tipping
- c. Bigfoot
- d. The disappearance of a 1930s village near Lake Anjikuni

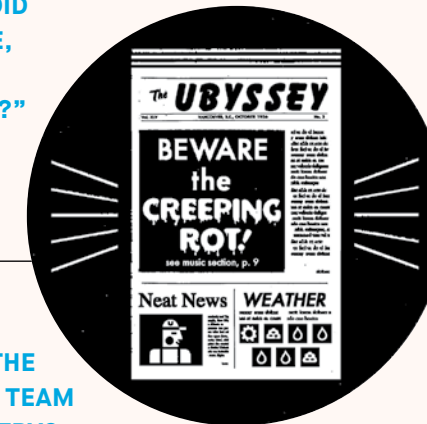


5. UBC RANKS 13TH OUT OF MORE THAN 1,400 INSTITUTIONS GLOBALLY IN DELIVERING ON THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. FOR WHICH SPECIFIC SDG DOES UBC TIE FOR FIRST PLACE?

- a. SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- b. SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- c. SDG 13: Climate Action
- d. SDG 14: Life Below Water

6. UBC IS ALMA MATER FOR THREE CANADIAN PRIME MINISTERS AND ONE PRIME MINISTER FROM THIS EUROPEAN COUNTRY:

- a. Austria
- b. Romania
- c. Bulgaria
- d. Slovakia



1. c) In April 2003, Professor Marco Marra's research team completed the world's first draft DNA sequence of the SARS virus, giving scientists the genetic information to develop tests and work on a vaccine.

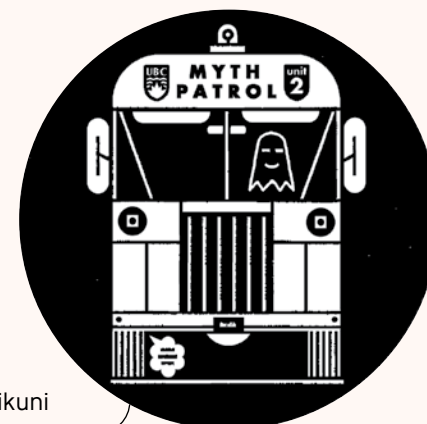
2. a) Excerpt from a 1956 editorial in The Ubyssy: "But if the Radio Society dares to play as much as twelve bars of any Presley record, this newspaper fervently hopes that all right-thinking students will stand up on their hind legs, and squawk like hell."

3. d) The UBC men's hockey team travelled to China for a seven-game series. It was part of a larger attempt by the Pierre Trudeau government to open and normalize relations with China.

4. b) Do people really sneak up on sleeping cows and push them over for entertainment? Dr. Margo Lillie and student Tracy Boechler (Zoology) estimated it would require a force of nearly 3,000 newtons. Although theoretically possible, they pointed out that cows do not sleep standing up and are unlikely to be cooperative.

5. a) UBC has again tied for first place for impact in industry, innovation and infrastructure. This ranking recognizes the university's patents, research income, and 245 spin-off companies.

6. c) Kiril Petkov, BCom'01, was the 17th Prime Minister of Bulgaria. The three Canadian prime ministers are John Turner, BA'49; Kim Campbell, BA'69, LLB'83; and Justin Trudeau, BEd'98.



Illustrations: Raymond Beisinger



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NEWS FLASH



VANCOUVER

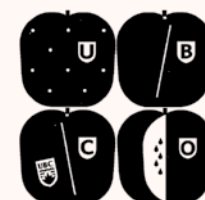
USING THE CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

Six innovative UBC projects, supported by Campus as a Living Lab (CLL) funding, are underway, ranging from a mycelium-based composting toilet to leak-detecting robots to an advanced outdoor learning pavilion.

Since 2002, CLL has driven original solutions to global sustainability challenges. Its framework empowers researchers, students, staff, and partners to leverage UBC's campus as a testing ground to explore and develop new ideas.

The 2022 CLL Fund Competition had up to \$200,000 available for innovative living lab projects at UBC, with an additional \$50,000 dedicated for health and wellbeing initiatives. The competition led to UBC's support for six new projects with potential global impact.

These include a database studying trees for climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement; an inclusive climate and COVID-resilient outdoor learning space; an Indigenous Campus Living Laboratory at UBC Farm's x̓w̓c̓i̓c̓əs̓əm Garden; a project using autonomous robots for leak detection to boost energy efficiency; an exercise-based mental health program for combatting depression; and a composting toilet employing mycelium (mushroom) biocomposites to convert waste into renewable resources.



OKANAGAN

NEW PROGRAM GRADS HELP PRESERVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Eight Syilx Okanagan students have successfully completed the Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency (BNLF) program, becoming the first graduates of an Indigenous language fluency degree in Canada.

Twenty years ago, the chiefs of the seven Okanagan Nation Alliance Members initiated the foundation for BNLF. Their vision – resulting in a collaborative effort involving UBCO, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) in Merritt, and the En'owkin Centre in Penticton – was designed to be a culturally specific program tailored to the Okanagan Nation.

Students and professors created resources from scratch, relying on archival recordings of Elders speaking Nsyilxcn. They transliterated and transcribed these recordings, bringing them into the classroom for discussion. They explored why Elders chose certain words and the meanings behind those choices.

The importance of BNLF is underscored by the declining use of Indigenous languages in Canada. The 2021 census revealed that fewer than 240,000 Indigenous individuals could hold a conversation in their native language, a 4.3 per cent drop since 2016. Programs like BNLF play a significant role in reversing this trend, contributing to the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages to aid in the process of reconciliation.

Illustrations: Raymond Beisinger

99.9%

Removal efficiency of "bioCap," a material developed by UBC researchers to trap microplastics in water.

509

Height in feet of UBC's tower at 550 Doyle Avenue, currently under construction and expected to be completed in 2027, making it the tallest building in Kelowna.

54

Number of years it took 71-year-old Arthur Ross to graduate after enrolling in Arts. He left UBC after two years to pursue acting, later becoming a lawyer. He decided to complete his BA after retiring.

18/78

Ages of the youngest (Floria Gu) and oldest (Yee Siong Pang) students to graduate from UBC in May 2023.

15

Number of minutes UBC's new portable drug-checking machine takes to deliver results. These machines can detect low levels of potentially lethal substances in illicit drugs.



SHERYL LIGHTFOOT APPOINTED TO THE UN

UBC Professor Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot has been named chair of the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), marking the first time an Indigenous woman from Canada has held this prestigious position.

The UN Expert Mechanism provides the UN Human Rights Council with advice on the rights of Indigenous peoples. It also assists member states in achieving the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), officially adopted by Canada in June 2021.

Dr. Lightfoot, an Anishinaabe from the Lake Superior Band of Ojibwe, holds appointments in UBC's School of Public Policy and Global Affairs as well as the Department of Political Science. She also holds the title of Canada Research Chair in Global Indigenous Rights and Politics. From 2018 to 2023, Dr. Lightfoot played a pivotal role in the conception and implementation of UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan, helping UBC become the first university in North America to integrate UNDRIP at the core of its mission.

In her new role as chair, Dr. Lightfoot says she aspires to work toward enhanced representation and participation for Indigenous governing bodies worldwide at the UN Human Rights Council in a way that is "fair, just, and appropriate." Dr. Lightfoot adds that her appointment is especially significant for Canada as it is "recognition of the country's leadership role in the declaration and implementation of the rights of Indigenous peoples."

IN MEMORIAM

Obituaries are published in full on the magazine's website at magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/in-memoriam, with listings included in our spring and fall print issues. Please submit obituaries at magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/memoriam-submissions.

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Theodore Allan Thornley, BA'58
Andras Szalkai, BSc'59
Gwendolyn (Lynn) Dick, BEd'60, BLS'64
Roy Nosella, BEd'62, MEd'69
Stuart Thomas Robson, BA'62
Edward Friesen, BEd'63
Peter Smiley, BSc'64, MD'68
Kathryn Prusakowski, BEd'74
Rita E. Schick, BSN'76
Frank Potoma, BCom'77
Deb Hope, BA'77
Ken Halward, BASc'78
Linda Wolstencroft, BASc'86
Malina Kordic, BA'92
David Letendre, BASc'93
Timothy Johannes Rattel, MFA'96
Ryan West, BSc'22
Dr. Jamie H.A. Wallen, Professor
Brian David Pate, Professor

The Hon. Pat Carney, CM, OBC, BA'60, MA'77, LLD'90

Pat Carney was best known for her work as an MP in the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney and for her lengthy service in the Senate. She was also a journalist, an author, an educator, and a matriarch.

Patricia Dora Carney was born in Shanghai on 26 May 1935 and spent much of her childhood in the Kootenay region of BC. Attending UBC in the 1950s, she studied political science and economics and her extracurricular activities included stints as a writer and editor for *The Ubyssy*. She returned to UBC in the 1970s to earn her master's in community and regional planning.



During the 60s, Pat was a business columnist published in BC dailies, and later set up her own economic consulting business. In 1980, she also started to make her mark in politics, becoming the first woman elected as MP for Vancouver Centre, and going on to become the first woman appointed to every federal post she held, including Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Minister of International Trade; and President of the Treasury Board. In 1990, she was appointed to the Senate, eventually retiring in 2008.

She stayed connected to UBC. During the 1990s, she was an adjunct professor at the School of Community and Regional Planning, and she also served on the advisory councils of the School of Journalism and the Dean of Science. She received an *alumni UBC* Achievement Award for Distinguished Service in 1989, and an honorary degree the following year.

As well as leading by example, Pat served on the advisory committee of Equal Voice, an organization dedicated to the election of more women to political office. She also joined the board of Vancouver YWCA and in 1984 was one of the first recipients of its Woman of Distinction Award. During her time on the Canadian Senate, her vote was crucial in narrowly voting down her party's 1991 anti-abortion bill.

She was a founding director of the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada, with the intention of fostering practical research to improve everyday living, and also turned her attention to the preservation of Canada's heritage lighthouses and maritime history. She wrote the memoir *Trade Secrets* (2000) and the story collection *On Island: Life Among the Coast Dwellers* (2017).

A resident of Saturna Island, Pat Carney died on 25 July in Vancouver, aged 88.

Philip B. Lind, CM, BA'66, LLD'12
 Dr. Phil Lind was one of Canada's most respected communications and media industry leaders. He was also a loyal UBC supporter whose strategic advice and generous support have been vital to many of the university's endeavours.

Phil joined Rogers Communications Inc. in 1969, ultimately becoming vice chairman and helping grow Rogers into one of Canada's pre-eminent cable companies. One of his career highlights was leading Rogers' expansion in the US during the 1980s, negotiating valuable acquisition deals.

Having led Rogers' cable interests in the US for many years, Phil realized there was a dearth of learning opportunities in Canada to examine the politics of a country with which we share a border and close business relationships. In the late 1990s, he reconnected with UBC's Faculty of Arts to establish the Phil Lind Chair in US Politics and Representation, the first of its kind in Canada, to focus on the US policy process. In addition, he supported the Lind Initiative, which brought prestigious American scholars to campus as an inspiration for UBC students. The first scholar was Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. Phil also entrusted UBC to steward the Phil Lind Klondike Gold Rush Collection, which includes rare items from his grandfather John Grieve Lind, an early miner and gold prospector.

Phil was a strong proponent of multicultural programming in Canada, promoting and supporting it through such brands as OMNI TV. He also lent his time and support to several arts- and environment-focused organizations. UBC awarded him an honorary degree in 2002 for his substantial contribution to the diversity of Canadian culture and his generous support of liberal arts education through broadcasting and technology. In 2016, he received the Alumni Award of Distinction.

Phil provided invaluable strategic advice to UBC as co-chair of UBC's remarkably successful *start an evolution* campaign, which concluded in 2015 having raised over \$1.6 billion and engaged more than 130,000 alumni across the globe. More recently, he served as a member of the volunteer leadership circle of UBC's current fundraising effort: FORWARD, the campaign for UBC.

Over his long and distinguished career, Phil received many honours,

including being appointed to the Order of Canada in 2002. Through his philanthropy, service, and leadership, he made a lasting impact on UBC and Canadian life and culture.



The Hon. Selwyn Romilly, LLB'66

Selwyn Romilly, who died on September 22, was one of the first Black graduates of the Faculty of Law at UBC. He attended law school during the turbulent 1960s when law schools, and society in general, were incredibly hostile environments for Black youth. These challenging beginnings to his career make his subsequent achievements and contributions to the legal community all the more impressive.

Selwyn was born in Trinidad and left home when it was still a British colony. His father, a school principal, had always insisted that his kids get

professions (and Selwyn's brother, Valmond, would follow him into the law profession). Selwyn's first choice was to study in England, but friends of his who were studying engineering at UBC convinced him to move to Vancouver. He confessed that his decision to go to UBC was partially influenced by Vancouver's mild weather.

After graduating from UBC, Selwyn articulated in Kamloops and later opened his own practice in Smithers. In 1974, he became the first Black person appointed to the Provincial Court of British Columbia. As a Provincial Court judge, he could apply the law elegantly and with sophistication without losing perspective of the life story of the person before him. In 1995 he was the first Black person appointed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia. When he retired, he had spent a combined 40 years as a jurist, well-respected and praised by his judicial peers and the legal community for his sense of justice, his high regard for the rule of law, and his grace.

Consistent with his record of overcoming adversity, looking for opportunity, and advancing justice, Selwyn worked tirelessly to instill these values in law students and in young lawyers. He led by example with his character, his words, and his actions. Dedicated to creating a more representative justice system, he helped establish UBC's first student award dedicated to supporting incoming Black Canadian JD students.

Selwyn was a willing mentor and offered a lot of advice to young lawyers. "Always go to work early, read thoroughly, and stay organized," he said, and: "If you want to get ahead, you have to be civil outside of court."

He is survived by his wife, Lorna, and two children, Charis and Jasom.



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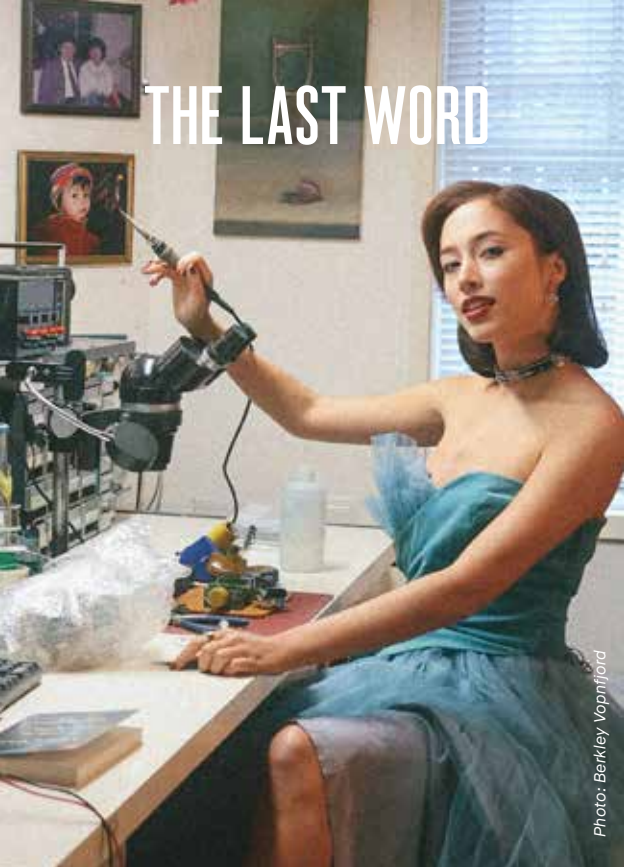


Photo: Berkley Vopnford

THE LAST WORD

Andini

Inventive mind,
romantically inclined.

WHO WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD HERO?

Harry Houdini, and my Auntie Sukanya and Uncle Ravi.

DESCRIBE THE PLACE YOU MOST LIKE TO SPEND TIME.

Lying by a pool on a hot summer's day, pretending I live in the movie *La Piscine* (sadly sans 1960s Alain Delon).

WHAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU READ?

A book about Old Hollywood icon and inventor Hedy Lamarr.

WHAT OR WHO MAKES YOU LAUGH OUT LOUD?

Charlie Chaplin, Danny Kaye, and my friends Joe and Monica.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU EVER LEARNED?

Knowing what yourself, your time, and your ideas are worth, and not being afraid to ask for what you deserve.

CLAIM TO FAME

Ann Makosinski (Andini) first came to public attention as the teenage inventor of a flashlight powered by body heat and a mug that uses heat from a drink to charge a phone – both of which led to appearances on Jimmy Fallon's *The Tonight Show*.

In 2018, she founded Makotronics Enterprises, which has filed several patents – including one for her flashlight. She is also a public speaker and fashion brand ambassador.

UBC CONNECTION

She studied English Literature at UBC for three years, leaving to pursue sustainable entrepreneurship, acting, and modelling.

LATEST PROJECT

Her first book, tentatively called *The Inventing Mindset*, will be released by Knopf Canada in early 2025.

Read more Q&As with Andini at magazine.alumni.ubc.ca/departments/last-word

WHAT WAS YOUR NICKNAME AT SCHOOL?

Ann-Banan or “The Flashlight Girl” (unfortunately).

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

My original 1940s studio publicity photographs of Basil Rathbone playing Sherlock Holmes.

IF A GENIE GRANTED YOU ONE WISH, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

To be able to fly! Or to reincarnate Gary Cooper for me.

WHAT ITEM HAVE YOU OWNED FOR THE LONGEST TIME?

My homemade portable Bug Hotel. \$2 a night, apparently.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EPITAPH TO SAY?

“Why don't you fly up and see me sometime?”

IF YOU COULD INVENT SOMETHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

People getting a brief electrical shock if they don't put their plastic bins away after taking their bags out in airport security.

NAME THE SKILL OR TALENTS YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO HAVE.

Competitive ballroom dancing.

IF YOU COULD ONLY EVER LISTEN TO THREE PIECES OF MUSIC, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

“Love Me Tender” – Elvis Presley
“Stayin' Alive” – The Bee Gees
Lucia di Lammermoor (the opera) by Donizetti

WHAT IS THE SECRET TO A GOOD LIFE?

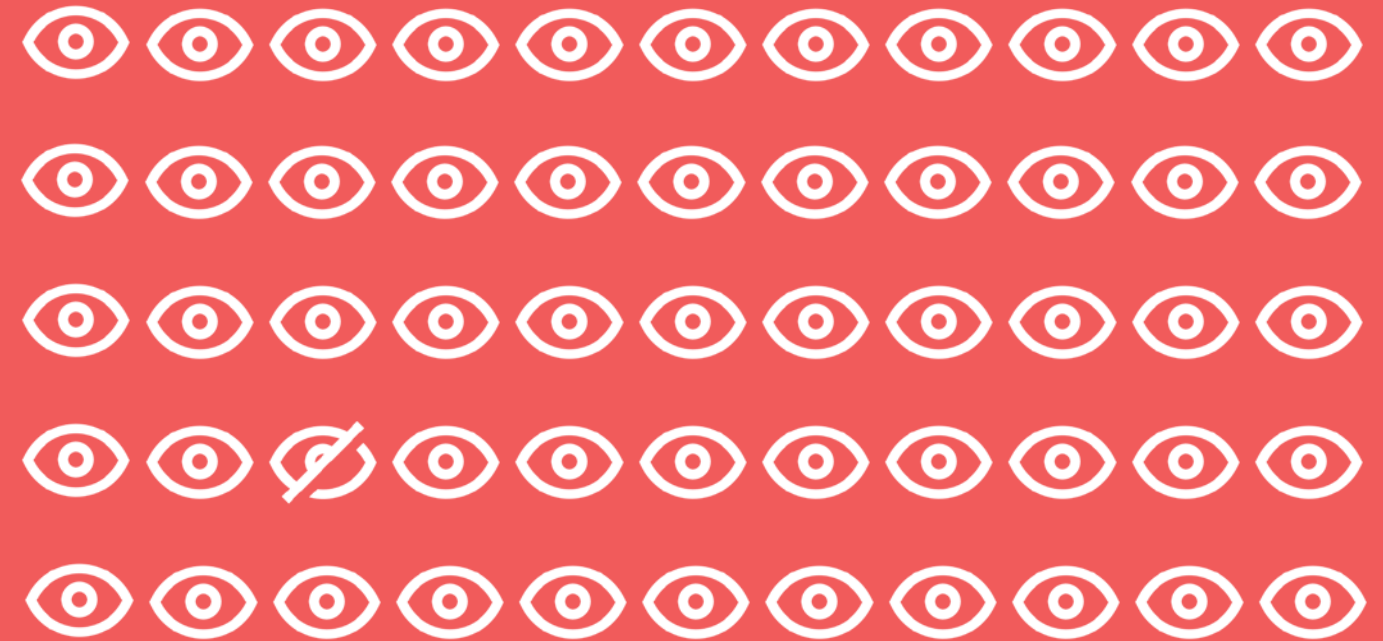
I'd say don't waste your time holding grudges or being with people you're not crazy about, be kind to others because you never know what they might be going through, and I find it often helps to look at life as either a tragic comedy or a comedic tragedy.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING LEFT ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Have dinner with Ann-Margret and get to tour her wardrobe.

WHAT ARE YOUR UBC HIGHLIGHTS?

I took a class on gothic French horror literature that I really liked.



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