

THE CAMPUS RESIDENT

SEPTEMBER 5, 2024
VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3



New Traffic Signal Delayed as School Year Begins

BC transportation ministry is targeting first half of September but with reservations, leaving parents frustrated.
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Province Gives UBC a Development Green Light

Approved land use plan will more than double population of university neighbourhoods.

BY WARREN CARAGATA

The provincial government has approved UBC's controversial land use plan that calls for doubling the population of the university neighbourhoods.

The approval came July 22 in a one-line ministerial order. "I, Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs, order that the University of British Columbia Point Grey Campus Land Use Plan amendments, approved by the UBC Board of Governors on December 5, 2023, are adopted."

The approval, however, was not announced by the government, which left it to UBC to make the decision public. UBC made the announcement

July 25 through its UBC Today newsletter. "The Province of B.C. has adopted an amended land use plan for the UBC Vancouver campus, enabling the university

Even though the government had to approve the plan, to some extent, it passed the buck back to UBC.

The province said it left the announcement to UBC because "the land use plan is the responsibility of the university."

The approval means the university can now proceed with its plan to double the population of six residential neighbourhoods—Chancellor Place, Acadia-East Campus, Hampton Place, Hawthorn Place, Stadium and Wesbrook.

These neighbourhoods, which make up about a quarter of the 400 hectares of the Point Grey campus, now have a population of 14,900 residents. Under the plan, that will increase to 35,700 by 2050. By then, the population density would be almost double that of downtown Vancouver with towers of up to 39 storeys in Wesbrook, 35 storeys in Acadia and 28 storeys in the new Stadium neighbourhood.

The University Neighbourhoods Association, which represents the residents, had opposed the land use plan and had hoped that the province would require changes. Richard Watson, the UNA chair,



Hampton Place, a neighbourhood on UBC's Point Grey campus. The university's provincially approved land use plan could see population density almost double that of downtown Vancouver, with towers of up to 39 storeys on campus. (Photo: UNA)

said when the university approved the plan in December 2023 that he had misgivings that UBC's plans would "enable the building of livable neighbourhoods, with ample green space, ecological integrity, effective transportation corridors, and services that are the basis of thriving communities."

UNA director Bill Holmes told *The Campus Resident* after the province gave its approval that the decision was not a surprise, given it has just approved zoning changes for the lelam development on the University Endowment Lands along University Boulevard that involve similar density and tower heights. An ad in the Aug. 15 Vancouver Sun gave notice of the government's intent to change zoning to permit the construction on lelam of five residential highrises of up to 34 storeys.

"(It's) disappointing that the government is not concerned by the excessive density and building heights in the amended plan which, I understand, UBC considers necessary so that it can meet its monetary targets," Holmes said.

And Holmes said the government should explain the basis for its approval. "The process is opaque," he said. "We don't know what criteria the government applies in making its decision." He does, however, intend to find out, adding that he has just submitted a freedom of information request.

Even though the government had to approve the plan, to some extent, it passed the buck back to UBC. "UBC has full responsibility for its land as well as

the amendments it makes to its land use plan," the government said. "Campus and land governance is the responsibility of the UBC Board of Governors." It is a different matter for the endowment lands, the government says, as they are managed by the province.

Some observers had speculated that with a provincial election set for October, the government would hold off a decision until after the votes are counted. But it remains an open question if the decision will affect the vote in Vancouver Point Grey, which includes the campus lands. Premier David Eby is not only the MLA but a university neighbourhood resident.

"I doubt that David Eby will lose votes over it," Holmes said. "I suspect that the LUP (land use plan) won't even be an election issue in this riding."

The government said its approval will allow UBC to continue with its proposed development of the campus, build needed student housing and secure the funds that the university needs "to proceed with projects in which the province has interests or sees as benefits to the region."

The 7-kilometre extension of the Skytrain to UBC is at the top of the list of the "projects in which the province has interests or sees as benefits to the region." But it won't come cheap. For comparison, the 16-kilometre extension from Surrey to Langley currently in development is now expected to cost \$6 billion.

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Elections to Result in UNA Board Overhaul

At least four new directors will be elected and a new chair will be appointed when the UNA holds its election for its board of directors in November.
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Off-grid Homes Developed on Campus

FP Innovations, a non-profit research organization with a lab on the UBC campus, is playing a role in developing housing solutions for a remote Indigenous community.
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Volunteers Help Local Journalism Thrive

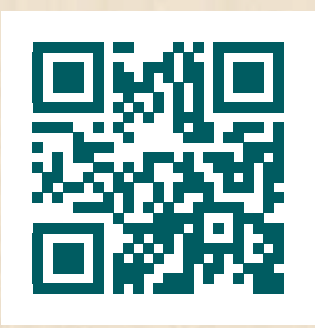
While the media industry suffers, a team of journalists and concerned journalists are volunteering their time to produce every issue of *The Campus Resident*.
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Election Means Major Turnover in UNA Board

Term limits mean a new board chair and new directors after upcoming elections.

BY DANIEL LI

At least four new directors will be elected when the UNA holds its election for its board of directors in November. Current board chair Richard Watson and director Murray McCutcheon will be ineligible to run again due to UNA's term limits. With Watson ineligible to run, the UNA will have a new board chair for the first time in half a decade. The elections will also fill a void left after the resignations of Ali Mojdehi in July 2023 and Jane Kang, who left the UNA earlier this year. The most recent election was held in November 2021. The deadline for candidate nominations is Oct. 4, and nominees will require

at least five other residents to support their nominations. The election will run from Nov. 4 to Nov. 26. Directors will not be elected by a simple first-past-the-post system where the top seven candidates with the most votes are elected. Instead, if one of the campus neighbourhoods ends up with more than three elected directors, priority will be given to candidates from other neighbourhoods to make sure there is a diversity of representation. The election will mark the first time the UNA uses an electronic voting platform developed by Montreal-based Simply Voting, marking a change from the previous paper ballots. In an interview with *The Campus Resident*, Chris Hakim, the UNA's corporate services specialist, expressed confidence in the security of the electronic voting system and said the availability of

different languages would help make the election more accessible to residents. The UNA has budgeted \$25,000 for the election, including the electronic voting system and promotional materials. Hakim said that the UNA expects voter turnout to increase this election due to the rollout of the new online system alongside efforts to boost engagement with the release of an online guidebook for new residents and a newsletter.

DANIEL LI IS A GRADE 11 STUDENT PASSIONATE ABOUT POLITICS AND JOURNALISM.



Outgoing UNA board member and board chair, Richard Watson. (Photo: UNA)

New Traffic Signal at 16th and Binning Delayed as School Year Begins

The transportation ministry is targeting first half of September but with reservations, leaving parents frustrated.

BY ADA BUCUR

The school year has started, but a new traffic signal intended to better protect children crossing West 16th on their way to Norma Rose Point Elementary has yet not been installed. The transportation ministry has once again revised the completion timeline to update the busy crossing at West 16th

and Binning Road, and now expects the changes to be made during the first half of September—two weeks after school starts. The community has been waiting for almost a year for the change from the existing pedestrian-activated flasher to a full traffic signal featuring the standard green, yellow, and red lights for drivers, along with walk/don't walk signals for pedestrians. The crossing sees about 900 pedestrians a day during the school year, many of whom are children. Concerned parents have noted that

many vehicles fail to stop for pedestrians, even when the pedestrian flasher is activated. They were the first to bring the issue to the attention of the UNA. As a result, the UNA has been pressing the transportation ministry to make changes, most recently through a letter to the ministry in October 2023. "Over the past two years, I have witnessed numerous close calls at that crossing with vehicles failing to stop for children and excessively speeding," said Mark Sissons, a Wesbrook Mall resident and father of a nine-year-old student at Norma Rose Point Elementary. In the spring, the transportation ministry told *The Campus Resident* that "the design of this safety improvement is currently underway, and we anticipate that the signal upgrade will be completed before school resumes after Labour Day." Three months later, the ministry announced that "the new signal is expected to be implemented in September," without providing a specific date, and mentioned that "the next step is the procurement

of materials by the ministry's electrical contractor." The ministry's vague response has worried parents, who are increasingly frustrated as the new school year approaches with the issue still unresolved. "As a parent, I am greatly concerned that not upgrading it could one day have catastrophic consequences and I urge the authorities to take action immediately," Sissons said. After failing to meet the initial deadline, the ministry has been hesitant to offer a new completion date. When pressed for a more precise answer, the ministry said: "Crews plan to install the new signal by mid-September," but added, "depending on weather and material availability." ADA BUCUR IS A CAMPUS RESIDENT, POSSESSES A GRAPHIC DESIGN DIPLOMA, A PHOTOGRAPHY CERTIFICATE, AND OVER TWO DECADES OF JOURNALISM EXPERTISE GAINED IN HER NATIVE ROMANIA.



Mark Sissons and his son Nayan crossing at Binning Road and 16th Avenue after pressing the button in late August as a motorist speeds by, ignoring the signal. (Photo: Ada Bucur)

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New South Campus School Gets Small Nudge

Vancouver School Board gives potential university neighbourhoods school a higher priority.

BY WARREN CARAGATA

In the face of parent concern about overcrowded schools in the university neighbourhoods, the Vancouver School Board has now given a somewhat higher priority to construction of a new elementary school.

“There is a long-term need for additional elementary capacity in the UBC area as the community develops further residential areas of the campus,” the board’s facilities planning committee said, in a report recommending the priority change.

At its June meeting, the full board approved its 2025–26 major capital plan that accepted the views of the facilities committee and raised the priority of a new school for the south campus neighbourhood to a Year-Four priority, an incremental change from the Year-Five priority in the previous capital plan.

Priorities for provincial government funding are ranked based on a five-year capital plan. School projects identified for funding in Years One and Two are considered the most urgent.

The facilities planning report says that “existing schools in the UBC area have a high-capacity utilization.” Parents simply



The new school is expected to eventually be built at this location in Wesbrook Place. (Photo: Warren Caragata)

say they are overcrowded. Parents have told The Campus Resident they sometimes have to send their children to schools outside the catchment areas for the two elementary schools serving university neighbourhoods—Norma Rose Point and University Hill.

The new school would have a capacity to teach 410 students. UBC has reserved land for the school at Ross Drive and Birney Avenue.

The change in priority does not mean a new school will be built any time soon. A board spokesperson told The Campus Resident that projects in Years Four and Five of the plan are flagged for the government when the board sees a future need. A lease for the school site would not be signed

until the government gives preliminary funding approval.

Suzie Mah, a board trustee representing the Coalition of Progressive Electors, says the capital planning process used by the province is too cumbersome. “It’s complex and in the end, it causes huge delays in getting schools built. For me, five years is way too long to wait.”

The Vancouver School Board provides public school services in the university neighbourhoods and the University Endowment Lands even though these areas are not part of the Vancouver municipality. The communities are rather considered unincorporated rural areas within Metro Vancouver.

LAND CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UBC is a property developer in addition to its role as the province’s largest university. Adding density to the residential neighbourhoods generates greater revenue to its \$3.1 billion endowment. The fund, UBC says, has two income sources - private donations and “lease and rental revenues generated from the university’s land assets.”

The land use plan, UBC says, will support “a commitment by the Board of Governors to explore a financial contribution toward the regional share of the SkyTrain extension.”

But Holmes among others says the government should not have allowed UBC “to monetize its land to such an extent.” Instead, he said, the land should be used for university purposes, “including providing more rental housing for UBC faculty and staff and for others who work on the campus.”

UBC says that under the land use plan, at least 30 per cent of neighbourhood housing units will be available for rent and at least half will be priced below market for faculty, staff and other housing needs. The plan also aims to provide housing in both the residential neighbourhoods and in student housing on-campus for at least

one-quarter of the total student population.

The plan, the university says, strikes “a balance between preserving and enhancing what the university campus already has—character, livability, green and open space, ecological assets—while enabling what it needs more of—academic space, affordable housing, amenities, infrastructure, and the financial resources to fund priorities.”

In addition to criticism around population growth and density, the plan met opposition because it lacks moves to provide democratic accountability and a municipal structure for the increased population in the neighbourhoods that will be the size of Port Moody or Penticton by 2050. The neighbourhoods are governed by the UBC Board of Governors. The UNA is a non-profit society established by the university to provide municipal-type services such as recreation and community news and events.

In 2022, the municipal affairs ministry published a study looking at governance issues in the endowment lands. The province has said it has no plans to examine governance issues for the campus lands and its residential neighbourhoods.

Meanwhile, UBC faculty members and staff have signed a petition calling on

the university to use its land holdings to build more affordable housing and ease the region’s housing crisis, instead of using it to add “to the speculative land inflation inferno.”

“Frustratingly, it seems that the large majority of new market-rate homes built on campus since the ’90s are not owned and resided in by university students, faculty and staff,” the petition said.

It added that about half of the condominium units in the residential neighbourhoods are owned by investors, “suggesting that UBC is a net contributor to housing price inflation, with recent housing efforts doing more harm than good.”

Data from the Canadian Housing Statistics Program of Statistics Canada showed that for 2022, 51.4 per cent of condominium apartments in Metro Vancouver’s Electoral Area A—in which UBC neighbourhoods account for the great majority of the

population—are not owner-occupied. That compares to just 38 per cent for the Vancouver metropolitan area and 46 per cent for Vancouver city.

WARREN CARAGATA IS A JOURNALIST, EDITORIAL CONSULTANT AND MEMBER OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.



Ielam neighbourhood, an 8.7 hectare development on campus currently under development. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

Field Replacement Completed on Budget

New field in Wesbrook is open for use, expected to last a decade.

BY POURIA KARIMI

The Wesbrook sports field is once again ready for community use after completion of the turf replacement project.

The \$1 million resurfacing project was completed during the week of August 19, just one week behind schedule.

UNA operations manager Wegland Sit said the project came in on budget, with 60 per cent of the costs coming from existing reserves, and 40 per cent coming from the Vancouver School Board.

The new field is expected to last for a decade, Sit said.

The field was resurfaced with the same kind of synthetic turf used 10 years ago when the field was established. However, while the infill material is the same, Sit said the new artificial grass is stronger.

The new materials are described as a mix of slit film and monofilament fibres with coated crumb rubber. Slit film fibres are known for their durability, while monofilament fibres showcase the look of natural grass. The crumb rubber improves footing and shock absorption.

The choice of materials followed

debate by UNA board members earlier this year about the environmental and health effects of synthetic materials.

To address concerns about micro-

plastics and crumb rubber entering the ecosystem, the UNA said it would try to prevent these materials from entering storm drains. Sump drains will be installed

to help collect crumb rubber. 

POURIA KARIMI ATTENDS UNIVERSITY HILL SECONDARY SCHOOL.



Wesbrook sports field after completion of the \$1 million turf replacement project. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

Phone Restrictions Now in Place at B.C. Schools

As limits for kindergarten to Grade 7 students take effect, one UBC professor says there's still a place for devices in the classroom.

BY ARIJIT JOSHI

As the school year gets underway, elementary school students will no longer be able to freely use their phones in the classroom.

In April, the provincial government required all school boards in the province to impose rules restricting personal digital devices.

The Vancouver School Board fell in line with the rule change in June, setting limits that apply to students from kindergarten to Grade 7. Schools in the UBC neighbourhoods and the endowment lands are run by the Vancouver School Board.

Students who bring their devices to school must have them in silent mode in their bags or lockers while on school grounds.

Premier David Eby said Aug. 27 that all school boards in B.C. now have limits in place that follow the provincial rules, although boards were given some discretion on how tight the limits could be.

The government's decision to restrict smartphone use in schools is one of several moves it is taking to keep children safe from online threats. The province has

introduced measures to order the removal of explicit images from the internet and pursue predators. It has also has passed legislation setting safe zones around elementary and secondary schools.

"Today," Eby says, "kids live with different challenges than they did a genera-

tion ago, and they face them all in the palm of their hand."

"While cellphones, the internet and social media help us connect with each other, they also present risks that can harm kids. The impact and influence of these tools is so great, and the corporations so powerful, it can be overwhelming for parents."

The restrictions come following concerns that personal mobile devices are a distraction and can cause disturbances that prevent focused learning.



As part of the new regulations, students who bring their devices will have to have them in silent mode in their bags or lockers whilst on school grounds.

Education Minister Rachna Singh said the government's actions will ensure that schools remain an environment for learning and critical thinking, and allow students learn to use technology responsibly and at the right time.

While the rules have their supporters and follow changes in jurisdictions across the country and around the world, one UBC professor says digital devices can sometimes play a positive role in a child's learning and development.

Ron Darwin, an assistant professor in UBC's language and literacy education department, recently told UBC News that there are benefits to having phones in the classroom.

"While phones can be a distraction, they are also powerful learning tools. Phones allow students to research, write, verify information, and learn languages," Darwin said.

"To ensure effective use in the classroom, teachers can design activities where students use phones for learning tasks. For example, students can use their phones to explore digital skills like posting on Instagram or making TikTok videos, and teachers can help them connect these activities to school tasks like writing or presenting."

The Vancouver School Board carved out some exemptions.

Using personal devices will be permitted for education purposes as directed by educators, for medical purposes, and to support diverse educational needs such as assistive technology. 

ARIJIT JOSHI IS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT IN THE MASTER'S JOURNALISM PROGRAM AT UBC.

Get to know some of the contributors who dedicate countless hours to each issue of *The Campus Resident*.

BY EMMANUEL SAMOGLOU

The crisis in journalism and the industry’s seemingly impending death has been a hot button issue for long time.

Those working in the sector, as well as the general public and elected officials, know the industry is in poor health.

Trust in journalists and the media has been eroded, legacy media companies are failing, and new media companies operating in the digital realm are struggling.

Yet at the hyperlocal level here in the university neighbourhoods, something remarkable is happening. A community-focused newspaper—printed quarterly on a relatively small budget with funds from local taxpayers—is thriving.

How?

Journalism doomsayers may have overlooked one thing—that there are concerned citizens who are willing to make an effort to report, write, and help put together a traditional newspaper—on their own time.

As the managing editor of *The Campus Resident*, I can say that this paper would simply not exist without the goodwill of a small group of residents living in our communities who are committed to the free flow of infor-

mation and informing the public on what is happening around them. The work these volunteers do is diverse, time-consuming, stressful, sometimes fun, and in my opinion, indispensable for a functioning society that’s committed to democratic ideals.

How is the newspaper put together?

Each issue of *The Campus Resident*—whether one of our quarterly printed issues or a monthly digital issue posted to our website—begins the same way: with a meeting of the Newspaper Editorial Committee.

UNA board chair Richard Watson says the motivation for setting up the committee came from a belief in the value of independent journalism and free expression. And to demonstrate that commitment, the editorial board is mandated to meet during closed sessions to make its decisions by consensus, in conjunction with the newspaper’s managing editor.

“The Newspaper Editorial Committee, composed of a diverse set of resident volunteers, with a mandate of setting the editorial direction and recruiting its content creators, allows *The Campus Resident* to function successfully as a paper for residents, by residents,” Watson says.

“I don’t think this structure would have worked as well in any other community, but we live in a place where people are generous with their time and expertise and are always eager to step up to the plate and contribute. We are very lucky indeed.”

The committee—selected by UNA board members from an open application process last year—generates a long list of story ideas and discusses them at the monthly meetings.

Members have an opportunity to discuss the merit of each idea and ask questions. For example: Will this story be of interest to our readers? Is it pertinent to someone living in the university neighbourhoods? Is it written in a way that’s accessible to newcomers to our community? And much more.

Eagle Glassheim
54 years old, Newspaper Editorial Committee Member and UNA Board Member

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

The digital revolution has transformed the finances of the news industry, and it’s hard for local news outlets to survive. This is a unique newspaper and uniquely positioned to serve the UBC area community. It wouldn’t be possible without volunteers, and I’m proud to join this effort. And it’s fun!

Why is journalism important to you?

I’m a strong believer in local journalism. Local newspapers inform residents of what’s going on in our neighbourhoods, activate citizens in local affairs, and build community. Journalism is foundational to a vibrant democratic society.

Sometimes our stories are a little out of left field, like when Premier David Eby wrote a review on Wesbrook Village’s newest eateries last year. And sometimes they might ruffle feathers, like when we ran an opinion piece from a resident who held grievances with how the UNA was spending its budget.

Most of our stories aim to inform readers about what’s new and interesting in our community, and these stories are written by an extremely diverse team of volunteers who live, study, and work in our communities.

Make no mistake, these volunteers are out there working much like professional newspaper reporters: researching and seeking information from bureaucrats and elected officials. This is journalism, pure and simple.

Once our reporters have hit their deadlines and submitted their stories, committee members will get to work again, putting in more time to copyedit and sharpen each article so they’re ready for publication, whether in print or online.

And once an issue is put together, it’s usually only a few days before the entire process will begin for the following issue.

Here are some of the volunteers who make *The Campus Resident* tick:

Seohyeon Park
21 years old, Reporter/Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I have been a UNA resident since immigrating to Canada. Throughout my time here, beginning as a middle school student and now a junior in university, I have gained insights into our community events and met passionate UNA volunteers who have inspired me to contribute by sharing useful information with our neighbours.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism presents new voices and creates a universal bond with people by creating a foundation that we all resonate with.



Seohyeon Park

Warren Caragata
74 years old, Newspaper Editorial Committee Member and Editor

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I enjoy the practice of journalism: writing, editing, reporting the news, telling people’s stories.

Why is journalism important to you?

A democratic society needs fair and honest reporting.



Warren Caragata

Amie Bernaerdt
19 years old, Reporter/Writer



Amie Bernaerdt

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I volunteer for *The Campus Resident* because it’s a great way to be a part of our vibrant community and to pursue my love of writing.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism is important to me because it helps you become aware of what’s happening in the world, whether it’s globally or just in your community.



Eagle Glassheim

Ada Bucur
Reporter/Writer/Photographer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

We should care about the place we live in and all have something to contribute. I worked as a journalist before expanding my creative repertoire through photography and graphic design. These are the tools I use to contribute to my community and what better place to do that than *The Campus Resident*?

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism is a way to connect with people and share their stories—their successes, failures, challenges, and solutions. It must be truthful, relevant, and motivating to drive positive change in the right direction.



Ada Bucur

Make It All Happen

Jennifer Chen
53 years old, Newspaper Editorial Committee Member

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I volunteer to connect with my community, amplify local voices, and contribute to meaningful discussions that shape our shared environment.



Jennifer Chen

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism empowers me as a writer and immigrant of color to challenge stereotypes, build cultural bridges, and give voice to underrepresented stories in pursuit of a more just society.

Jayne Seagrave

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I volunteer as a writer for a number of publications, not-for-profit organizations, and charities and the commitments to provide copy fits into my own personal obligations.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism's power is that it informs, educates and fosters a well-informed society. The role of the journalist is to serve as conduits to deliver news in an enlightening, informing and engaging way.



Jayne Seagrave

Pouria Karimi
16 years old, Reporter/ Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I volunteer to stay informed about local news and events, combining my passion for journaling with a commitment to community engagement.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism is important to me because it allows me to learn new things through writing, share vital information, and contribute to an informed and engaged community.



Pouria Karimi

Anne Zhang
17 years old, Reporter/Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

Writing for *The Campus Resident* allows me to explore and refine journalistic writing, while informing the community on relevant events and pressing concerns.

Why is journalism important to you?

I believe that journalism is key to building an informed and connected community. It gives me a platform to talk about issues I'm passionate about.



Anne Zhang

Warren Keith McKinnon
86 years old, Reporter/Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

It's an opportunity for me to research, discover and highlight the contributions people make to create a thoughtful and caring community.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism is important to me because I want to learn how the experience or perspective of others affects our understanding of life and influences our relationships.



Warren Keith McKinnon

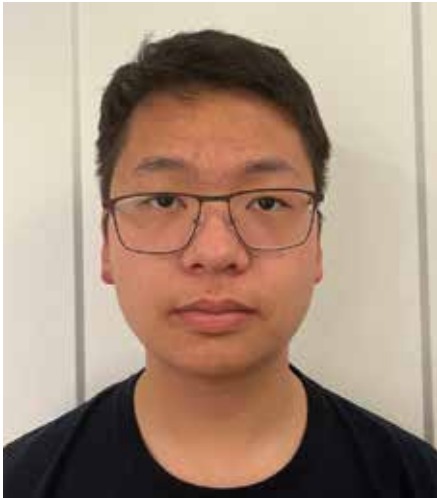
Daniel Li
16 years old, Reporter/Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

I've always had an avid interest in politics and I wanted to share with the local community.

Why is journalism important to you?

I think that local journalism is a key way of providing residents with important information about the community and for holding local officials accountable to the public.



Daniel Li

Syon Bhushan
12 years old, Reporter/Writer

Why do you volunteer for *The Campus Resident*?

Volunteering for The Campus Residents is about community contribution and personal growth. It also offers a chance to develop my writing skills professionally, which I find rewarding.

Why is journalism important to you?

Journalism serves as my platform for articulating thoughts and sharing personal experiences. It is a powerful tool for storytelling and a means to connect with others on a deeper level.



Syon Bhushan

Climate Action Plan Approved, Sets Ambitious Goals

More study, planning, and investment will be needed to meet targets.

BY EAGLE GLASSHEIM

The Board of Governors has approved the university’s Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan, endorsing proposals aimed to reduce carbon emissions from its residential neighbourhoods to net zero by 2050.

The plan, approved in June, outlines a mix of regulations, incentives and education intended to reduce the carbon impacts of construction, waste management, transportation, and building heating and cooling.

It also includes provisions for adapting to climate change, including the increased risks of heat and wildfires and greater variability in precipitation.

Several initiatives are already underway. The Wesbrook neighbourhood has had a district energy system providing heat and hot water to new buildings since 2015. The system now uses natural gas, but the plan calls for switching the system to an unspecified low-carbon energy source by 2030.

Under the plan, new developments in Wesbrook and the future Stadium and Acadia neighbourhoods would have to use district energy or some other low-carbon energy source. The plan also strengthens energy efficiency requirements for new buildings, anticipating stricter provincial rules that take force in 2032.

For existing buildings in the Hampton, Hawthorn, and Chancellor neighbourhoods that are not connected to a district energy system, the action plan proposes working with the UNA to encourage low-carbon retrofits such as heat pumps.

Isabel Todorova, the UNA’s sustainability specialist, says the UNA will have a role in sharing “information about building retrofits and external retrofit incentives (such as those from BC Hydro and the provincial government) with stratas and building owners.” UBC would also support pilot projects in UBC-owned buildings to demonstrate the feasibility of low-carbon technologies.

It’s unclear if the net zero targets can be reached without external funding. But acknowledging the considerable costs of retrofits, the plan calls for efforts to obtain financial support from the provincial government for decarbonization projects and unspecified financial incentives for stratas and homeowners.

The plan also provides more information on other initiatives, such as emergency preparedness. “The UNA will be partnering with UBC on a variety of projects related to climate emergency preparedness,” Todorova says, including “developing a localized emergency response plan for local wildfire events and exploring opportunities to increase grants, supplies, and equipment for social connectedness activities.”

The UNA has already begun implementing other elements in the plan’s climate adaptation agenda. Todorova notes that these include “projects to increase community resilience during extreme heat events” such as establishing structures to provide shade, misting stations, and adding water fountains.

The plan calls for reductions in household and construction waste by reducing consumption and diverting waste through recycling and reuse. It supports the expansion of the UNA’s successful Green Depot for reusing and recycling clothing, household goods, and packaging.

The plan singles out UNA community yard sales for encouraging reuse of household goods, and it proposes tool shares and repair workshops that would reduce unnecessary purchases. Acknowledging that neighbourhood recycling and organic waste collection have been a mixed success, the plan calls for expanding education and recycling infrastructure at the strata and neighbourhood levels.

Like many of the ambitious goals outlined in the plan, waste reduction and diversion will require considerable study, planning, and investment. While the plan’s documentation catalogues over 100 measures to reduce carbon emissions, it provides few details on how they would be achieved, and, more importantly, who will pay for them.

Reducing embodied carbon in new construction is a case-in-point. The City of Vancouver has incentivized low-carbon projects by relaxing height restrictions on mass timber buildings—allowing developers to offset the higher initial costs of construction by adding two to three storeys to their buildings.

The plan sets an ambitious target to reduce embodied carbon in new buildings by 40 per cent by 2030. But it introduces



Wesbrook’s district energy system currently uses natural gas, but UBC’s climate plan calls for switching the system to an unspecified low-carbon energy source by 2030. (Photo: Eagle Glassheim)

embodied carbon before proposing specific policies.

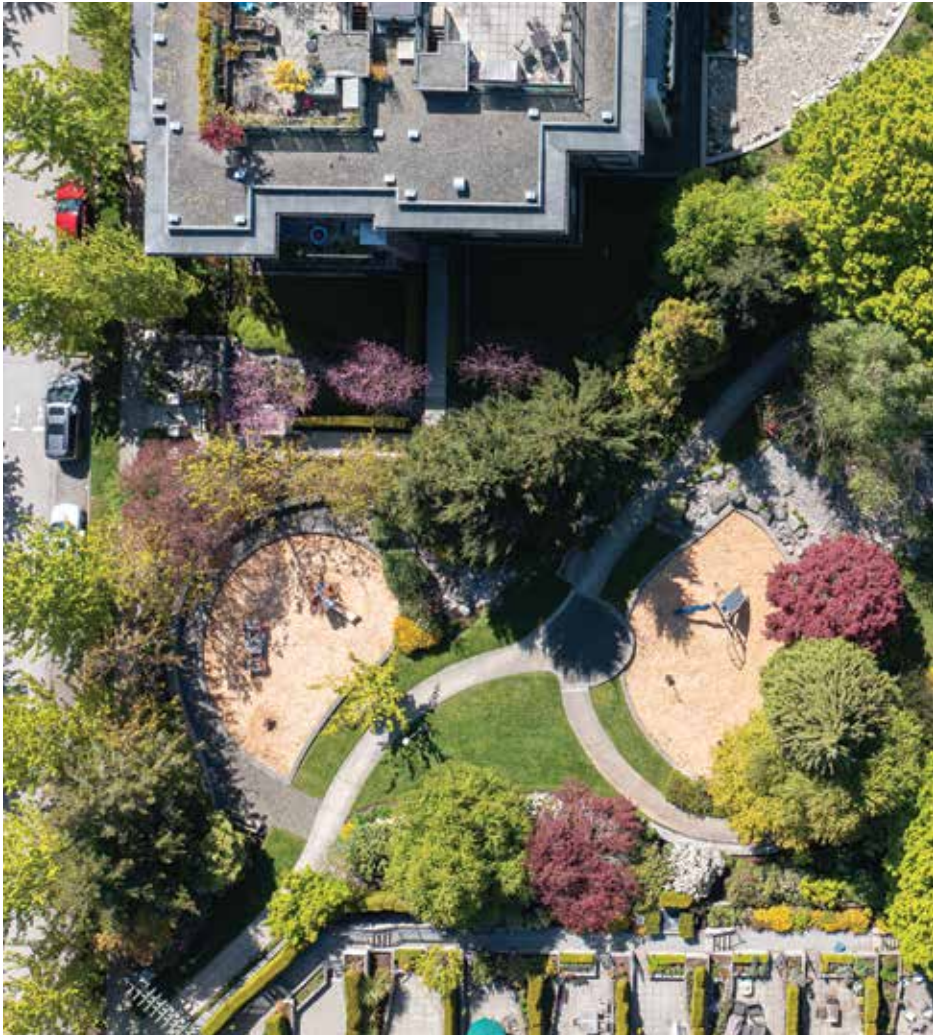
The plan itself does not itself create programs or regulations. Instead, it provides a guide for revisions to UBC development regulations, most notably the Residential Environmental Assessment Program. It also will inform future neighbourhood plans, UNA operations, transportation planning, and, in the longer term, strata decisions on renewal and replacement of existing heating and cooling systems.

Residents will have an opportunity to help shape some of these changes—in particular on green space, transportation infrastructure, and emergency planning—as UBC revises the Wesbrook Neighbourhood Plan in the coming months.

Beyond that, neighbourhood residents should be able to track UBC’s ongoing decarbonization efforts. The plan calls for tracking embodied carbon, energy usage, transportation patterns, tree canopy cover, and waste flows. Accountability is crucial to the success of any climate action plan.

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no requirements or incentives for achieving the target, instead outlining an initial phase to study, track, and account for



UBC’s climate plan calls for efforts to obtain financial support from the province for decarbonization projects and housing retrofits, such as heating pumps. (Photo: UNA)



THE CAMPUS RESIDENT

The Campus Resident values a diversity of voices and views.

Submit your letter to the editor to:
editor@thecampusresident.ca

Imagine that you live in a community in B.C. that is not on the grid—no hydro, no natural gas. Imagine you live in a home where heat and light are supplied by diesel and propane that take two hours to be delivered by truck over a forest service road.

Imagine that, in seeking an alternative source for heat and light for the homes in your community, you contact FP Innovations, a non-profit research organization with a lab on the UBC campus.

You choose FP Innovations because your community of Kluskus is the home of the Lhoosk’uz Dene Nation, one of 75 Indigenous communities in B.C. that have turned to the organization’s Indigenous Forestry Sector Technical Support Program. Christoph Schilling, the program lead, says its role is to support Indigenous forest dwellers and the Canadian forestry sector.

In a parking lot at 2665 East Mall, the company has completed two parts of a prototype modular home. On delivery this summer to the Kluskus community, located 200 km west of Quesnel, the two halves will be joined together.

Heat and light for the modular home will come from two major sources: a community-based heat and power project that FP Innovations says will be completed later this year, plus carbon-based insulation in the walls.

The community-based heat and power plant will generate electricity and provide hot water heating. Dene Chief Liliane Squinas says the territory was heavily affected by a pine beetle outbreak and the chipped and dried pine waste will be the fuel producing power for the community, replacing diesel generators.

Off-the Grid Homes

An isolated Indigenous community turns to FP Innovations for housing help.

BY WARREN MCKINNON



Anje Wahl, the senior researcher at FP Innovations. (Photo: Supplied)



Christoph Schilling, the head of FP Innovations' Indigenous Program. (Photo: Supplied)

“We will be creating a green power supply while removing the biomass fire hazard surrounding our community,” the chief said.

The home’s exterior walls are designed to reduce energy use through what Schilling calls “passive energy.”

A space within the walls, 30 cm wide, is filled with compressed sawdust and cellulose. The house retains heat and requires almost no other heating other than the sun itself. That can be augmented by baseboard heaters powered by a solar panel or the community biomass system. The insula-

tion is so effective, says Anje Wahl, the FP Innovations senior researcher, that only baseboard heaters would be needed in extremely cold weather.

The biomass energy system was developed in Finland. Another import, Wahl says, comes from Switzerland and involves the use of mass timber where lumber is “cross laminated” for strength. Stability and strength are gained when each layer is set perpendicular to the previous layer. A panel has multiple layers according to the Canadian Wood Council. Mass timber was also used extensively in the building of UBC’s eighteen-storey Brock Commons Tallwood House student residence on Walter Gage Road.

Drawing on this innovation, one of the most distinctive aspects of the 75 sq. m modular home is that its foundation is made of timber rather than concrete. Wahl estimates that 16 tons of carbon emissions were avoided using mass timber for the house rather than concrete. Construction time is also reduced.

The foundation consists of four layers of cross-laminated timber. It rests on a water-repellant foam next to the ground. A sensor membrane is installed between the foam and the wood foundation to monitor temperature and moisture.

The commercial cost of the home is \$300,000. The Lhoosk’uz Dene Nation paid \$150,000 with additional funding from the federal government’s economic development agency for British Columbia, and the B.C. government’s Northern Development Initiative Trust.

WARREN MCKINNON IS A LONGTIME CAMPUS RESIDENT.

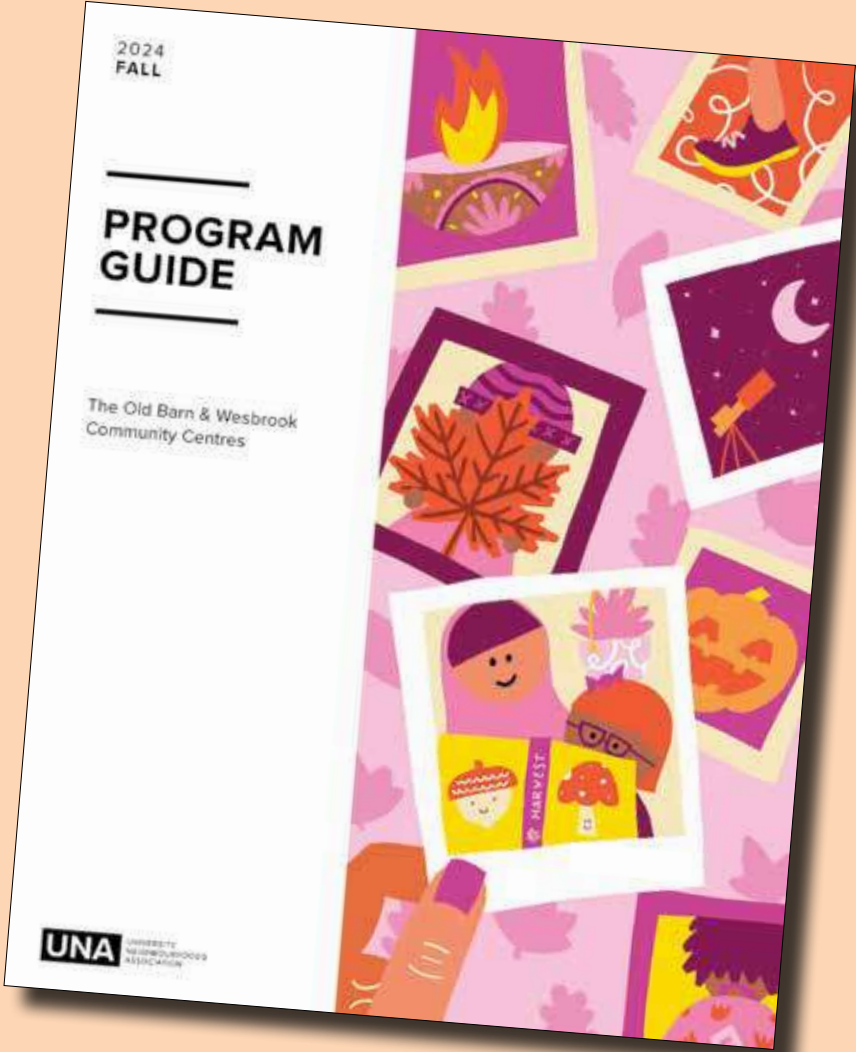
UNA UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION

REGISTER NOW OVER 200 PROGRAMS OFFERED

Try a new fitness class, learn a new musical instrument or drop in to play a sport with your friends! There’s something for everyone at the UNA community centres.

Registration for Fall recreation programs is ongoing. Spots are limited, so sign up soon!

For more information, visit myuna.ca/programs or drop by the **Wesbrook Community Centre** (3335 Webber Ln.) or the **Old Barn Community Centre** (6308 Thunderbird Blvd.).



Time to Get Fit

September is a great time to kickstart fitness at local community centres.

BY JAYNE SEAGRAVE

It is that time of the year again when local community centres share their program offerings for the fall season. I have always thought that September is much like the month of January signifying the start of a new year, when people make resolutions to improve their fitness and health habits. Many of the more popular courses at the two UNA community centres—Wesbrook and Old Barn—get full fast.

Registration opened last month, but it's never too late to see what's available and if there are still remaining spots. The UNA publishes a hard copy delivered to residences in the area and an online version at www.myuna.ca/programs. It is important to find an activity you enjoy. When this happens, you start to consider it not as hard work or something to dread. Instead, you look forward to it and get fit at the same time. Cards on the table, I am a dedicated Zumba addict and spend at least five hours a week practicing my art in the local community centres. I can't begin to describe the fantastic buzz this activity

generates. I adore it. The highlight of my week is at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, when I join more than 70 (primarily women) in the gym. For an hour, we move to Latin tunes guided by an awesome instructor. I leave the Zumba class ecstatic, full of energy and so very happy. The best hour of my week, and all for under \$10.

The UNA community centres offer a range of dance classes including Zumba, Zumba Gold (a less demanding form), adult ballet, classical Indian, Chinese folk dancing, and dance fusion.

An advantage of these classes is they do not involve a partner. It's easy to register as a single and be welcomed. A friend of mine became so involved with line dancing, she now attends line dancing holidays all over the world. I have another Zumba mate who looks for cruises that have at least three hours of line dancing a day, illustrating how addictive dancing can become.

Dance, like many more traditional sports, is a physically challenging activity. It is now widely accepted that there are significant health benefits from regular exercise. It reduces stress, improves flexibility, lowers depression, can lead to weight loss, increases energy, improves cardiovascular function, improves coordination, balance and memory, and generates self-esteem and confidence. Dancing, like sports, can be enjoyed at any age.

There are more programs for all ages offered by UNA, including spin classes, yoga, osteofit, bootcamps, and sports such as soccer, volleyball, badminton and of course, the extremely popular pickleball classes—sign up early!

Both UNA community centres have

open gyms where pre-registration is not required. They're equipped with free weights, machines, treadmills, mats and more—all for an economical drop-in fee. When my children were younger, they were often registered in after-school or weekend community centre programs, which gave me free time to access the gym, (although I have to admit, it was often more attractive to go to a coffee bar than the gym, but good to have the option nevertheless).

There are also options for working with a personal trainer in the gym, who will address your fitness ambitions and devise a program specifically targeting your goals. Get in touch with fitness@myuna.ca to find out more.

In addition to the UNA programs, UBC offers a huge range of classes that are open not just for students, faculty and staff (see www.recreation.ubc.ca). There are classes for tennis, aquatics, group fitness, boot camps, yoga, martial arts and conditioning. Many require prior registration and get full quickly, but for other activities such as pool access, there are opportunities to access the facilities when they are not busy, especially if you have free time during the day.

So, if you want to improve your emotional well-being, motivation, friendship circle and fitness level look no further than the UNA community centres classes and programs at UBC. Time to get fit!

JAYNE SEAGRAVE IS A B.C. RESIDENT AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF "CAMPING BRITISH COLUMBIA, THE ROCKIES AND THE YUKON". SHE WRITES FICTION AND NON-FICTION, AND OCCASIONALLY TEACHES WRITING AND PUBLISHING COURSES.



A fitness class at Wesbrook Community Centre. (Photo: UNA)

Sharing a Lifetime of Enjoyment

People of the UNA: Bridge Master John Maunsell.

BY JAYNE SEAGRAVE

Residents of UBC neighbourhoods can take an eclectic range of courses at UNA community centres. The programs are designed to stimulate minds and bodies of every age, provided by instructors proficient in the subject. One of the courses involves the game of bridge. Usually, it attracts around eight people and it's free to anyone who has a strong understanding of the game, who wants to enhance their skills, and have fun. The class takes place every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. John Maunsell, who has been playing bridge all his life, is a member of the group who has a special role—he is a bridge Life Master. Life Masters are players who have been awarded a certain number of points at sanctioned tournaments based on how they placed and the number of players in the event. John has been a volunteer coach since 2015 for those who want to improve their game. He's a B.C. boy, having grown up on Vancouver Island. His father taught him, his



Bridge master John Maunsell (Photo: Vivian Su)

mother, and his older sister, but only he and his father had an affinity for the game. John played at UBC as a student. "There was always a game on," he says. John graduated with a degree in English and history

and chose teaching as a career, working initially in Whitehorse and then in other B.C. communities. Although he played bridge throughout his life, it was not until 2015 that he rekindled his passion for the game, registering for a free course offered at the Wesbrook Community Centre.

It was quickly evident that he was not just another participant, but the person others turned to if they needed advice. He says that as a teacher, he fit naturally into the role of encouraging and coaching his fellow players.

At the same time, he started to play at The Vancouver Bridge Club. By that point he was playing about nine hours a week. Over the last 10 years, he has won major tournaments in B.C., Oregon, and Washington.

John soon realized that his bridge teaching needed a more formal structure. In 2017, he learned that the American Contract Bridge League was holding a convention in Penticton and offering a two-day course on how to teach bridge. He enrolled.

As a pastime, bridge is in decline— younger players are generally not interested. Many players, John says, are over the age of 50. And while bridge is an easy game to learn as a beginner, it's difficult to master at a competitive level. But for John, bridge has meant a lifetime of enjoyment that he's just happy to share with his Tuesday companions.

Partnership Brings 1,500 New Student Beds to UBC Vancouver

More students will have access to on-campus housing at the University of British Columbia thanks to a new student residence complex coming to the Vancouver campus.

BY MATTHEW RAMSEY

New housing project will also include 37 childcare spaces and a 400-seat dining hall

The total project cost is \$559.9 million, with the provincial government contributing \$300 million and UBC providing the remaining \$259.9 million. The funding is the most significant provincial contribution to a single building project in UBC’s history.

“We are grateful to the B.C. government for this historic \$300-million investment in the UBC Vancouver campus,” said UBC President and Vice-Chancellor Benoit-Antoine Bacon. “This support will be transformative in providing much-needed additional student housing and childcare for our community. By working together, we are alleviating significant pressures on our students and the local rental market, and further enhancing an environment where academic excellence and personal well-being can flourish.”

The project will feature five new student residence buildings on the Lower Mall Precinct of UBC’s Vancouver campus, currently the site of St. John’s College. One of the buildings will be an eight-storey hybrid mass timber and wood frame structure. The complex will include 1,508 student housing beds (1,333 new and 175 replacement) with a focus on graduate students, as well as 37 new childcare spaces, a 400-seat dining hall, common amenity space, and academic and administrative office space.

“We know people want to find homes near where they live, work and

study in British Columbia,” said Premier David Eby. “Our government is building on-campus housing at an unprecedented pace – including our biggest project to date right here at UBC – helping more students find a safe, secure and affordable place to call home and relieving pressure on the rental market.”

The residence units will be self-contained suite-style units, primarily consisting of independent studios, four-bedroom shared units and a mix of two-to-three-bedroom units, which may support students with families or multiple single students, depending on demand. There will also be about 400 additional units without kitchens. There will be an event space, fitness and games rooms, music practice rooms, laundry facilities, study rooms and administrative offices.

UBC is the largest university provider of student housing in Canada with 16,003 beds on its two campuses (13,883 in Vancouver and 2,120 at UBC Okanagan). The university has invested \$700 million to build more than 6,000 new below-market-rate student residence beds over the past 14 years on the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses.

“Despite that growth, demand continues to outpace supply, and this project is important for our students,” said Andrew Parr, associate vice-president, student housing and community services.

“The funding announced from the province, coupled with UBC’s investment, is a critical step forward in advancing UBC’s Campus Vision Plan 2050 and Housing Action Plan, in which we commit to delivering 3,300 new beds on the Vancouver campus and 500 new beds on the Okanagan campus by the mid 2030s.”

Construction is set to begin in fall 2026. The project is expected to become operational in phases, starting in fall 2028 and completing in fall 2029.



UBC President Benoit-Antoine Bacon (centre), Premier David Eby (right). (Photo: UBC Media Relations)

The redevelopment of the St. John’s College site aligns with the strategic goals outlined in UBC’s Campus Vision 2050 plan for the UBC Vancouver campus, recently adopted by the Board of Governors in December 2024.

About Campus Vision 2050 and the Land Use Plan

UBC’s Land Use Plan establishes generalized land uses and development policies for the Vancouver campus. A major amendment to the Land Use Plan was adopted by the B.C. government in July 2024, which enables the university to begin implementing the ideas, policies and strategies developed with the community through the Campus Vision 2050 process, including UBC’s Housing Action Plan commitments.

Campus Vision 2050, which sets a long-term vision for the physical campus, was shaped by input from thousands of UBC community members, campus residents, Musqueam, and Indigenous community members over a two-year period. Together with the updated Land Use Plan, Campus Vision 2050 enables the residential campus population to double by 2050, with half of the residents living in below-market rental rate accommodations.

As part of UBC’s recently updated Housing Action Plan, up to 40 per cent of new campus neighbourhood development will be rental, with at least 25 per cent designated as below-market rental for faculty and staff, and up to 15 per cent as market rental for those who work or study on campus. Additionally, the plan includes increasing on-campus student housing to at least 17,300 beds, up from the current 14,000. This housing growth will also be supported by a comprehensive suite of amenities and services, as well as strong climate action commitments and policies.

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(Photo: UBC Media Relations)

In Our Words: Living on Campus is a Personal Journey

Adapting and Thriving: Campus life for children in a post-pandemic world.

BY SYON BHUSHAN

“This place is too small! We will live here for three months,” my mom said when we first moved to the campus.

It’s been over 10 years, and we haven’t left yet. Ten years of amazing hikes, sensational bike rides, fun educational events and countless enriching experiences.

Growing up on a university campus has been an incredible experience. I’ve always had things to do: UBC’s Geering Up science and engineering camps, watching outdoor movies, attending occasional lectures.

The university neighbourhoods are a vibrant community, and I have had opportunities to develop wonderful friendships.

Growing up here, I have enjoyed many academic events led by students over the years. For example, I attended a paper-making workshop led by graduate students. I also attended other fun events like the Science Rendezvous street festival this past May.

I like hiking and the campus has a lot of places to do that, including my favourite, the trails in Pacific Spirit Regional Park.

The park has 55 kilometres of trails. Over the years, I have visited time and again. Coast Salish is my favourite trail, a continuous up-and-down route that makes it less strenuous but still changes elevation. The most challenging trail I have done is Wreck Beach, as I had to go down 490 stairs to the beach. I once went

down the trail to watch the sunset from the beach. It was amazing!

The campus has a lot of sports facilities: the tennis centre, the aquatic centre, the skating rink, the baseball centre, a climbing wall, the hockey centre, soccer fields, and more.

There are sometimes Thunderbird games in the UBC skating rink, which I watched a few times, cheering as hard as I could for the home team. The sports facilities on campus are the best in the city in my opinion and offer children an unparalleled experience and opportunity to shine.

One of the most memorable experiences I’ve had since moving here was my involvement with raising the reconciliation totem pole in 2017.

Many other people and I helped raise the pole by pulling on ropes. The pole tells a story about the Indian residential school system and the people who were affected. The top half of the pole shows the time after the residential school system and shows spirits, family, and a canoe. On the top of the pole is an eagle about to take flight. I felt proud to have the opportunity to raise the pole, but I was also sad for all the people affected by residential schools.

Growing up in the university neighbourhoods has been a blessing. I’ve made everlasting friendships, created incredible memories, and learned so much. It’s truly a magical place to grow up.

SYON BHUSHAN IS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT LIVING IN THE UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS.



Campus Resident contributor Syon Bhushan, taking part in the raising of the Reconciliation Pole at UBC in 2017. (Photo: Syon Bhushan).



The Reconciliation Pole on UBC campus, created by Haida carver and hereditary chief James Hart, 7idansuu (Edenshaw). (Photo: Owen Sopotiuk/UBC Media)

A National Day Toward Reconciliation

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a reminder of past wrongs.

BY ANNE ZHANG

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, occurring yearly on Sept. 30, serves as a reminder about Canada’s history of residential schools and honours the children that never returned from them. It is a public commemoration of the horror that Indigenous communities endured and is one step in a long process of reparation and reconciliation.

It is of immense importance that Canadians understand the lasting impact of residential schools, and the first step is education.

The learning journey can begin by exploring the diverse and rich cultures of local Indigenous communities—in the case of UBC, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people.

More resources can also be found at the websites of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, the Orange Shirt Society, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day is another event that takes place Sept. 30. It’s an Indigenous-led grassroots

commemorative day that promotes wearing orange in recognition of the loss of culture, freedom, and identity that Indigenous children experienced at residential schools and shows support to those who survived.

Thus, Sept. 30 marks an important day to recognize missing children, promote cultural reconciliation, and look to a better future.

Richard Watson, the UNA board chair, says the association doesn’t organize events or schedule programs on Sept. 30, opting instead to incorporate Indigenous learning sessions and culture at other times of the year, including Indigenous Peoples Day in June and by including Indigenous performances at Neighbours Day on Sept. 8.

“It is a difficult time to request for Indigenous People to teach us about their cultures during that time because it is a time of mourning for the Indigenous community,” he says.

“On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we hold close in our hearts the memory of the children who never made

it back home, the survivors who endured suffering and pain, and the families and communities forever impacted by residential schools,” Watson says.

“The UNA would like to let those who have been affected by residential schools to know that we are with them and encourage everyone to commit ourselves to a path of understanding and compassion.”

UBC acknowledges the day primarily by lowering the Canadian, B.C., Musqueam, and UBC flags. Community events are also organized, and prospective participants are encouraged to connect with local organizers in mid-September for details.

Past events across Vancouver have included reflection and education activities at the Arts Umbrella on Granville Island, UBC’s intergenerational march to commemorate Orange Shirt Day hosted by the science faculty, and the BC Lions Orange Shirt game.

ANNE ZHANG IS A GRADE 12 STUDENT AT PRINCE OF WALES MINI SCHOOL AND LIVES IN HAMPTON PLACE.



Last year’s UNA Community Bike Jam event – one of many events that take place in the university neighbourhoods each year. (Photo: UNA)