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The past year brought both challenges and opportunities for the Office of Student Life. With the pandemic and shifting to the virtual environment for the 2020-2021 academic year, the Office of Student Life quickly pivoted to create an online experience for students. The goal was to continue to offer new student engagement opportunities, peer to peer programming and education, student support, and both preventative and responsive work to support a safer and more inclusive campus environment.

This annual report provides an overview of the work of the Office of Student Life over the last academic year. Our Office has grown both in terms of programs and people over the last year. With the emergent context of the last year and the year ahead, we’ve also spent some time reviewing our work to ensure we are putting our efforts into programs that will have positive and meaningful impacts for students and are in line with our mandate and the priorities we understand to be important to students. This report will highlight our key programs and offerings of the past academic year, as well as forecasting some goals for the upcoming year.

~Kirsten McMenamie
OUR PRIORITIES

Promoting an anti-oppressive, anti-racist campus environment.

A student centred and trauma informed approach to student outreach & support and responses to student conduct concerns.

Fostering student leadership development and creating opportunities for co-curricular learning.

Creating spaces for students who face multiple and complex barriers to become meaningfully engaged and experience a sense of belonging.

Facilitating opportunities for new students to feel prepared and connected during their transition to life as a UVic student.

Creating spaces for student-led initiatives and campus engagement.

Some new programs launched in the 2020-2021 year that we want to highlight include:

The establishment of the **Student Equity and Social Justice Education team**, including the new and revised roles of Manager, Student Equity and Social Justice Education, Student Equity Advocate and Student Leadership Coordinator.  

See page 12

The establishment of the **Anti-Racism Supplement** for our Student Life Activity Grant.  

See page 13

The **NEW STUDENT CONNECT** Program, a program aimed to create virtual community building, peer mentorship, and engagement opportunities for first year students.  

See page 10-11
Welcoming New Students in New Ways

The Office of Student Life offers a range of programming for new UVic students, facilitating their successful transition through pre-arrival and arrival orientation programs and events, as well as first-year experience programs and activities. This year, our new student engagement programming both adapted and expanded in response to the changing context of COVID-19.

As we prepared for students to begin their UVic experience virtually in the 2020-2021 academic year, the Orientation team made significant changes to our program delivery and piloted new programs and initiatives to better engage with students in a virtual context. Our team adapted quickly to design programming using virtual platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and YouTube. We looked to new modes of communication, including Instagram and e-newsletters, to better engage and share information with students in a virtual campus environment.

And in January 2021, in collaboration with International Student Services, we launched UVic's first Winter Welcome program to help students reconnect with the UVic community after winter break.

In September 2020, OSL also launched a brand-new initiative aimed at connecting new students to peers, peer mentors, and campus community. The New Student Connect program sought to address the major gap that was anticipated for new students starting their studies in this unprecedented time. How would new students make friends? Build a sense of community and belonging? Find out about and access support and resources? With the support of partners across campus and an incredibly dedicated new staff team, this ambitious program pulled together and trained over 100 upper year student mentors and supported over 3000 new students through a new and challenging virtual transition to UVic.
ONLINE PRE-ARRIVAL PROGRAM

September 2020 marked the second year the Pre-Arrival Program was offered to new students. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events, several changes were made to the program.

- The program was moved into Brightspace, UVic’s new learning management system
- We added content about online learning, and ensured all content reflected the new online learning experience students would have
- We added an additional topic and activity to introduce students to concepts related to anti-oppression.

- 52% of new students visited content
- 27% of new students completed the program
- 94% of new students say the program was helpful
ARRIVAL PROGRAMS

In response to COVID-19, all arrival programs were pivoted into a virtual format. Here are some highlights from the official welcomes to each academic term.

SEPTEMBER

- 2,777 students registered for the two programs
- ~2,074 students attended the virtual programming
- Programming was expanded from one day to two days in order to add additional program elements while decreasing consecutive screen time
- For the first time, orientation offered workshops on topics including academics, community, health and wellness, and social justice
- Almost 750 people tuned in for the live streaming of our virtual orientation opening ceremony, #ThisIsUVic Live. The 25-minute video featured student emcees, an official welcome from the president, Thunder the mascot, and more!

JANUARY

- ~150 students attended January Orientation
- Students participated in a virtual opening ceremony video, workshops based on their student status and virtual social activities.
- Launched a new program called Winter Welcome in partnership with International Student Services. The two-week program included over 50 workshops on topics including academics, community, health and wellness, and social justice.

MAY

- ~80 students attended May Orientation
- For the first time of the academic year, students were invited to participate in an on-campus tour!
Back-to-school BINGO

The Back-to-school BINGO contest ran throughout January 2021 to help kick-off the new term. Students were encouraged to complete a number of different activities, such as attending Winter Welcome events, meeting with their Engage Leader, creating a term schedule, engaging with a wellness activity, and more, to help set themselves up for success for the term. If they completed enough activities to fill out a BINGO line, they were entered to win a UVic sweater!

Spirit packs

In August 2020, every new student was sent a spirit pack in the mail to help welcome them to UVic. Spirit packs included:

- A UVic postcard with a message from the president
- A UVic branded mask
- A Thunder sticker
- A bookmark from the Student Wellness Centre
- A “you got this” magnet from Alumni Services
- A “be part of the change” pin promoting OSL’s sexualized violence programming

Spirit packs were also sent to students who started at UVic in January and May 2021.

Virtual exam care packages

To support students through the spring exam period, the OSL created a virtual care package they could access online. The virtual care package, presented as a PDF, included study snack ideas from fellow students, study playlists, study tips and wellness tips, campus resources, and positive encouragements from Engage Leaders.

Holiday cards from your Engage Leaders

To encourage students throughout the winter exam period, and promote a feeling of connection, the OSL facilitated a massive community mail-out. All new students in the Connect program were mailed a postcard that their EL had personally written to them, as well as a New Student Connect sticker!
Inside the Ring is a biweekly newsletter sent to all UVic students via email that contains important dates, university announcements, events, opportunities, resources and more. The newsletter was launched in September 2020 to connect students to the institution and provide a method of outreach from the institution to students. While the newsletter is produced by the Office of Student Life, it is intended to convey information from all areas of the university.

Student Responses

“The newsletter is great. It is packed full of important information.”
“I wouldn’t know about many events going on at UVic without it.”
“It makes me feel more connected to the UVic community!”

Meet Me in the Quad

Recognizing that a lot of programming for students was going to involve being on a computer and looking at a screen during an online learning year, we launched a new podcast, Meet Me in the Quad, to engage with students asynchronously.

3 seasons for the podcast were released, each with a different theme:

Season 1 was hosted by 4th year English student Teresa Sammut, and included episodes with first-year instructors about their course set-up for the fall term, as well as episodes with upper-year students on key aspects of student life.

Season 2 was hosted by OSL staff member Nicole Crozier. Half of the episodes were interviews with first-year students about their first six weeks at UVic, and half were interviews with UVic staff focused on different academic skills.

Season 3 was hosted by 3rd year psychology student Briar Mayoh. Episodes explored a variety of aspects of the student experience, including mental health, applying to medical school, finding housing, applying for summer jobs, and more.
To better reach and communicate with new UVic students during a year of online learning, we launched a new Instagram account, @UVicYearOne, in July 2020. Our goal was to share important university information, promote campus events and resources, share tips and tricks to help students succeed and help students feel like a valued member of the UVic community. We ended the year with 1600+ followers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Student content creators:** From August through September, we followed the journey of six different new students. Each student shared one post every week, documenting what they were up to, how they were feeling, etc., with the goal of creating a sense of connection between students, and normalizing the transition experience.

- **Educational content:** Throughout the year, we shared stories with tips and tricks on a wide variety of topics, including time management, note-taking, getting involved, talking to your instructors, preparing for a career fair, studying for exams, accessing SupportConnect, and more.

- **Exam pep talks:** Throughout the exam period, we sent students short pep talks via DM to provide encouragement during a stressful time.

- **Sunday breaks and check-ins:** Every Sunday, we posted a story that encouraged students to take breaks, rest, and look after their mental health, while showcasing a different Victoria location. As part of these stories, we regularly asked a check-in question to gain insight on how students were doing throughout the term, and followed up with students who were struggling.
The **New Student Connect** program came to fruition in response to the unprecedented challenges a new and uncharted virtual transition to university posed for incoming students.

**New Student Connect goals**
A student who has participated in the Connect program...
- has built meaningful relationships
- knows resources and where to find help, support, and services
- feels a sense of belonging at UVic
- is excited to continue studying at UVic

In the 2020-2021 academic year, new UVic students were paired with an upper-year student mentor called an Engage Leader (EL). ELs helped make the first-year experience memorable and meaningful for new students. These student leaders provided ongoing support, encouragement and information through monthly one-on-one check-ins. They were a wealth of knowledge about student life, the UVic student community, services available to new students, and ways to get the right support when new students needed it.

Using the Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) platform, ELs facilitated one-on-one connections with their students on a regular basis, as well as amongst a group of first-year students from their faculty. They also led virtual activities and events to help build community with this group.

Further utilizing MS Teams, the New Student Connect HUB was created. This unique MS Team became a centralized space where OSL staff and our partners across campus shared information and events relevant to new students. As information was shared throughout the year, new students were able participate in different social events, learn about clubs and course unions, and attend learning workshops happening across our virtual campus. Additionally, the New Student Connect HUB acted as a space where students could share their passions and engage in opportunities for social interaction outside of their faculty group for a holistic experience.
Indigenous and international students

Recognizing the unique identities and experiences of students, the Connect program created specific pods for Indigenous students and international students, respectively. Students from these groups were given the option to participate in an identity-based pod or a faculty-based pod depending on their preference.

- Each pod had its own unique HUB channel
- Students were connected to programming and support unique to their needs
- First Peoples House
- International Student Services
- Monthly specialized events
- Their EL was Indigenous or an international student respective to their needs.

What 1st year students said about their ELs:

- 83% “They shared information that is important for me to know”
- 77% “They facilitated valuable 1-to-1 interactions”
- 87% “They were supportive and/or encouraging”
- 64% “They helped me with my academic experience”

Academic initiatives

While the Connect program is ultimately not an academic support program, we recognized that students were interested in connecting with classmates and finding ways to succeed in their studies despite some of the challenges of the online learning environment. In response to this, in the second term we launched our academic initiatives, with two primary goals:

Help students meet their academic peers by creating collaborative learning spaces.
Use collaborative learning to help students develop healthy study skills.

Highlights:

Academic Community HUB
Study group matching
Pomodoro-style study sessions
OUR STUDENT LEADERS

The Student Life Leadership Program (SLLP) invests in 25 student leaders who work to promote positive mental health, build queer and trans community on campus and educate students on sexualized violence prevention and consent culture through three streams: Mental Health Leaders, Consent Advocates and Relationship Educators (CARE), and QVic Life Leaders.

The SLLP follows an evidence-based curriculum that engages students in personal, professional and community development through workshops and learning sessions on anti-oppression, holistic wellbeing, critical allyship, facilitation, and effective support and referrals. Students then take these learnings, and plan and implement initiatives and events through a peer-based education model to effect positive change at UVic.

This year, as campus life moved online, the SLLP partnered with the New Student Connect Program to offer online spaces to engage in conversations around wellbeing and consent and to offer opportunities for queer and trans students to build community with one another.

STUDENT EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION TEAM

In January 2021 a new position titled Manager, Student Equity & Social Justice Education was created within the Office of Student Life. The mandate of this position was to bring an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens to student life programming, including in relation to sexualized violence prevention, mental health & wellness, student leadership initiatives, and student life grants.

As the Manager, Student Equity & Social Justice Education role became integrated into the OSL, the significance of and need for a critical equity lens to support all aspects of the office became apparent. As well, the importance of establishing collaborative relationships across campus, including with student representatives and student advocacy groups, became clear.

The winter 2021 term presented an opportunity for the Manager, Student Equity & Social Justice Education to get a sense of the UVic landscape, to develop strong working relationships both internal and external to OSL, and to start planning for the establishment of a Student Equity & Social Justice Education (SESJE) team within the Office of Student Life.
In 2021, the Office of Student Life streamlined the application process for the UVic Student Life Grant program and the Anti-Racism Supplement, allowing students to apply for up to $1500 in funding for the newly revised UVic Student Life Grant +Anti-Racism Supplement Grant program. As well as revising the application to make it more accessible, the Student Life Grant Committee was expanded to include additional campus partners, more student representatives, and a requirement for BIPOC representation on the committee.

With five application deadlines established throughout the year, students may now apply for funding on an ongoing basis and may choose to propose a student life initiative (eligible for up to $1000 in funding) or an initiative with an anti-racism focus (eligible for up to $1500 in funding).

More information about the Student Life Grant +Anti-Racism Supplement, as well as the application form and grant guidelines may be found here.

2020-2021 RECIPIENTS

**Natasha Newman**  
*Kitchen Table talks for Indigenous Students in NSC program*

**Joseph Sheppard**  
*Authors with Autism: Campus peer-support writing program for students on the spectrum*

**Debora Torok**  
*Moving Psychology Toward Anti-Racist and Anti-Colonial Reserach and Practice: Dr. Jennifer Mullan workshop*

**Matilde Cervantes**  
*UVic Multicultural: Pax & Diversity through Arts*

**Baylie Adams**  
*In Appreciation of William Grant Still; A Virtual Benefit Concert*

**Sarah Lane**  
*Women in Science STEM Research Symposium*

**Navjot Jassar**  
*Litigation Skills Program for Racialized Law Students*
In partnership with over 15 campus groups, including the University of Victoria Students’ Society and First People’s House, the OSL hosted UVic’s 7th Annual Wellness Week. The week promoted dozens of free events, aimed at promoting student connection, positive mental health and wellbeing through a holistic lens. This year, with COVID-19 impacting the experience of the UVic community, and with classes and the UVic community online, the events of Wellness Week shifted to the virtual sphere.

Our theme in 2021 was Pathways to Wellness, as events, activities and conversations were brought forward highlighting different ways and areas important in supporting individual and community wellbeing. **The 5 dimensions highlighted were:**

- **Academic/Intellectual Wellness**
- **Physical Wellness**
- **Spiritual Wellness**
- **Emotional Wellness**
- **Community/Social Wellness**

**Student Responses:**

“I appreciate that UVSS and UVic have made an effort to make services available to students through distance. I think that I have been able to attend more events than I would normally have been able to attend in person”

“I just wanted to say thank you so much for doing this!! I joined the meditation group last week and just attended Justin Michael Williams talk! I am in my third year at UVIC and have found so many resources from this wellness week I had no idea existed! Especially given everything happening in our world I really needed some more “calm” in my life, so thank you.”

“Thank you for the work you do, its shifted over the years, and much more inclusive and accessible”
Main event headliner Justin Michael Williams, who works at the intersections of meditation, equity and music shared his experience through an inspirational live event for the UVic community and in a conversation with Chancellor Shelagh Rogers.
Sexualized Violence Prevention (SVP) & Awareness

The Office of Student Life supports UVic’s mandate to address sexualized violence through prevention, education, and awareness raising.

The two main initiatives OSL staff are actively engaged in are the annual Sexualized Violence Awareness Week and the SVP workshops facilitated by students, for students.

Below are some highlights of these initiatives over the past year.
SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK

The University of Victoria's seventh annual Sexualized Violence Awareness Week: Let's Talk about Consent Online was held from September 21-25, 2020. The week included a variety of virtual events and workshops such as Understanding Consent Culture (AVP), Consent 2.0: Navigating Sexual Harassment Experienced Online (EQHR), Sex Positivity (GEM), and The Men’s Circle (AVP).

There were two main events: Rewriting the Rulebook: Sexualized Violence in Sports with Pamphinette Buisa, a Team Canada Rugby player and former UVic Vikes player, and Christine O’Bonsawin, a UVic Indigenous Studies professor and Olympic history expert, who discussed athletes’ experiences with sexualized violence, their own experiences with discrimination in sport, and shared how we can build a safer sports culture at UVic.

The second event was Sex and Consent in Canada: What’s Okay, What Isn’t, and Why, a discussion between Dip Nag, the UVSS Director of International Student Relations and Arshdeep Grewal from MOSAIC BC. They talked about the difficulties living in a new culture where the rules around sexual consent may be different, and how to navigate dating and consent as an International student in Canada.

The week was coordinated as a collaboration between the Office of Student Life (OSTL), Equity & Human Rights (EQHR), the University of Victoria's Student Society (UVSS), and the Anti-Violence Project (AVP), in consultation with Vikes Athletics and Recreation, (ATRS), Residence Services (RESS), International Student Services (ISS), Health and Counselling Services, and other community services.
Tools for Change, an introductory workshop about the root causes of sexualized violence, consent, and the university’s sexualized violence policy, continued to engage students through its second year, educating hundreds of students through drop-in workshops, classrooms, student groups, and orientation events. The workshop is lead by trained student facilitators and seeks to provide students with tools to apply their learnings in practical ways. The workshop was adapted to a virtual format (Zoom) for the 2020-2021 academic year.

92% of participants said that they increased their knowledge of consent (the definition of consent, how people communicate consent, and how people can practice consent).

STUDENT RESPONSES:

“I really think everyone at UVic should have to take this. It was well taught, super informative, and it is relevant to everyone. Great experience overall!”

“Very interactive and productive workshop that provided me with lots of valuable knowledge. Will definitely be recommending my other friends to participate.”

“Thank you for teaching me more about how to spot and understand sexualized violence. A lot of times things become normalized by our culture and it is important to me to help others feel accepted and comfortable.”
89% of participants said they increased their ability to recognize behaviours of sexualized violence

81% of participants said their confidence in their ability to intervene increased

Bringing in the Bystander, a workshop that seeks to build upon the learnings of Tools for Change, continued to engage students on intervention theory and strategy by looking at case studies, videos, and current research in Canada. The workshop is lead by trained student facilitators skilled in supporting conversations around sexualized violence prevention and education. In its five years at UVic, these workshops have trained hundreds of UVic students. The workshop was adapted to a virtual format (Zoom) for the 2020-2021 academic year.

STUDENT RESPONSES:

"I thought it was an excellent workshop, and the environment was very safe and welcoming. It was a great way to learn about bystander intervention and has helped inform me of the ways I can help others."

"The facilitators were effective in making the workshop interesting and the format was engaging."

"I felt that this was a very useful program and that I learned a significant amount about what it is to be a bystander and sexualized violence. I feel much more informed and confident in addressing these sorts of issues in the future. I felt this was a very useful workshop."

Taken from collected survey data.
Students facing multi-faceted challenges require a coordinated response that engages multiple university units and community service providers. Student Support Coordinators (SSC) are skilled practitioners that are individually paired with students to address support needs.

This approach enables communication and coordination efforts to occur in a way that promotes timely access to information and resources while balancing the needs of the institution in a way that contributes to creation of safe, caring and inclusive learning and living environments for students and for the campus community.

2020 saw the implementation of two brand new positions. One being a Manager of Student Support. This role provides leadership to the SSC Program, oversees the referral & intake process as well as provides consultation for staff & faculty on student support related concerns. The second position is a Varsity Athlete Specialist SSC. This role works with all referred UVic students with a specialized lens toward varsity athletes.

The Student Support Coordinator Program at its very core, is about helping students overcome the obstacles impacting their personal wellness and academic success.
SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Comprehensive Support
Providing short and long-term support to students to address a broad range of needs, along with service coordination between community services and campus.

Information & Referral
Student Support Coordination service relationship; providing students with information and referrals for campus and community resources.

Outreach Solutions
Reaching out to students referred through campus and community service resources (i.e. hospitalization) providing reintegration support, while triaging and mapping support needs.

Consultation
Manager consults with staff and faculty on student concerns, providing support, resources and coaching.

Students are connected with Student Support Coordinators through Referrals from:

- Academic Advising
- Campus Security
- Centre for Accessible Learning
- Deans & Associate Deans
- Equity & Human Rights Office
- Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement
- International Centre of Student
- Office of Student Life
- Residence
- Response Coordination Team
- Student Wellness Centre
- Vikes Athletics and Recreation

Other support categories: Personal safety; Substance Use; Disruptive Behaviour

Frequency of Student Support Cases

- Complex student needs
- Interfacing other units
- Complex mental health
- High risk mental health
- Non-academic misconduct
- Physical/sexual violence
- Interfacing external supports
NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University’s Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations (AC1300) policy provides students, faculty and staff a safe way to report student conduct concerns and facilitate a process that strives to repair harm, resolve conflict, protect confidentiality, and provide restorative and educational outcomes for students.

Guided by Policy AC1300, the OSL investigates and responds to student conduct matters and allegations of non-academic conduct on campus while ensuring students are treated with equal care, concern and respect. All individuals involved are provided with an opportunity to express their perspectives and access support in a confidential and safe space.

69
Total Number of Allegations Received from April 2020 to March 2021

69
Total Number of Assigned Sanctions from April 2020 to March 2021

What is Non-Academic Misconduct?

Non-Academic Misconduct includes but is not limited to where a student engages in any of the following types of student conduct on university property or in connection with a university activity:

(a) theft, damage or destruction of property;
(b) unauthorized entry or presence on university property;
(c) fraud or impersonation;
(d) disruptive or dangerous behaviors to self or others;
(e) unlawful possession or use of alcohol that violates the university liquor policy;
(f) use or possession of illicit drugs; or
(g) other activities that result in criminal charges or conviction or a court judgment.

To report a student conduct concern, visit uvic.ca/studentlife to submit a Non-Academic Misconduct Incident Report Form.
Our Team

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