

UVic Sustainability Project Annual Report 2024-2025



*Prepared: March 27th 2025,
by UVSP Coordinator, Katia Bannister*

Territory Acknowledgement

The UVSP acknowledges, with respect and gratitude, the Lekwungen-speaking Peoples on whose unceded lands and territories the University of Victoria Sustainability Project (UVSP) meets and works, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEC peoples whose relationships with these lands and waters have existed since time immemorial and continue to this day. We also acknowledge that our membership currently consists of a majority of Settler individuals who are occupying these unceded territories.

With this recognition, the UVSP centres our work in a conscious and ongoing commitment to actively resisting ongoing processes of colonialism in the spaces and places in which we work and the fields we engage with. We acknowledge that the University of Victoria is a colonial institution founded upon the establishment and perpetuation of structures of systemic racism, and the systematic oppression of marginalized peoples existent within the walls of the institution, within the borders of so-called Canada, and beyond. In direct recognition of these statements, we are committed to actively contributing to anti-colonial action at all scales, dismantling systemic discrimination, violence, and harm that continue to oppress marginalized peoples within our institutions and this country as a whole. We acknowledge that tangible action is needed and we commit to ensuring that these words are not empty.

UVSP Team

The UVSP operates under direct supervision from the Board of Directors, with a team of Coordinating Directors elected every year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The staff team consisted of a Coordinator, a Communications Officer, and up to three Work Study students collaborate with the Board of Directors to carry out sustainability-focused events, initiatives, and programs on-campus. From 2024-2025, the UVSP had approximately twenty-six (26) active Board members.

Our Coordinator of four (4) years, Katia Bannister, remained in her role, and our Communications Officer, Haida Davies-McDermott, stayed in her role until they recused themselves a few weeks prior to our AGM. In 2024-2025, the Coordinator role continued to be a twenty (20) hour per week position and the Communications Officer role remained a ten (10) hour per week position.

At the AGM, the following Coordinating Directors were elected or re-elected:

- Chairs: Madisen Asante and Chloe MacGregor.
- Secretaries: Linnea Hill and Jade Jazen.
- Treasurer: Joel Nordine.
- Fundraising Directors: Bethany Klein and Marianne Raymundo.
- Social Media Directors: Sarah Berton, Abbey Heard, and Kayla Neumann.

In September 2024, Sarah Berton also stepped into the UVSP's Work Study position as the Administration and Campaigning Assistant. In January 2025, Chloe MacGregor left her role as Co-chair, and in March 2024, Marianne Raymundo excused herself from her role as Fundraising Director.

Summary & Highlights

In the last year, the UVSP hosted twenty (20) events for the campus community, revived our sustainability-focused grant program—now named the Campus Futures Grant Program—and began developing an on-campus Lending Library. Notable highlights include more collaborative events with other Affiliated and Advocacy groups such as a BIPOC Lakewater Canoe Clinic with the Students of Colour Collective (SOCC), a Container Gardening and Seed Bomb Making Workshop with the Campus Community Garden (CCG), and a Lingerie, Bodies, and Sustainability event with the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) where participants could mend, make, or beautify their own underwear. The UVSP also revived our Farm Crawl event and visited local farms on the Community Action Bus with the CCG this past summer, an occurrence our groups have collaborated on a number of times. In 2025, the UVSP also tried a new kind of ‘crawl’ event—a Refillery Crawl! This event had a small attendance (only eight (8) people), but was very well-received and helped the UVSP to develop valuable relationships to local refilleries. In 2025, attendance at the UVSP’s Environmental Roundtable event also grew exponentially and the UVSP Board is extremely excited to continue discussions about how to adapt and deepen the impact of this event in light of this growth. The UVSP also hosted some more ‘seasonal’ events this year, including the Farm Crawl during the start of harvest season, Re-supply Night for back-to-school, All-Parts-of-a-Pumpkin for Fall festivities, and our Bee Mine craft night for Valentine’s Day.

Bee Campus Campaign

In the past year, the UVSP revived our Bee Campus Campaign, hosting two pollinator themed events (our Bee Mine craft night and our Pollinator Walk with CICADA Club) and continuing to work to find a location for our mural project. In starting to host more pollinator specific events, the Board hoped to create an opportunity to more effectively lobby UVic for action to protect pollinator health and habitats.

Mindful Mending Workshops

In 2024-2025 the UVSP continued to hold Mindful Mending Workshops with the goal of giving students access to mending supplies and learning opportunities that will allow them to bring practices of mending and repair into their everyday and lived practices of sustainability. These events are also an excellent way for students to connect with each other and find inspiration for future projects. At each event, we offer space for students to beautify and upcycle items, mend items, or just work on fibre art projects.

This year, the UVSP continued to run one Mindful Mending Workshop per semester and began inviting knowledgeable community members to join us at these events to lead participants in ‘scrap’ projects. UVic alum, Jessica Weir, joined the UVSP on two occasions, one to make potholders and the other to make pencil cases—both out of reclaimed pieces of scrap fabric.

Ventures into Sustainable Recreation Campaign

In 2024-2025, hosted four (4) recreation-based events as a part of our Ventures into Sustainable Recreation Campaign. These included our: BIPOC Lakewater Canoe Clinic with SOCC, a Back-to-School Hike in September, a Beach Clean-up and Picnic in the Summer, and a Whitewater Canoe Clinic. These programs were facilitated by UVSP Staff and Board members and sought to encourage participants to consider their relationships to place, nature, and recreation in community-based settings that promote dialogue and emplaced learning.

Environmental Roundtable

The UVSP Environmental Roundtable convened once again in 2025 with the goal of better understanding the work of “Nurturing relationships, inspiring action” within the context of sustainability work. This is the third time that the Environmental Roundtable has been hosted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the event was held earlier in March—on March 10th—in an effort to boost engagement. Another difference from the two (2) previous Environmental Roundtables, this event was held in the SUB Upper Lounge rather than the Michèle Pujol Room in an effort to inspire a more welcoming atmosphere. Participation in this year’s event once again doubled. In 2023 we estimated that we were joined by about forty (40) participants, in 2024 we guessed that we joined by about seventy-five (75) participants, and this year we believe around one-hundred and fifty (150) participants joined us at some point during the event.

For the tabling portion of the event, the UVSP invited a variety of community organizations and sustainable businesses and was thrilled to be joined by: POLIS, Found Off the Grid (FOG), the CCG, Zero Waste Emporium (ZWE), Capital Bike, the UVic ERC, Compost Education Centre (CEC), CICADA Club, Community Cabbage, and the Gorge Waterway Action Society (GWAS).

Elder Terri Barnhard joined us to help open our event in a good way. Madisen Asante (UVSP Chair) and Jade Jazen (UVSP Secretary) were the MCs for this year’s event. Our presenters at this year’s event were (1) Loreisa Lepine and Drew Elves from the A Place of Medicine garden who shared about this work and spoke to a theme of ‘Invitation and Imposition’ and (2) Justin Rhoden from the Geography Department who spoke to a theme of “Hope as (In)Action: On the Radical Potential of Nurturing Critical Hope” and explored what exactly critical hope is and what its role is in imagining, nurturing, and realizing meaningful relationships with peoples and lands.

After the presentations, we held a community potluck meal, generously cooked by UVSP Board members and volunteers with guidance from Community Cabbage members. This year’s meal featured a variety of soups, as well as apple crumble and cookies. It was eaten off of Dishware from Victoria Coolkit’s new Dish Library, which was launched only a few days before our event.

The final portion of our evening featured roundtable discussions led by four students: Community Cabbage members A-C Barrios Stewart and Liz McCleary, past UVSP Chair Lindsay Worden, and youth climate anxiety researcher, Sabrina Guzman Skotnitsky. All at different stages of their undergraduate or graduate degrees, each of our facilitators brought their own experiences and perspectives to our dialogue about “nurturing relationships and inspiring action”. Between them, their knowledge and experiences stretch across topics related to: climate justice, art-based activism, geomorphological processes, climate anxiety, food justice

and sovereignty, community organizing, and much more! Key themes that came out of this year's roundtable discussions included: rest, reciprocity, and radically being in relationship, rooting our actions in our everyday practices and intimate relations, love as action, and nurturing longevity—in our relations and impacts.

This year, our door prize at the Environmental Roundtable featured generous donations from Habit Coffee, Ecologist, Refire Kitchen, Knotty by Nature, Beehive, Rise Consignment, Quest Escape, Country Grocer, Uncouth Chocolate, Paboom Home Imports, Goldilocks Goods, The Grove, Luna Collective, and Sea Cider. As a result of current economic downturn, many businesses that had donated to the raffle previously could not donate this year (though asked to be considered for future Roundtables), but as a result we expanded our outreach and received donations from many new donors.

Campus Futures Grant Program

This year, the UVSP granted two (2) applications to our Campus Futures Grant Program. One to Food Not Bombs and Dykes Nation for a food literacy and food security event series, and the other to an ES 407 group project hosting an event called 'Feast Your Ears' as a fundraiser for Community Cabbage. Each grant was \$500 in value.

Ripples 2025

Ripples 2025 is a collaboration between the UVSP, the POLIS Water Sustainability Project, NatureKids BC, and Students for a Green University UNBC. The theme of this year's zine was 'Stories told by ice' to honour this year's World Water Day theme: Glacier Preservation.

We received submissions from twenty-five (25) youth to Ripples 2025, up from seventeen (17) youth the previous year. Thanks to Students for a Green University UNBC, who hosted a Writing Workshop for Ripples on their campus, we received a number of thought-provoking written contributions to this year's zine. The UVSP also hosted our annual Ripples Art Night at UVic.

This year, Ripples was not able to be published on World Water Day due to a significant amount of deadline overlap with the timing of the UVSP's Environmental Roundtable, so it will be published digitally in April or May.

Community Relationships

The UVSP shares connections and relationships with many on- and off-campus community groups through several of our major events and initiatives.

This year, the UVSP collaborated with the CCG and CICADA Club on events for our Bee Campus Campaign.

This year, the UVSP worked on Ripples with both of our collaborators from the previous year—NatureKidsBC and the POLIS Water Sustainability Project—and also welcomed Students

for a Green University UNBC to our team, which we are certain helped to organically deepen the impact and reach of this year's zine.

This year, the UVSP's Ventures into Sustainable Recreation (VSR) campaign allowed our collective to build working relationships with the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club (VCKC), South Island Whitewater Club (SIWC), and our friends and colleagues at SOCC. These relationships will continue to support robust, community-oriented, accessible, and engaging events and programs as a part of this campaign. The UVSP and SOCC plan to collaborate on another canoeing event in September.

This year, the UVSP's Environmental Roundtable was particularly impactful for deepening our shared ties with Community Cabbage—which was born at a UVSP Environmental Roundtable in 2014—and many Cabbage members supported with different aspects of this event. Additionally, inviting Loreisa and Drew to join us as speakers at this event definitely had a significant impact on our event participation, with many students joining us just to hear them speak. This year's Roundtable also offered opportunities to more meaningfully connect with the tablets who joined us, and the organizations and businesses that attended this portion of the event largely reflected our ongoing efforts with relationship-building work. A new event to the UVSP this year, our first ever Refillery Crawl, was an enormous success in deepening our relationships to off-campus businesses whose work is deeply rooted in sustainability. As a result of this event, we have solidified working relationships with ASH Refillery, Zero Waste Emporium, and the Victoria Soap Exchange, and plan on making Refillery Crawls a regular occurrence in the future.

By The Numbers

Over the past year, the UVSP has seen an overall increase in both the amount of students engaging with our programming a single time throughout the year, as well as the number of students who are participating in our programming on a regular and consistent basis. The number of students involved with the UVSP's Board has stayed relatively the same over the past two (2) years, with there currently being about twenty-six (26) active Board members compared to the twenty-seven (27) active Board members the UVSP had last year.

Demographics

The UVSP's primary demographic for engagement is full-time undergraduate students at UVic. However, our programming is also utilized by part-time students and graduate students. We also receive engagement from UVic alumni, campus neighbours, and members of the greater community of so-called Victoria. These engagement trends are relatively uniform across our programs.

The UVSP's current Board of Directors is composed of a mix of first through fifth year undergraduate students. The UVSP's Board is a diverse and interdisciplinary collective, with students studying: Environmental Studies, Political Science, Geography, Indigenous Studies, Biology, Climate Science, Business, Linguistics, Marine Biology, Earth and Ocean Sciences, Physics, Civil Engineering, and Kinesiology,

Social Media

This year, the UVSP's social media presence has continued to develop and grow with the assistance of three (3) Social Media Directors and the Staff team. The UVSP's instagram, @uviceustainabilityproject, has over 2,250 followers to date and that number has increased 3.3% since the beginning of January 2025. In the Spring 2025 term the instagram account reached 12.6k accounts and 88.5k views of content which significantly contributed to event attendance and community partnerships. Insights show that the majority of our social media audience are between the ages of 18-24 (41.4%) and 25-35 (36.2%).

In the last year the highest individual post reaches were for, in descending order, the Open Letter to Kevin Hall (9,677; 579 interactions), National Day for Truth and Reconciliation & Orange Shirt Day Events (8,735; 378 interactions), the Environmental Roundtable (5,932; 251 interactions), the Refillery Crawl (4,340; 256 interactions), and the Farm Crawl (3,714; 177 interactions). Our Reels were also quite popular this year. Our highest played Reel was the UVSP x ERC Campus Garry Oak Ecosystem Work Party with 3,833 views, closely followed by the Refillery Crawl Reel (3,647 plays) and the Fall Mindful Mending Reel (3,438 plays).

Year-to-Year

This year, engagement and interest in several of the UVSP's events and programs increased significantly, others stayed quite similar, and still others experienced decline. In total, the UVSP hosted around twenty (20) events for students throughout the 2024-2025 school year in addition to our weekly Board meetings, which all students and community members are welcome to attend. We hosted fewer events than the previous year, but were heavily focused on increasing engagement and trying new event ideas this year, which made the events we did host more energy intensive

- Our Board Meet & Greet in September was well-attended with about thirty-five (35) participants, but we heard feedback that the event should be adapted for people to ask more questions about current Board members' experiences with the UVSP.
- For our Back-to-School Hike at East Sooke Park (T'Sou-ke and Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation territories), we had about fifteen (15) participants.
- Our Mindful Mending events were consistently well-attended, with at least thirty (30) participants at each event, many of whom stayed for most of the events and were new to the UVSP.
- Our Ripples Art Night in February had its participation shrink from previous years, from sixty (60) people to about fifteen (15). However, the timing of this event unfortunately coincided with SOCC's Global Village.
- Our Environmental Roundtable event in March increased in attendance from around seventy-five (75) attendees last year to around one-hundred and fifty (150) throughout the course of the event.
- Our Learn to Canoe Clinics (Lakewater and Whitewater) were very limited in size to adhere to safety guidelines. The Lakewater Clinic was limited to fourteen (14) students and took place on Esquimalt territories and the Whitewater Clinic was limited to nine (9) students and took place on Quw'utsun territories. Both clinics were full.

- At Re-supply Night there were only nine (9) participants, but the event was hosted in November on the Friday before reading break due to challenges with room bookings and we think that this had a significant impact on event attendance as the event was very well-received online.
- Our Refillery Crawl only attracted eight (8) participants, but there happened to be a very large Surfrider Beach Clean-up the same day and we think that this detracted from our sign-ups as there was an enormous amount of buzz generated about the event online.

Challenges

In the past year, the UVSP's dire situation from a lack of referenda funding has shifted significantly due to the successful passing of our 2024 referenda. However, the UVSP's finances remain relatively limited, and we have been forced to continue to dip into our now significantly diminished trust fund. Even with analysis of and changes to our spending for the coming year, it is certain that within the next few years, we will need to run another referenda.

The UVSP has also continues to face challenges by way of physical space limitations in the past year as we share a small office with the Campus Community Garden and both our staffs and communities continue to grow. However, in the past year, we have been given access to other storage space in the SUB which has alleviated some of this pressure.

Another challenge for the UVSP this year was with creating an appropriate and manageable workload for each of our staff members. Issues included, but were not limited to: Too much work overlapping at different points over the course of the year, too much time being devoted to running events, and issues related to work being completed on-time.

Looking Forward

In the coming year, the UVSP is looking to shift our event model from staff being more heavily involved in the hosting and facilitation of all our events, to a model (more akin to previous years) where Board members will help to 'anchor' events. Instead of trying to plan all of our events at the beginning of the school year or each semester, the UVSP will host one event-planning focused Board meeting per month, giving Board members—other other community members—a chance to generate and propose event ideas. The UVSP staff will then support Board members with filling out insurance forms, promoting events, making event equipment purchases, distributing honoraria to event facilitators, and other organizing tasks. UVSP staff will still take the lead on planning our annual Environmental Roundtable event and ensuring that roles for this event are filled, as well as some regularly scheduled event programs, like our Mindful Mending Workshops and now hopefully, Refillery Crawls. We hope that this change will help to free-up some of the UVSP's staff capacity and help to re-root our programming back in the grassroots values that are important to us as a collective.

In 2025-2026, the UVSP will not be employing a student staff during the summer, with the exception of if we receive funding for (a) position(s) through Canada Summer Jobs. We will also be reducing our Communications Officer position to seven (7) hours per week to address our

continued overspending due to a lack of sufficient funds. We also hope to refocus this role to work directly on the UVSP's monthly newsletter, the operation of our new Lending Library, and the approval of applications to our Campus Futures Grant Program. This year, the UVSP will also be applying for two (2) Work Study positions from UVic to increase our staff capacity without putting further strain on our budget.

Conclusion

The past year has been a year of new ideas and experiences for the UVSP. We've started to try and get a few new projects off-the-ground, including our new Lending Library initiative, tried several new event concepts, worked closely with new community partners such as the Zero Waste Emporium, and experienced significant growth in-relation to our Environmental Roundtable event. In the year to come, we are looking forward to running more small-scale and volunteer-led events, fully launching our Lending Library, and hopefully increasing our staff capacity with a new Work Study position.