

# THE CAMPUS RESIDENT

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## As Heat Dome Descends, UBC Rental Buildings Bake, Residents Roast

*Faculty and staff residents express concern about inability of UBC to keep homes cool during recent heat wave; they say climate change was not factored in when rental buildings were constructed*

**John Tompkins,**  
Editor

Nineteen UBC faculty and staff members living in seven buildings on campus have added their names to a report that states temperatures in the rental units in which they live were either uninhabitable or almost uninhabitable at times during the heat wave in June 2021.

The report, which will be delivered to UBC Campus & Community Planning, UBC Properties Trust and Village Gate Homes, and owner of the properties, is written in the form of a letter of concern (or petition).

The petitioners write, “We are very concerned that our housing and neighbourhood design are dangerously inadequate to meet the challenges of climate change.” They call this development very alarming “given we were attempting to

mechanically cool our homes with fans or air conditioners and still struggled or failed to maintain liveable temperatures.”

Of note, residents report being unable to sleep, becoming sick or having medical issues exacerbated, experiencing negative impacts to mental health, and signs of heat stroke in pets.

It is clear from this recent heat wave, they say, that UBC residences are not designed for the increased and extreme summer temperatures caused by climate change.

“We need help now to keep our homes livable during the summer.”

Below, the renters note several issues and, in the interest of opening a dialogue with UBC Campus & Community Planning, UBC Properties Trust and Village Gate Homes leadership group, they suggest requests for possible solutions or questions related to each issue.

### Issues and Requests

**Issue 1:** Heat-related issues are common across faculty & staff residential buildings, even some of those built recently (e.g., Mundell House), indicating a lack of consideration for climate change’s impact on summer temperatures in the design of these buildings.



**An exterior view of a Mundell House apartment where a resident has hung aluminum foil over the windows in an attempt to reflect sunlight. It is noted that a few units in the neighbourhood have done this or similar since the heat dome of June 2021.**

**Request 1a:** An immediate town hall with the leadership group from UBC in order to hear residents’ concerns and provide information about how and when UBC is planning to a) update existing buildings to allow units to be cooled to habitable temperatures and, b) build future buildings with climate change in mind.

**Request 1b:** Provide UBC residents with

an update, with concrete timelines and actions, for the implementation of UBC’s Green Building Action Plan (GBAP), specifically the Priority Action listed in Appendix B: Residential Action Plan to “Develop a strategy of GBAP requirements for retrofit and renovation projects in neighbourhoods” (pg. 12).

**HEAT continued on Page 7**

## As a New School Year Approaches, High School Students Are Wary of Going Back Into Classrooms

*As covid cases continue to rise nation-wide, some students are hoping for virtual options*

**Nicole Duane**  
Grade 11 student,  
Lord Byng Secondary School

In mid-March of 2020, schools around B.C. announced their closures in wake of COVID-19’s rising infection rates. I doubt that any student had anticipated how long the pandemic, or back then only epidemic, would last.

Last year’s closures were met with mixed reactions. Some students were ecstatic at the prospect of an early summer break, while others were anxious about missing whole months of learning and falling be-

hind the next year. While teachers made an admirable attempt to transition towards virtual classrooms, issues like our lack of access to technology and improper time management meant that many of us did not receive the education that we otherwise would have.

Flash forward to September 2020. We were all a bit disappointed that the virus hadn’t calmed down by then, months into mask-wearing and social distancing. Us high school students were also hastily introduced to the quarterly system; two full classes in two months, each alternating weekly between virtual and in-person lectures. The idea was great; each student belonged to a secured “bubble”, and free masks were handed out so we didn’t have an excuse to not wear one. However, the arrangement proved to be difficult for many students; we only had two months to complete each course, and with class times being cut by around 3/4, the material was

extremely condensed and sometimes missing a unit or two.

Some courses, like culinary arts and P.E., meant free time during its virtual week (how do you run laps over Microsoft Teams?!), while those unlucky enough to have double academic classes had to scramble to complete their coursework and watch video lectures. Of course, there are a lot of students who prefer online learning over the traditional school day; those cite the accelerated courses as advantages, rather than hurdles, to their learning. However, there’s no doubt that we cannot condense an entire school year’s worth of learning to a few weeks and still expect students to absorb and process the information just as deeply.

So what happens now? Despite warnings of an upcoming fourth wave, schools are planning to switch back to in-person classrooms in September. This plan was unveiled months ago, long before the Delta variant

appeared on our radar. It now feels like choosing between two evils; virtual, accelerated courses, which are ineffective learning methods for many high-schoolers, or going back into the classroom, which may be risky health-wise. Our new semester system means that each student will only be taking 4 classes simultaneously, rather than all 8, so there will be less social contact than usual—but it’s still a big step up from last year.

The issue is even more concerning if we look over to our U.S. neighbours, who are decidedly experiencing another spike. Even though some students are ambivalent about the issue, others would much prefer to stay at home and watch lectures digitally.

These students, along with many parents, are hoping that schools would offer them that option. Schools are doing what they can to make the upcoming school year feel normal—but when did “normal” begin to feel synonymous with “dangerous”?

# Tuktu Tells Unique Story of Community Growth

*Are you a senior living in the UBC area? Then, check in here for help with everyday tasks*

**John Tompkins**  
Editor

Rustam Sengupta and his family moved to the University of British Columbia to live in 2016. Living so far away from his ageing parents, Rustam searched for someone who could fill-in for him, so they wouldn't feel lonely and isolated. But his parents didn't need a full time carer – they needed someone to check-in on them, help them with everyday tasks, just as he did when he lived close to them.



**Rustam Sengupta**

Rustam Sengupta is a serial entrepreneur with over 15 years of experience in creating products and organizations that he believes can change the world. His previous success story is with Boond – a company he established in 2009 – which set up solar power plants in some of the remotest places in Africa and Asia. He was selected as one of the top 36 entrepreneurs who accompanied the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi as a part of his Start Up India delegation to the US in 2015. In addition to his role in impact investment advisory and deal structuring to start-ups, he has had wide experience in private banking and strategic consulting and has worked in agencies like Standard Chartered (in Singapore), Syngenta (in Switzerland) and Deloitte Consulting (in the US). He is now an investor and consultant for anyone with a bright idea or looking to make a difference.



**Komal Makkad**  
Marketing Head (Services)

Marketing veteran with extensive experience in brand management and marketing strategy with global brands. She heads the marketing services for Tuktu.

**Manuel Andaya - UI/UX Designer**  
A recent BCIT graduate and front-end specialist tasked with bringing Tuktu's UI design to life.

**Gloria Mo - Marketing Intern**  
A fourth year Cognitive Systems major from the University of British Columbia. Assisting with social media and sharing Tuktu's mission with the world.

This is when Rustam Sengupta, a scientist in the field of sustainability at UBC—identified a major gap in the care-giving market. In Canada, and around the globe, a large segment of the population was aging, and fighting to remain independent and self-sufficient, while needing a helping hand with a few chores. Rustam found that the community around these seniors was full of people able and willing to help – but often there was no one to connect them.

Enter Tuktu, Rustam's brainchild to solve this problem: an empathetic, community-driven platform to match seniors with community members willing to provide simple on-demand services, allowing seniors to outsource tiring and demanding everyday tasks and get companionship as and when they need them.



**Daniela Yli-Kiikka**  
Head of Product (Design)

Diverse experience in UI/UX design, quick prototyping and instrumental in helping companies shape their visual identity.



**Abhay Sundaram**  
Senior Developer

With over 15 years of technology experience, 'the head geek' is instrumental in building the Tuktu platform.



**Rebecca Kenny**  
Market Discovery

A Ph.D. candidate and a primary care paramedic who brings a unique perspective of seniors through research to Tuktu.

**Tuktu Advisors**

Coming from diverse walks of life, our advisors give us invaluable insights on their experience in business, finances, development, and work within the senior community.

**Prof. Milind Kandlikar** Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia

Ms. Komal Makkad, Marketing Head for the new company, said the staff at Tuktu are committed to helping shape the future of community care. Their communication efforts focus on building social capital that brings generations together. They want to ask the big questions, analyze the trends and spark collaboration!

*In the Inuktitut language of the Inuit people living in the arctic regions of Canada, Tuktu means Caribou, a species of deer that is a significant part of the local people's culture and spiritual relationship with the land. Tuktu is also one of Canada's iconic species that reminds us why communities matter.*

**Fr. Babu Mathew** - Pastor, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Vancouver

**Muzda Stenner** - Realtor, ReMax Realty

In all, there is a core team of 12 people, from many backgrounds, Ms. Makkad noted.

"All have the same passion and commitment to shaping the future of community care. The team is supported by a great group of individual service providers (called Tuktus) who have an array of skills and an equal passion for community building.

Ms. Makkad said at Tuktu Care, "Our guiding principles aim to simplify the lives of seniors, by ensuring safe, flexible, and affordable care, so that they can continue to live independent, fulfilling lives.

At Tuktu Care, Ms. Makkad said in a recent e-mail interview, "Our guiding principles aim to simplify the lives of seniors, by ensuring safe, flexible, and affordable care, so that they can continue to live independent, fulfilling lives.

"We strive to provide a supportive, community-driven online platform, matching seniors with people from their community who want to provide everyday services and companionship.

"By enabling synergistic relationships between seniors and the community at large, we hope to build elevated communities for care – because in Canada, we care!"

"We strive to provide a supportive, community-driven online platform, matching seniors with people from their community who want to provide everyday services and companionship.

Asked how long Tuktu has been operating, the spokesperson said, "The company was formed in the height of the pandemic, in 2020. The team and the platform have seen exponential growth in the last 3 months. "We had a soft launch of our services on Canada Day this year (2021) and are currently matching older adults with service providers offline to get a more accurate understanding of our customer segment. We are in the process of testing the application, which we will launch in the Fall."

**TUKTU continued on Page 4**

**UNA UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION**

**Apply to be part of the new UNA Land Use Advisory Committee**

The UNA Board of Directors is establishing a Land Use Advisory Committee to serve as an advisory committee to the Board regarding land use planning and development on the UBC Campus, as well as to act as a forum to facilitate discussions on land use planning and development with residents.

Apply to be part of this committee by visiting:  
[bit.ly/luacommittee](https://bit.ly/luacommittee)

**UNA UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION**

**TRY-IT WEEK**

Come try select fitness, art and educational programs for **FREE** at the Wesbrook Community Centre.

**SEPTEMBER 7-11, 2021**

Try-It Week classes are free but registration is required.

[myuna.ca/tryit](https://myuna.ca/tryit)



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**EDITOR & BUSINESS MANAGER****JOHN TOMPKINS**

Email: CampusResident@myuna.ca

Tel: 604-827-3502

**DESIGN PRODUCTION****REBECCA IND**

Email: Rebecca.Ind@myuna.ca

**OPEN LETTER**

## Students Send UBC Stiff Note Concerning Safe Return to Campus

*Signatories of the letter are Cole Evans, President, Alma Mater Society, Eshana Banghu, VP Academic and University Affairs, Alma Mater Society*

On behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC, we are writing in regards to the health, safety, and well-being of the UBC Community as we return to campus this fall. On July 21, 2021, the AMS Council unanimously passed a motion to call on the University of British Columbia to do more to ensure the safety and security of members of the UBC Community by mandating vaccinations in student residences and mandating masks in lecture halls.

According to the AMS Return to Campus Survey, to which 7,933 UBC students (enrolled and incoming) responded, there is significant discomfort around the current

messaging and measures being taken by the university. There is no doubt that the university is aligned with the Public Health Office (PHO). There is also no doubt that it is unacceptable for UBC, an institution that prides itself as a leader across the country, to only be doing the bare minimum in ensuring the safety and security of its students, staff, and faculty.

The student union, representing all 56,000+ undergraduate and graduate students, strongly believes that the University must do more than the bare minimum to ensure that we have a safe return to campus and that students feel comfortable attending UBC. The Alma Mater Society calls on the administration and the Board of Governors to address the concerns brought forth by the community through clear and comprehensive communication, mandating masks in lecture halls, and requiring vaccinations in student residences at UBC.

82% of students (with the knowledge

that there are no mandatory vaccinations in Canada) would be in support of a policy to mandate vaccinations in student residences. As raised by us in previous correspondence, there is an increasing number of universities in North America that have mandated at least one dose of vaccination to be on campus, as well as, to reside in student residences (with exemptions). It is disappointing to see UBC fall behind as other Canadian institutions take the lead in this arena and implement extra measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their respective communities.

UBC has shown exemplary leadership in the past by mandating masks on campus before the PHO mandate in 2020, and it is difficult to understand why the University is hesitant to show the kind of leadership that's desired and needed by the community now. 60% of students have concerns about being exposed to COVID-19 in classrooms and lecture halls.

With thousands of students coming back to campus who will be seated in packed lecture halls alongside hundreds of students, we ask that the University implement measures in those high-risk areas. This could be through a mask mandate in lecture halls, or other measures that the University deems will truly address the concerns of the UBC community.

UBC students are looking to their University's leadership to go beyond the bare minimum by taking the extra measures of mandating vaccinations in student residences, mandating masks in lecture halls, and clearly addressing community concerns to ensure the place students call home feels safe enough to be their home. The reverberant message of the students we represent can no longer be ignored or dismissed by the University as it has been so far – this is an opportunity to demonstrate to students that the University's leadership is genuine in their efforts to listen to and work for students.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Reader Rejects Tone of Article

I am bewildered and astonished at the inclusion of the article in English and Chinese entitled "Dark History Hurts as Never before" in the July 26 edition of Campus Resident. Neatly echoing the talking points of the Communist Party of China regarding racism and Canadian Indigenous residential schools, Ms. Kang engages in a slick and sentimental white-washing of complex historical issues in this country.

Why on earth was this article deemed acceptable for publication at a time when China holds two of our citizens hostage and engages in genocidal behaviour toward ethnic minorities within its borders? This is in addition to its current imperialistic behaviour around the globe, rooted in the very outlook of the Han and Tang dynasties which are named and praised by Ms. Kang. For reference, we are correct to compare residential schools in Canada to what Ilya Solin in the Washington Post once described, in reference to Mao Zedong's rule, as "the biggest mass murder in the history of the world", which took place during the same time period.

Paul Allen

Dr. Michael Brauer, a professor at UBC's faculty of medicine and expert on the environment, air pollution and human health, discusses the health impacts of wildfire smoke, extra precautions for those most at risk and the long-term impacts of yearly exposure.

### What are some common health effects from wildfire smoke?

Wildfire smoke can most obviously affect the respiratory system, so people with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), may see their diseases get worse and find it harder to breathe.

Smoke can also affect those with heart disease and may trigger strokes and heart attacks. People with type 2 diabetes may also experience increased symptoms.

In some cases, responses may be severe enough to require hospitalization.

While it may be less obvious, the potential mental health impact of wildfire smoke can also be debilitating. People who experience days and days of smoke may begin to feel a sense of dread and loss of

control—especially those who need to flee their homes or actually lose property.

### If you're recovering from COVID-19, should you take any special precautions during fire season?

If you have lingering symptoms from COVID-19, especially breathing difficulties, you're likely to be more sensitive to smoke in the air. So listen to your body. If you're having difficulty breathing, be extra careful and lower your activity level. Simply put, take it easy.

### Any extra advice for those with pre-existing medical conditions?

If you have a respiratory or cardiac condition, make sure you have an adequate stock of inhalers and other medications because there could be a shortage of these items, like we saw with masks in the early stages of the pandemic.

It's a good idea to book an appointment with your doctor to review your care plan and make sure you're doing all the right things to manage your disease. Ideally this should be done in the spring, before fire season.

## Wildfires Are Here to Stay: How to Protect Against Smoky Skies

*As wildfires rage across many parts of Canada, the health effects of smoke remains a pressing concern for many people—particularly for those recovering from COVID-19 or anyone with pre-existing medical conditions.*

### Do masks help mitigate the effects of wildfire smoke?

When worn properly, N95 respirator masks can block more than 90 per cent of the particles in fire smoke. The surgical and cotton masks many people have worn during the pandemic only provide moderate levels of protection against smoke.

### Are people who live far from the wildfires in any danger?

Of course, people who live in communities such as Lytton, B.C., where fire has caused death and destroyed many homes, are most affected.

But the health impacts can be felt hundreds of kilometres away from the actual wildfire, as the smoke travels with prevailing winds. In fact, last year, in B.C., for example, we didn't have a bad fire season but were still affected by fires in California, Oregon and Washington State. Currently, air quality in New York City is poor due to smoke from fires in Oregon.

WILDFIRES continued on Page 8

## TUKTU continued from Page 2

Dr. Sengupta is a productive researcher in the field of sustainability—witness the success he enjoyed making and marketing solar panels in Africa. He also is a clear thinker in the field of human affairs. We post here a few letters to friends that reflect this.

## Letter 1

Class and racial divide have never been more apparent than now as our society seems to be crumbling in the face of the exploding pandemic or the civil unrest in the US or the apathy towards the millions of migrant workers in India. While all this may be a culmination of years of systemic inequality - one can't wonder on the colossal lack of value driven leadership in the world today.

I had an interesting discussion on this topic - leadership responsibilities of corporate heroes who we idolize and while some insights were encouraging - most were largely pessimistic. Corporate leaders have been doing much better than ever

before when it comes to philanthropy or supporting causes with mass appeal and most of these 40 something leaders are passionate and generally believe in equity and equality. But very few are actually committed to taking a stand on what they believe in or taking on a leadership role when it comes to driving these values beyond the company walls. The typical response has ranged from - "this is not our job" to "we have to remain neutral" to "corporates cannot take sides - our job is to make profits and give employment".

While one cannot always argue with these rationalizations, it seems sadly quite myopic and misaligned as these very corporates are now larger than most countries of the world and have indomitable access and power over information and capital. Amazon, Google, Facebook etc. are bigger and more powerful and wield far more influence than any political leader right now but most of them are still averse to taking a side and instead support neutrality in related debates. What makes it more interesting is the divide between even the employees of the same company and leadership.

## Letter 2

I hope you are all doing well and are safe from the terrible pandemic. The viral spread claimed its three millionth victim today. Like millions of others (in India), I also lost one of my favourite uncles and other family and friends this year. So I want to start my New Year first by remembering them and thanking them for the part they played in my life. I am still in beautiful Vancouver, and the nature around me continues to remind me of how blessed I am. I have a lovely family and good health, so I can't express in words my gratitude for what I have.

To say that the Globe 2020 conference was unpredictable would be an understatement. I feel it was more of a reminder of our life's fragility and transience. Personally, this year was one of immense self-growth and a test of empathy, patience and faith. Malhar (son), Helina (wife) and I spent a significant part of the year secluded at home with just each other for company, and we discovered our generosity for each other's whims and nuisances and our unlimited capacity to share. My parents moved to Singapore, and

for the first time, their vulnerability made us scared and worried for them. Thankfully after many scares, they are now managing their life and looking forward to 2021. We also met a lot of nice people this year (many virtually) and started unique relationships that we hope to cherish in future.

Professionally, climate change and cleantech continue to play a vital role in my career. Additionally, I have also started getting excited about the senior care space and innovation opportunities in home-based community care. 2021 is poised to be an interesting year, and I hope we can stay in the present and rethink how we plan to live our lives. I hope we can prioritize what is real and build empathy and kindness for others and ourselves. Most importantly, I pray that we unite as a human race and stay grounded and resilient.

Thank you all for being a part of my life - I realize that I am connected to you much more than I understood before and even though we may be physically isolated, what I have learnt from you is the biggest treasure I possess.

## Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Team at UBC Takes Steps to Ensure We Can Breathe Easy

Over the past 18 months, learning, research, and work at UBC has been taking place remotely wherever possible.

But one group of people has diligently stayed on campus to keep infrastructure humming: the team responsible for ensuring that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems function properly.

Now, as UBC prepares for a return to on-campus learning and instruction, these essential workers are doubling their efforts to ensure university spaces meet or exceed guidelines set out by WorkSafeBC, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Their efforts are also being guided by the university's COVID-19 HVAC working group to support the health and safety of the UBC community, which brought together professional engineers and building mechanical systems experts from UBC Facilities and Safety & Risk Services in UBC Vancouver, as well as Health, Safety and Environment from UBC Okanagan, and faculty members from the school of population and public health's occupation and environmental health division.

"That committee, which was well represented by both campuses, came up with some specific recommendations to get UBC campuses ready," explains Adrian Hingston, associate director of health, safety and environment at UBC Okanagan.

"One recommendation, consistent with the BC CDC recommendations, was to bring in outdoor air where possible, and to make sure systems are operating as designed," says Hingston. "ASHRAE also recommended after-hour building flushes to get fresh air through the buildings and they also recommended moving to a mini-

mum MERV—minimum efficiency reporting value—13 filter."

What this means, in practice, is that every air filter in the university is being audited and replaced as necessary over the summer months.

"Historically, we would just follow the same guidelines as we always would, and change things out according to each unit's maintenance schedule. Now, we have to do everything within two months, to make sure it's all at a base starting point," says Shaun Macdonald, head millwright with UBC Facilities' Building Operations in Vancouver.

"We want to be in the best possible shape for September 7," adds Martin Gibb, manager of engineering and utility services, Facilities Management, at UBC Okanagan.

"Typically, we don't go in and blitz all the buildings as we are doing this year, because if we do them all around the same time they all come due at once," Gibb says.

On the Vancouver campus, there is the additional challenge of ventilating older buildings that do not have HVAC systems. "We're looking at purchasing portable air filters and fans for spaces that don't have mechanical ventilation," says Stephen Li, mechanical engineer in Building Operations, UBC Vancouver, who is busy working through a list of hundreds of spaces that UBC Safety & Risk Services has flagged for review in the run-up to September.

The work is a bit of a juggling act, he says. "Do we put in electric heat, or would that overload the electrical supply? How much electrical supply do we need that will allow us to install those portable fans and filters? How many fans do we need to bring in the right amount of outdoor air to



Shawn Kenney (left) and William Guest (right) from UBC Vancouver changing the MERV 13 air filters in an air handler unit located in the Pharmaceutical Sciences Building. Photo credit: UBC

be code compliant?" says Li. "Those are all questions that I have to answer."

All of this is occurring on top of the regular daily task of responding to calls. "We still have work orders coming in from spaces that are being occupied right now," notes Li.

With about 900 spaces being assessed for upgrades at UBC Vancouver, and 24 buildings at UBC Okanagan being outfitted with minimum MERV 13 filters, it's a large task by any measure.

But it's one that the operations teams are pleased to be taking on.

"The campus after March 2020 felt so strange," recalls Macdonald. "On my bike ride to work, there were no people walking to the campus. Buses were driving by, but they were empty. Going into buildings where all the lights were off, the doors

were locked and all the classrooms were empty was kind of eerie."

Now, he says, there's a growing sense of anticipation in the air, as he and his colleagues look forward to welcoming the community back to campus.

"It's actually quite exciting. It's not just about having everything populated again, it's that feeling that you're here helping maintain and build this school environment for all these people that are going to be the next generation, and they're here to learn," Macdonald says. "We all take pride in our work, and working on this campus is probably the best reward."

Republished from [news.ubc.ca](https://news.ubc.ca)

Further information can be found at [www.facilities.ubc.ca/covid-19/building-ventilation-safety-measures/](https://www.facilities.ubc.ca/covid-19/building-ventilation-safety-measures/)

LETTER FROM UBC PRESIDENT

# Preparing for the Fall Term

In just a few short weeks, we will begin the new academic year. I know that many members of the UBC community have concerns about the return to campus. I have heard directly from many people, as well as from the AMS, the Faculty Association, elected Governors and others.

I am grateful for all the suggestions, and I understand and value people's concerns.

I and my team have shared their suggestions and concerns with the UBC Executive, with the COVID planning teams at UBC and with provincial officials through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

I have been in regular communication with the Chair of the UBC Board of Governors about the return to campus, and I have had discussions with the full Board.

Together with public health officials, we continue to monitor key COVID-19 metrics such as case numbers, hospitalization rates and progress with vaccinations. We are working with the local and provincial health authorities to deliver vaccinations on campus and via mobile units, continue

and potentially expand rapid antigen testing on campus, and test and ensure robust and industry standard ventilation in learning spaces.

We have developed detailed safety plans for every space on both campuses and other UBC locations. Each of these involves a careful risk assessment vetted by Work-Safe BC and the relevant government ministries. We continue to partner with government to facilitate the safe arrival of international students and to provide them with testing/quarantine and vaccinations upon arrival.

As you know, case numbers have begun to rise recently, and the highly contagious Delta variant is becoming more prevalent. Because of this, I strongly recommend that all members of the UBC community are fully vaccinated, before returning to campus.

Recognizing that some members of the UBC community may still need to be vaccinated at the start of school, I strongly recommend all members of the community continue to wear masks indoors.

We will continue to partner with the public



Professor Santa J. Ono.  
Photo credit Paul Joseph, UBC.

health officer and health authorities to carefully monitor COVID cases on campus. Risk assessments are being carried out on a real time basis and are informed by public health data. The Provincial Health Officer has the authority to issue additional public health measures such as mandatory masking, if required. In fact, this has already occurred in the Okanagan region, which includes UBC Okanagan, because of a renewed COVID outbreak there. We have purchased a significant supply of non-medical masks so that we are ready to implement a campus-wide strategy if advised by the PHO.

only be issued by the province, and I will continue to keep the provincial government aware of concerns voiced by the UBC community.

And we will update the community on any changes to public health guidelines that may arise in the future.

Working together will be the best way that we can ensure a safe start to the academic year. I look forward to seeing you on campus.

**Santa J. Ono**  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
The University of British Columbia

Changes to public health guidelines can



Students wearing masks while indoors on UBC Campus.  
Photo credit: UBC Brand Marketing

## B.C. Coroners Service Reports June Heat Wave Killed 569 People

The B.C. Coroners Service has confirmed that 569 people died as a result of the extreme heat wave that hit the province at the end of June.

The final tally is a 300 per cent increase over the number of deaths that had been reported to the B.C. Coroners Service during the same period in previous years.

- Seventy-nine per cent of those who died were 65 or older.

There were almost 900 heat stroke-related calls between June 24 and July 7, B.C. Emergency Health Services said.

- BCEHS responded to 104 heat stroke-related calls in Vancouver, the most of any region.

- Kamloops and Kelowna had the highest rate of heat stroke-related calls, with 29 and 28.8 calls per 100,000 people, respectively.

Jobs were posted Friday for 85 paramedics and 30 dispatchers to "meet this extraordinary demand for ambulance services," Health Minister Adrian Dix said.



Photo credit: Don MacKinnon, Getty

# NEIGHBOURS DAY

Formerly Barn Raising

**Wesbrook Community Centre**  
**SEPTEMBER 11, 1-4PM**  
Food • Music • Arts & Crafts • Dog Pack Walk & more!  
[myuna.ca/neighboursday](http://myuna.ca/neighboursday)

## Titled *The New Alchemists*, Book by UBC Nursing Professor Brings Insight into Online Health Scams

Internet health scams have increased in recent years, often spread through social media and causing untold harm, according to a new book by UBC nursing professor, Dr. Bernie Garrett.

The *New Alchemists* focuses on some of the many deceptive healthcare and marketing techniques used to mislead people—and offers readers tips to avoid falling prey to scammers.

Dr. Garrett has more than 35 years of experience in nursing and research on health care practices. In this Q&A, he explains why online health scams are so pervasive, shares recent examples, and gives advice to minimize their impacts.

### Why is your book called *The New Alchemists*?

The alchemists are best known for trying to turn metal into gold, but they also sought to develop an immortality potion. These ancient philosophers acquired a reputation for being charlatans and crooks, and so the title fits very well with what we're seeing today where people are marketing various fake remedies.

### Why is it important to understand and detect health scams?

Deliberately selling a product using false

marketing or spreading false information can have serious health consequences. Probably the worst examples are the fake cancer clinics that sell remedies or treatments for cancer patients who are desperately searching for solutions.

We've also seen hugely deceptive practices in the pharmaceutical industry, such as lawsuits over the mis-marketing of drugs such as OxyContin or Abilify.

Stranger examples include the 18-year-old fake doctor in Florida who operated for a number of years, as well as bizarre fake health machines, and alternative practitioners who market useless therapies using false claims.

### Why are people seemingly deceived so easily?

Scam marketers are well-versed in modern advertising techniques and the psychology of persuasion. They know all the triggers that can help sell a product. Examples include making it appear that a treatment is scarce, with language like "supplies are running out" or "buy it quickly now before it's gone." They often link their product to positive images, such as photos of mothers, or claim that a product is "healthy" or "natural".

There are certainly conditions that the medical field does not have good treat-

ments for and so people seek alternatives. Unfortunately, this can also make them easier prey for deceptive practitioners.

### Have these deceptive practices proliferated during COVID-19?

They definitely have proliferated, and this has been aided by social media. You've only got to look at the success of the anti-vaccination campaign, where we see people being falsely advised that they will become magnetic or infertile or claiming vaccines have not been tested. Unfortunately, people can post misinformation on social media with no real consequences.

### How can people protect themselves from internet health scams?

As we outline in the book and in previous research, look for trigger words, such as if the marketer suggests that something is only available for a short time or from this one site. Watch for claims that mention "science hasn't caught up with this" or "amazing results". Be very wary of claims that are based on personal testimonies or celebrity endorsement.

Check the source of information. Use established, reliable sources such as Health Canada, the World Health Organization or even the FDA in the United States. These type of sources are certainly more trust-

worthy than a blog post from relatives or friends or people you've never heard of on social media.

It's also important for all of us to lobby for better health regulation and advertising standards of practice.

We do need to take an interest in our health and in what we are being told. Deception is more widespread than people think, but you can take some simple steps to avoid getting caught up in it.

Overall, if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



Photo credit: Glenn Carstens-Peters, Unsplash

## What Really Goes On in a Hospital Emergency Department?

Medicine has changed in the two decades that Dr. Fred Voon has been a physician. The questions from his patients in the emergency department have remained the same, such questions as:

*"Why is the wait so long?"*

*"Why did that person get seen ahead of me?"*

*"Why do I have to tell you the same story I told the last person?"*

Dr. Voon, a clinical assistant professor with UBC's department of emergency medicine, tackles these questions and more in his new book, *Your Inside Guide to the Emergency Department—And How to Prevent Having to Go!* Drawing on his experiences across Canada and New Zealand—most recently Victoria—Dr. Voon takes readers behind the scenes and helps demystify the emergency room visit.

### What motivated you to write this book?

Over the past 20 years, I've kept hearing the same questions from angry or confused people in the waiting room. I looked around for pamphlets or brochures that might help in our emergency departments, and there really wasn't anything good out there.

I got lots of feedback from nurses and the rest of the team about what they would want someone to know while they're sitting in the waiting room for four hours. The more I worked on the book, the more the information kept growing.

I realized it wasn't the public's fault for not knowing this stuff. It's our fault as a

medical system that we haven't educated the public about what to expect from the emergency department.

### Can you give me an example of a take-away for readers?

The book explains why you shouldn't call the hospital's emergency department with medical questions or ask about whether to come in or not. It's usually a non-medical clerk who is answering the phone. They are vital to the operation of the department. They're like air traffic control—everything flows through them. So, it's a bit like calling the airport control tower to ask what time your flight is supposed to leave.

### How can people benefit from the smaller tips you highlight throughout the book?

Some conditions aren't an emergency and it could save a person an emergency visit altogether if they knew that. On the other hand, I also tried to include some dangerous things that people might not know about, such as aortic emergencies, and what to watch out for.

There are lots of pearls of wisdom that I've picked up along the way such as using over-the-counter medications effectively, how to administer eyedrops easily and how to calm anxiety and distress. These are things I use or share every shift, so I think it's important information to get out there.

### Why shouldn't patients get too hung up on wait times?

It doesn't really help to know what the wait time is before you come in.

Even if we think it's going to be a two-hour wait, it changes quickly. For instance, if somebody suddenly deteriorates in the ER or an ambulance arrives with a critical patient, one particularly sick patient can tie up the department for a lot longer, and then people who are less sick get pushed down the list.

If the wait time is going to determine whether you come in or not, then maybe it's not really an emergency. Does the length of the airport security line-up stop you from going on a flight?

If somebody has to call 9-1-1, will they even have time to read this book? I hope they have time to read the book because that means it's not imminently life-threatening! Some people might want to just keep it available on their shelf so they could take it with them if they ever did have to call the ambulance or end up in the emergency department.

Your *Inside Guide to the Emergency Department—And How to Prevent Having to Go!* is available at [drvoon.ca](http://drvoon.ca). News media can contact Erik Rolfsen at [erik.rolfsen@ubc.ca](mailto:erik.rolfsen@ubc.ca) to receive a review copy.

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**HEAT continued from Page 1**

**Issue 2:** No central cooling system exists in many of the existing VGH residential buildings (with the possible exception of Oakwood Residences) forcing residents to install individual air conditioners in their units or suffer intolerably high temperatures.

**Request 2:** Provide information to residents about what, if any, solutions exist for updating existing buildings with central cooling systems. When possible, install central cooling and filters that also mitigate other indoor air quality concerns (e.g. wildfire smoke).

WHO (World Health Organization) Housing & Health Guidelines, pg. 48, Table 5.1 lists maximum acceptable indoor temperatures for various countries and cities. The highest temperature listed, 32°C, was exceeded by many VGH units. Cities at more comparable latitudes have habitable limits of 25-28°C - each reported case from the linked spreadsheet exceeds these limits.

**Issue 3:** UBC residential neighbourhoods lack a neighbourhood plan to respond to heat waves and other climate events.

**Request 3:** develop a community resilience plan to increase social connection, decrease isolation, and develop the community's social capital so that everyone, including the community's most vulnerable, is supported in times of crisis.

**Issue 4:** Many, if not all, VGH residential buildings have only casement windows that do not allow for sufficient air exchange with the outside.

**Request 4:** Provide information to resi-

dents about what, if any, solutions exist for updating the windows of existing buildings to allow greater air exchange. When possible, implement these solutions.

**Issue 5:** Residents are prohibited from adding shades, awnings, light-reflective materials to windows, doors and balconies.

**Request 5a:** In the short term, (i.e., summer of 2021 or until the above issues are fully addressed), amend the Residential Tenancy Agreement item "Outside" to allow residents to temporarily install shades, awnings, etc. to attempt to more passively cool their units.

**Request 5b:** Install light-and-heat shading fixtures over the balconies of each unit in a building.

**List of Petitioners:**

- Bridgette Clarkston, Webber House Resident
- Katie Marshall, Cypress House Resident
- Jenny Peterson, Webber House
- Neil Armitage, Webber House
- Julen Etxabe, Magnolia House
- Kimberly Huysler, Dahlia House
- Sena Kalay, Mundell House
- Ryan Taylor, Mundell House
- Andrew Owen, Nobel House
- Lori Rozali, Webber House
- Ryan Bochnak, Mundell House
- Emily Cranston, Mundell House
- Lora Moon, Cascara House
- Olga Arlitt Mundell House
- Caitlin Donnelly, Mundell House
- Karina Antonenko, Larkspur House
- Daniela Palombo, Mundell House
- Stephan Koenig, Webber House
- Cinda Heeren, Webber House

## One Letter Leads to Another

When Bridgette Clarkston—a faculty member at UBC—saw an article in the June issue of The Campus Resident related to the use of land, she found it very interesting.

"I thought I would share a related resident-initiated effort about climate change and our neighbourhoods," Ms. Clarkston would say.

After the heat dome had subdued a little, Ms. Clarkston—an associate professor who teaches in the botany department—solicited details from Village Gate Homes tenants to document how unsuitable the buildings are in warm weather (even under regular summer conditions) and sent a letter of concerns to UBC leadership (letter is attached).

"I had a reply from leadership at UBC Properties Trust with an offer to have a meeting — this is being scheduled for September."

In an e-mail to the newspaper, she said, "I'm sending you this because I believe this is an issue of interest for many UNA and UBC residents and could be worth including in a future Campus Resident article."

"My initial letter was centered on VGH residents because that's where I live (Webber House in Westbrook Village). I believe, however, that the current climate-related plans for UBC are either not sufficient or aren't going to be implemented soon enough."

*Dear UBC Leadership,*

*Please find attached a letter of concern signed by 19 residents from seven Village*

*Gate Homes properties regarding increasingly uncomfortable — and during the recent heat dome, uninhabitable — summer temperatures in Faculty & Staff rental homes across UBC. We are very concerned that our housing and neighbourhood design are dangerously inadequate to meet the challenges of climate change.*

*We outline five specific issues related to this topic along with requests for immediate and concrete action.*

*We also document temperatures and experiences from 20 different residential units for your consideration — these are linked as a spreadsheet in the letter.*

*We look forward to hearing your response and thank you for your time.*

### Statistics Submitted by Bridgette Clarkston

- 1. Names of Houses** (Webber House, Nobel House, Dahlia House, Cypress House, Mundell House, Magnolia House, Larkspur House) Total 20 suites
- 2. Floors** range 1-6
- 3. Facing Directions listed:** East, West, Northwest, South, Southwest, Southeast
- 4. Temperature Range in Celsius** 29-34.5 degrees.
- 5. Cooling devices:** Air Conditioning (AC) =2, Fans=16, Other Cooling Devices=10
- 6. Common complaints:** 3 month old baby in hot suite, baby overheated, too hot to sleep, pets overheated, due to pre-existing medical condition (asthma) went to Emergency, forced to stay at hotel

## Comments from Residents During the June 2021 Heat Dome

**Bridgette Clarkston:** Only with an AC unit running 24 hours a day could we keep one room of our apartment at 29 degrees. Adjacent room was 31.1 degrees Celsius with blinds drawn, window closed. I have an infant, I need to be able to keep my house at a liveable temperature when it's too hot to be outside. I felt trapped and very anxious during the Heat Dome. Public cooling centres are helpful but potentially risky for those (like infants) who can't get a COVID-19 vaccine right now. And what about "regular" heat waves (like we've had in July and August)? My apartment hits 28-29 degrees in the evenings



**A thermostat reading of 31.1 degrees Celsius in an apartment at UBC/UNA at 9:00 p.m. during the infamous Heat Dome of June 2021. Even though the apartment had Air Conditioning, it could only cool one room.**

when it is mid to high 20s outside because our building holds in the heat.

**Erica Jeffery:** 30 + Celsius in adjacent room with no AC, fan off, black out curtain drawn.

**Neil Armitage:** All blinds drawn. Windows closed and then opened at night, temp would get to low of 31. Difficulty sleeping. Had to put our dog into a cool bath several times a day as she was showing evidence of heat exhaustion.

**Andrew Owen:** Fans, spray bottles, feet in cold bucket, compost in fridge, changed garbage daily, dog had to be cooled. Blinds closed when facing sun

**Anonymous Resident:** Because balcony absorbs substantial heat from sun during day, opening windows along balcony in evening/night had minimal effect as balcony continued to radiate the heat absorbed earlier.

**Katie Marshall:** All blinds drawn, constant monitoring of outside temperature relative to interior. Jury-rigged swamp cooler had minimal effect. Slept with ice packs in bed (when sleep was possible at all). Partner has medications that interfere with water balance and had substantial physical difficulties (severe nausea).

**Sheila Teves:** Dog had to be cooled down with ice packs.

**Ethan Greenblatt:** We were afraid our dog was going to have heat stroke.

**Rachel Germain:** We're lucky we only get somewhat direct sun 2 hours a day, can't imagine what some of these other units were experiencing! Back when we were on 3rd floor of Dahlia house it was sweltering even in a normal summer.

**Ryan Taylor:** 34.5 was likely not the max temperature in our unit because we moved into a hotel because it was too difficult to keep our infant cool. (We have lived for years in the tropics and are used to heat).

**Anonymous Resident:** I grew up in Australia, so can handle heat, but this was pretty unbearable. The lack of air flow is terrible. The balcony acts like a heat trap.

**Caitlin Donnelly:** I grew up in Kelowna with no air conditioning, but I wasn't able to take this heat. It was OK outside at night during the heat wave, but my apartment didn't cool down even with all windows open.

**Sena Kallay:** All blinds down, open windows cause more heat coming through inside, Temperatures 10-12 degree more than outside. I had to go emergency twice due to my asthma condition.

**Lori Rozali:** Despite elaborate heat management efforts, temp stayed 29-31 in main area and 2-3 bedrooms too hot/hu-

mid to use. Cat was showing evidence of heat exhaustion.

**Aicha Asma Houfani:** June 27th night was absolutely awful, although I'm North African and I'm used to extreme heat. What helped me sleep is taking a cold shower right before going to bed, but I woke up around 4 am and couldn't stand the heat. I laid on the balcony for an hour or so, and surprisingly the breeze was a really nice and fresh 24°C, but the temperature inside the apartment remained the same.

**Ryan Bochnak:** We moved to a hotel for three nights, our 2-year-old developed a heat rash, the unit does not cool down at night because it is not possible to open windows more than a crack.

**Emily Cranston:** The apartment is always warm despite being east-facing (typically 5-10 degree warmer inside than outside) - during the heat wave we had to move to a hotel because of health concerns for our 8-month-old and we had to take the cat to the vet for medical treatment and rehydration.

**Karina Antonenko:** Keep windows, blinds and curtains closed during the heat, then use fans in the evening & night to pull it colder air. During the day using the fans and evaporative cooler inside. Even with all that it was impossibly hot, too hot to sleep. Had to use cool baths for hours at a time when I started to feel too overheated and dizzy.

# Resolving Parking Disputes Proves Easier with New Website

*No need to go to court; just log on and process online*

University Neighbourhoods residents and other British Columbians now have access to a new website to help them better understand and resolve violation ticket disputes faster and without always having to go to court. The system became effective from Thursday, July 8, 2021,

“We know that integrating technology into our justice system has significant benefits, making it easier and more efficient for people to interact with the courts,” said David Eby, Attorney General.

“This new tool will consolidate existing information into one place, helping British Columbians to learn about and resolve their ticket issues without always having to go to court. It is another step forward as we work to update B.C.’s justice system to better support the needs of people.”

British Columbians can find more information online and access the new site.

The web-based tool uses plain language and simple questions to guide users to relevant information and resources to help resolve their ticketing issue themselves. The site provides details about:

- how to pay and dispute tickets;
- how to request a fine reduction or time to pay; and
- other ticket-related information, depending on the individual’s needs.

The site will provide information about provincial violation tickets, including tickets related to the Motor Vehicle Act such as speeding or red-light violations and driving without insurance. British Columbians will also find information about tickets issued for offences under municipal or federal laws, such as operating without a business licence or fishing without a licence.

“The Provincial Court welcomes this new online resource for people to obtain information about their traffic and other violation tickets, and the steps they can take to deal with them,” said Melissa Gillespie, chief judge of the Provincial Court. “Our website metrics show there’s a high interest in this information, and the ‘guided pathways’ in this tool will help people find specific information about their type of ticket quickly and easily.”

This project is part of a broader commitment to modernize the justice system and make it easier for British Columbians to access justice.

**Quick Fact:** Every year, more than 500,000 violation tickets are issued in B.C., with about 80,000 ticket disputes scheduled for hearing at the B.C. Provincial Court.

**Learn More:** To find more information about paying or disputing a violation ticket, visit: [tickets.gov.bc.ca](https://tickets.gov.bc.ca) For information about traffic, ticket and bylaw cases at the Provincial Court, visit: [provinciacourt.bc.ca/types-of-cases/traffic-and-bylaw-matters](https://provinciacourt.bc.ca/types-of-cases/traffic-and-bylaw-matters)



The homepage of the new BC Provincial Court online ticket information and payment system.

**WILDFIRES continued from Page 3**

**How can people stay healthy during fire season?**

First and foremost, you should try to stay as far away from wildfire smoke as possible. During smoky days stay indoors if possible, close windows and maintain a cool comfortable environment. Reduce your level of activity and avoid outdoor exercise during smoky periods.

If you have an air conditioner in your home or car, use the recirculation mode so you draw in less air from the outside and consider installing higher quality filters. Purchase

a portable air cleaner and use it in rooms where you can close the door and windows.

**Does yearly exposure to wildfire smoke produce negative health effects over time?**

If people are exposed every year to high levels of smoke from wildfires, the risk of a cumulative negative impact on health will likely increase. And while Canadians deal with the effects of local fires, we must remember that we’ll also feel the effects of smoke from fires in other parts of the continent.

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**UNA** UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION

**BECOME A UNA SOCIETY MEMBER TODAY**  
Participate in Elections and General Meetings

A UNA Society Membership\* entitles eligible residents to participate at UNA general meetings and to vote and run in UNA Board of Director Elections.

You can verify and manage your membership online through your UNA Account or in-person at the Wesbrook Community Centre or the Old Barn Community Centre.

Visit [myuna.ca/society](https://myuna.ca/society) for more information.

\* Membership is not automatic when you sign up for a UNA Account or UNA Card – residents must opt-in and proof of address is required.

2021 FALL

**PROGRAM GUIDE**

The Old Barn & Wesbrook Community Centres

**Registration is now open!**

Register early to secure your spot, at [myuna.ca/recreation](https://myuna.ca/recreation)

**UNA** UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION