

# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES



**ESTABLISHED IN 2004, SFU'S FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (FHS) IS HOME TO SOME OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS NAMES IN HEALTH SCIENCE INCLUDING SEVERAL CRC'S, ENDOWED RESEARCH CHAIRS AND FELLOWS OF THE CANADIAN ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES.**

In 2020, the research work of FHS was simultaneously disrupted and strongly mobilized by the global COVID-19 pandemic. While several projects experienced slowdowns resulting from travel and engagement restrictions, other opportunities to leverage the knowledge and skills of FHS members arose as scientists around the world began intensively investigating the mechanisms, symptoms and socio-economic impacts of SARS-CoV2.

## **COVID-19 RELATED PROJECTS**

Tania Bubela, dean of SFU's Faculty of Health Sciences, is co-leading a \$1.2-million study focused on the impacts of COVID-19 in the workplace. The data collected from the project becomes available in real-time to inform public health decisions that support employee health and safety. It is a 15-month project funded by Genome BC and co-led by researchers at the UBC Faculty of Medicine.

Professor Kelley Lee is currently leading a project supporting the global coordination of the COVID-19 response. The project continues to define, categorize and track cross-border measures adopted by countries and private companies. The project also works closely with the World Health Organization and other public health partners to better support governments and companies with their pandemic response under International Health Regulations.

Research associate Julia Smith and her team are working to identify and document the gendered

dynamics of COVID-19 and gaps in preparedness and response. The project is supported by a \$2.17-million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

PhD student and Vanier scholar Natalie Kinloch led a study published in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, showing that the improper collection of nasopharyngeal swabs is a major cause of false-negative COVID-19 diagnostic tests. Their findings underscore the importance of proper training and technique in the collection of high-quality nasopharyngeal specimens.

## **INDIGENOUS HEALTHY LIFE TRAJECTORIES INITIATIVE**

This collaborative project between the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, First Nation Health Authority and FHS uses a 'two-eyed seeing' approach to conduct a maternal-child longitudinal cohort study called "*Hishuk-ish tsawalk*" (*everything is one, everything is connected*). The project optimizes healthy early-life trajectories and wellbeing for Indigenous Peoples and is supported by a \$1-million CIHR grant.

## **INVESTIGATING THE HEALTH OF INDIGENOUS MEN IN B.C.**

FHS' Lyana Patrick is conducting a three-year research project in collaboration with a community grassroots organization, DUDES Club (Downtown Urban Knights Defending Equality and Solidarity). She works with community partners, elders, health-care practitioners and DUDES Club members to better understand the many factors influencing Indigenous

men's health and to extend the clubs' engagement model throughout B.C.

### **ADVOCATING AGAINST CONVERSION THERAPY OF LGBTQ+ PERSONS**

FHS assistant professor Travis Salway and his community collaborators conducted an extensive survey of 9,000 LGBTQ+ men, finding 1 in 10 had experienced conversion therapy. In follow up interviews, Salway and his collaborators documented several harms. They were invited to present their data and recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which is currently reviewing Bill C-6, an amendment to the Criminal Code to ban conversion therapy.

### **HEALTH CHANGE LAB PROVIDES HANDS-ON, IMMERSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION**

Faculty teaching fellow and lecturer, Paola Ardiles, instructs a 13-week health promotion class that brings together third and fourth-year SFU undergraduate students from all disciplines. The class investigates a local social issue, builds a sustainable business intervention to respond to it, and pitches their ideas to community influencers. In 2017-19, Ardiles investigated the impact of this class from student and community perspectives. She is currently co-leading a qualitative study related to community-engaged learning at SFU.

### **INVESTIGATING EQUITY OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV**

Canada Research Chair in Global Perspectives in HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health, Angela Kaida, collaborates with recognized local, national, and global partners by leading innovative mixed-method studies. Kaida's work is centered on a rights-based evidence-informed, community-driven approach to sexual and reproductive health in the context of

HIV. Her most recent publications have covered gender, power and health dynamics in Sub-Saharan populations, feminist digital storytelling by and for women living with HIV, and intimate partner violence in women living with HIV.

### **CHATR LAB COLLABORATES WITH MUNICIPALITIES TO DESIGN SAFER, SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE CITIES**

Meghan Winters leads the Cities, Health, and Active Transportation Research (CHATR) lab, a group working to understand how community design impacts transportation, socialization, and equity in communities. Currently she co-leads the Interventions, Research, and Action in Cities Team (INTERACT), a Canadian research group that is launching the second phase of a five year study to investigate how to reinvent cities to promote physical activity, relaxation and social connectedness outside of the context of cars.

### **2020 NOTABLE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS**

Brittany Bingham became FHS's first Indigenous PhD graduate. Bingham received an MSFHR award as the principal investigator for a research project shortly after successfully defending her thesis.

Adjunct professor John Challis was named an Officer to the Order of Canada for his contributions to the field of obstetrics and gynecology.

Professor Kelley Lee was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. This is Canada's highest academic honour.

In 2020, Julian Somers was named a Distinguished SFU professor.

Meghan Winters received the CIHR Trailblazer Award for her leadership, mentorship and innovative contributions in the field of population health.



**THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES STRIVES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATIONS BY OFFERING COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND PRODUCING INNOVATIVE, WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH.**