University of the Fraser Valley Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning

Jackson Phillips, PIBC Student Representative, and Dr. Cherie Enns RPP, MCIP

Welcome to the University of the Fraser Valley, the home of Canada's newest accredited undergraduate planning program, situated on the unceded traditional, ancestral, and sacred territory of the Stó:lō peoples. The Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning (BRCP) degree aims to equip students to respond to today's complex and dynamic planning challenges, combining regional and global perspectives. Students benefit from courses that address core planning competencies, while integrating human-centred design, sustainability, and smart city technology. Through dedicated faculty and adjunct expertise, studio-based coursework, practicums, and internships, the BRCP program blends planning theory with applied experience. Based at the Abbotsford Campus, we are positioned to be a hub for planning in the Fraser Valley and beyond, including partnerships with planning initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, Pakistan, and Europe.

Jackson Phillips
PIBC UFV Student Liaison Perspective

When I started at UFV, my knowledge of the planning profession was limited; I now see planning as my lifelong passion. I began my degree at UFV in Winter 2024 with the goal of becoming a teacher. I've been interested in geography, politics, and history, but at the time, I didn't know I could study urban planning. My planning journey began in a lower-level geography class taught by Dr. Cherie Enns, RPP. Dr. Enns encouraged anyone interested in how cities function and how we live in communities to pursue the new Planning Degree. By the end of my first semester, I knew that the Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning was right for me.

As I progressed through the program, new regional and global opportunities opened under the umbrella of the larger Planning, Geography and Environmental Studies (PGES) department. One connection was with Lusia Bravo, a public space scholar, and her non-profit organization, City Space Architecture. This collaboration led to a Study Tour to Italy and a tactical urbanism project with the Public Space Museum in Bologna. In Bologna, we learned about public space activism, culture and preservation. At the end of our study, we collaboratively facilitated a tactical urbanism placemaking event as a step towards revitalizing an underutilized open area in Bologna.

A key aspect of our program that I have had the opportunity to take part in is our practicum placements. Over the past semester, I have worked with five other students on an applied project with the Village of Lytton. During this practicum, we worked with Caroline Lamont, RPP, to research strategies the village can use to increase its youth population. This practicum allowed me to visit a rural community and learn about the challenges of rural community planning. Our work led to a council presentation and report with recommendations on housing, placemaking, and the environment.

Practicums are one of our most valuable aspects of the program; they give students experience, build connections, and create networking opportunities. My peers have had the opportunity to work on applied projects for the Fraser Valley Regional District, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the City of Langley, City of Maple Ridge, Abbotsford, Mission, Pit Meadows and Tsawwassen First Nation, as well as private consulting firms.

Planning students have also worked in Kenya with non-profits, participated in activities at UN-Habitat, and applied planning concepts to real-world global challenges. Over the past summer, 8 students have been working in Kenya on Projects involving community-based research, land use planning and environmental restoration. This program is funded through the University Canada Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Program.

"During my internship placement with Mto Wangu Initiative in Nairobi, Kenya, I learned how environmental and social challenges are interconnected and how effective solutions often require collaboration with the communities experiencing them. The placement was both academically and personally transformative. It gave me a more nuanced understanding of what it means to conduct meaningful, community-centred work and reinforced the importance of approaching environmental challenges not solely through scientific research, but also through social, cultural, and community perspectives. I left the experience feeling more confident in my academic and professional abilities, and grateful for the opportunity to learn from the people and communities I worked alongside!"

— Jeevani Harry, BRCP Student

Among our community partners, the City of Abbotsford has been one of our strongest relationships. Each semester, the city hosts a studio event where UFV Students can present work to staff and elected officials. The City Studio events are a popular tool for planning students to engage with working planners and work on research projects for the city. I myself



Lecture (Italy Study Tour 2025)



Mto Wangu Initiative in Mathare, Kenya (Students with youth leaders 2026)

have attended City Studio events many times, presenting projects on transportation systems, urban forestry, and wildfire resilience. After every City Studio, students leave with valuable knowledge and new connections.

Students, as well as faculty teaching in the BRCP program, reflect our regional diversity. In the first- and second-year courses, we have recent high school graduates; and in our upper-level courses, we have a mix of domestic and international students, as well as returning, more mature students. We are increasingly attracting second-degree students or those already working in the planning profession.

"I registered in the BRCP program because I am passionate about growing within the planning profession and building a career that makes a meaningful impact within communities. As a current Planning Technician who is completing my planning education, the BRCP program has given me the opportunity to connect what I learn in the classroom to the planning work I do every day. This combination of academics and practical experience has strengthened my understanding of the profession and reinforced my commitment to my career path and to growing as a planner. In addition, the program has provided valuable opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and networking with planning professionals. For anyone looking to either advance their planning career or take that first step, the BRCP program offers a supportive, hands-on pathway to develop both the knowledge and experience needed to succeed in the profession."

— Amy Hodgson

This fall, we are launching our Planning Student Association. With our initial accreditation and growing student body, the BRCP students decided it's time to bring UFV Planning Students together to focus on planning issues, networking and regional events. We are currently working to support and promote the BRCP to first-year students and fundraise for future events. As our program grows, UFV's Planning Student Association will provide connections to the planning community and professionals in the region. As I progress into my final year of the program, I am excited for the opportunities this degree has given me. Attending conferences, presenting research, and meeting potential employers just scratches the surface of what the Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning degree can provide here at UFV.

Jackson Phillips is an Accredited Student Member of PIBC and the Student Liaison for the University of the Fraser Valley.

Dr. Cherie Enns is an Associate Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley where she is Chair of the Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning program.



City Studio, Student Award Winners, with City of Abbotsford Mayor (2026)

Planning Students working with the Village of Lytton (2026) v



