

Speakers' Series on Civic Leadership The Speakers

Carrie Chassels, Ph.D., M.Ed., B.Ed., B.A.

Dr. Carrie Chassels is an accomplished leader with a career history that includes leadership positions with The Easter Seal Society of Ontario, the Toronto District School Board, the University of Toronto, and Vancouver Island University. Carrie has served on many Boards, Councils, and Committees in her professional and personal life. Prior to her appointment as Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs at VIU in 2014, Dr. Chassels was preparing to run against Doug Ford in the 2014 municipal election in Toronto. Part of her preparation included participating in Campaign School hosted by Women in Toronto Politics, attending campaign workshops delivered by City of Toronto staff, and receiving mentoring support from former Toronto mayor, David Miller.

Brian Clemens, CPA,CMA

Brian Clemens has 27 years of municipal finance experience with the City of Nanaimo including 15 years as Director of Finance. Prior to that, he held financial positions with the BC Pavilion Corporation, Loomis Transport Group, Expo 86 Corporation, and Microtel Limited. Brian is retired and living in Nanaimo.

Allison Habkirk, BA, MA (Planning), MPA, MCIP

Allison Habkirk has 30 years of experience in local government as a professional, elected official, and educator. Allison is a Registered Planner who has worked as a staff planner, consultant and trainer for local governments and the Province of BC. Ms. Habkirk is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and an instructor at Capilano University. She teaches Community Planning in Local Government Organizations, Land Use Planning in BC and Policy Skills and Local Government in BC. She also served as Program Manager for the Local Government Leadership Academy, which provides leadership training to local government and First Nations elected officials and senior staff. She served as Mayor and Councillor for the District of Central Saanich for three terms of office.

Al Kenning

Al Kenning worked for most of his career in the public service including 27 years with the City of Nanaimo. He held senior positions as the City's Director of Finance, General Manager of Corporate Services, Deputy City Manager and City Manager. During his years at the City of Nanaimo, the City was widely respected throughout the Province as a progressive and well managed organization. Al also held senior positions including with the Auditor General of BC, the BC Lottery Corporation, and the Thompson Nicola Regional District. Al holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from UBC and is a Chartered Professional Accountant (retired). Al continues to reside in the City with his wife Linda and has 4 grown children and 5 grandchildren who also all live in the City.

Patrick Ross

Dr. Patrick Ross has been an active public educator since the early seventies and officially retired as Vice President, Student Services, Vancouver Island University in 2008. Since then, he has provided private consulting services to a wide range of both public and not for profit organizations focusing on strategic planning, problem solving, and leadership development; all aimed at enhancing corporate capacity. His work has been well recognized and participants report that his seminars are engaging, thought provoking, and most importantly, pragmatic. Patrick is a committed Nanaimo citizen who often volunteers his time to organizations who are working to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Kim Smythe

Kim Smythe's career in communications began in government public relations with the Alberta Public Affairs Bureau. His professional life evolved through positions in advertising, corporate marketing communications, business development, event management, and community and government relations. He has worked effectively with all levels of government as well as the private and not-for-profit sectors. Since 2014, Kim has been President & CEO of the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, which plays a significant role in the economic development mix in the mid-Island region as well as in many other community leadership functions.

Gary Weikum

Gary Weikum has 35 years experience working in community planning and land development. He has successfully led public engagement processes on diverse projects such as: neighbourhood planning, downtown revitalization, landslide mitigation, arterial road expansion, infrastructure planning and bridge design. He is a former instructor at the University of Lethbridge, teaching courses in community planning, economic geography, sustainability, and greenhouse gas management. Mr. Weikum has a bachelor degree in Geography from the University of Victoria and a masters degree in Community Planning from the University of British Columbia.