Meeting Minutes

SEPTEMBER 22, 2009, 5PM
DAVID CLODE ROOM, GRAD CENTRE

Present:
Adrienne Canning, GSS Chair
Takuto Shiot, GSS Director of Finance
Agata Styhka, GSS Director of Services
Yifan Wang, GSS Director of Student Affairs
Elly Carlson, Anthropology
Leslie Rietveld, Biology
Adrian Schroeter, Computer Science
Duncan McLeish, Earth and Ocean Science
Romina Gertmann, Earth and Ocean Science
Grace Lee, Economics
Babak Zakeri, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Nick Van Orden, English
Sara Duncan, Environmental Studies
Leanne Dickau, Exercise, Physical & Health Education
Veronica Bhandar, Germanic & Slavic Studies
Adam Hough, History
Magdalyn Asimakis, History in Art
Mike Large, Law
Taylor Marie Young, Linguistics
Rena Mann, Math & Stats
Conrad Fox, Mechanical Engineering
Wanda Martin, Nursing
Kimberley Ruta, Pacific & Asian Studies
Matthew Riddett, Philosophy
Aaron Maxwell, Physics & Astronomy
Stephanie Matthew Park, Political Science
Valerie Caldeir, Psychology
Emily Gaede, Social Work
Stephanie Cram, Sociology
Amy Cox, Sociology
Kalin McCluskey, Studies in Policy and Practice
Megan Press, Visual Arts
Stacy Chappel, Executive Director (ex-officio, non-voting)
Don Chow, UVIC Athletics and Recreation (guest)
Michelle Petersen, UVIC Athletics and Recreation (guest)
Jim Dunsden, UVIC AVP Student Affairs (guest)
Kristi Simpson, UVIC AVP Financial Planning and Operations (guest)

Regrets:
Jessica Evans, Child & Youth Care
Annalise Smith, Music

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm

I. Guest Speakers

Canning introduced Don Chow and Michelle Petersen from UVIC Athletics and Recreation, Jim Dunsden, UVIC AVP Students, and Kirsti Simpson, UVIC AVP Financial Planning and Operations who were attending in order to present to students regarding the proposed Athletics fee increase and new building.
Dunsden described the current athletics fee and explained the new $55 fee would include the $36 opt in rate. He said the fee is comparable to other institutions, such as SFU and UBC and community facilities.

Dunsden said that since the GSS raised the concern of paying three terms, UVIC had agreed that the new fee structure would include reducing the summer fee (including the current $73 fee and the new $55 fee) by 50% in the summer term, and making it possible for graduate students to opt out of both the current $73 fee and the new fee in the Summer. Currently graduate students cannot opt out of the 73% fee.

McCluskey stated that students in SPP are often older and coming to campus only once per week for a class. Several have children and therefore need childcare drop in options in order to use recreational facilities. They may also prefer occasional drop in rather than signing up for an ongoing class because busy grad students may end up missing several classes.

Chow reported there was a general trend toward drop ins and UVIC has been changing the product mix in response to this change. He said with the new facility UVIC also hoped to offer more flexibility in options because of expanded space.

Cram asked if the $55 will include more than the current fee.

Chow responded the $55 will cover access to the current benefits, plus the weight room. Classes with an instructor, or official that needs to be paid, are charged an extra fee.

Large asked whether the fee increase is in compliance with the University Act and the BC Tuition Limit Policy.

Simpson said the policy applies to current fees, not to new programming.

Large read the tuition limit policy:

“*The tuition limit applies to:*

*Professional programs.*

*Cost recovery/continuing education credentialed programs.*

*All other credentialed and open enrolment programs.*

*Mandatory fees, including capital construction support (e.g., building fees), consumable fees (e.g., fees charged for field trips and consumable supplies) and other mandatory fees (e.g., application fees and technology fees).*

*The tuition limit does not apply to:*

*International students and third-party contracts.*

*New programming (first year). Institutions may set the initial tuition and mandatory fee rate for new instructional programs (not amendments to existing programs). After the first year, tuition and mandatory fees will be subject to the tuition limit policy.*

*Community/continuing education non-credentialed courses. Most of these are short-term courses offered in the evening or on the weekend (e.g., first aid, photography).*
Mandatory fees for student association or society fees (collected on behalf of student associations).”

Large said the fee will apply to a current program with a changing facility.

Simpson said the weight room inclusion is new, and said it is similar to the bus pass, which had been an optional fee and then became a mandatory fee. She said when the tuition limit policy was drafted in applied only to tuition and the language reflects that.

Large reported that the fee increase is significant and the feedback from Law grad students is the fee is a big concern—$165/year spent on this is literally $165 now unavailable for groceries.

Simpson said the UVIC Board of Governors could simply impose the new fee, but have chosen instead to seek student input through the ballot process.

Large said this would only be relevant if a referendum was permitted as a carve out in the BC Tuition Limit Policy. He said he appreciated the effort of the university to get feedback, and to come take tough questions. He said that even a referendum would be unlikely to constitute consent from more than 10% of the students.

Dunsden clarified the vote would be a “consultative ballot”, not a binding referendum. The results will be given to the Board of Governors for information, who will decide whether to create the new fee. If they do, the final decision will go to government.

Chow clarified that with an opt out for Summer, the total annual fee increase could be $110 for students not using the facility in the summer.

Simpson clarified that graduate students would be able to opt out of both the current $73 fee and the new $55 fee in the Summer.

Martin said students in the Nursing department asked whether students with a disability can opt out. She said some students could not use the current facility due to a disability.

Chapelle said students with a disability can’t opt out of the Athletics fee currently.

Chow said the students may be interested to know that a goal of the new facility is to improve disabled access, and also to expand the CanAssist research facility.

Martin noted that none of the nursing students were currently using the facility, other than herself.

Dunsden asked if proximity was the issue.

Martin said it was because most of those in the program are busy mothers who commute to Victoria out of town for their class once per week. She said that although they support health promotion, recreation through campus was not a priority.

Chow said the many nurses do health certification programs through the Athletics facility.

Martin said this would be undergraduates, not graduate students.

Shiota asked why the ballot couldn’t be separate for grads and undergrads as the GSS had asked.

Simpson said it will be separate.
Shiota said the GSS had been told the graduate student vote could be reported, but asked whether the official reported result will include that information.

Dunsden said they will release the full result.

Shiota asked how the separate report would impact the fees and asked if the BOG would stop the building proceeding if the graduate students voted against it.

Dunsden said they will be counted as one vote for that purpose, that in order for the new facility to be viable, they need all the students to support it and the vote would be counted as one student, one vote.

Park thanked the speakers for coming. He said students in political science reported very little use of the facility. He asked if there was a possibility of an opt out for graduate students.

Dunsden said the opt out would only be during the Summer terms.

McCluskey said the system is very frustrating—you pay a mandatory athletics fee then it turns out it doesn’t cover most activities, so you have to pay extra for each.

Canning said families are a concern for many graduate students, and that many graduate students with families end up paying the mandatory fee and then paying to use a community centre because they can bring children to a drop in childcare, or enroll the children into a lesson while the parent works out. Canning noted the facility review had mentioned this as an issue for the demographic, but it seemed daycare was not part of the plan at all.

Park said many students he talked to were concerned that if they didn’t use the pool or other services included in the mandatory fee, but were taking a class, they would pay for the class, at about $10 less than a community member walking in off the street. The result is that students in that situation are paying $73 to save $10 on a class. He suggested greater access to drop in would make the plan much better.

McCluskey said that at her undergraduate school students didn’t pay additional fees. Instead, students volunteered to lead classes, and this eliminated the cost overhead.

Chow said this is how many of the clubs worked—students form a club and gain access to the dance studio, then volunteers from the club coordinate classes. To join the yoga club costs $20 and then the 100 members get their classes for a much lower fee.

Dunsden said they would need to go through the new feedback again. He said the goal was to have students use the facility. He said they could look at the options of having some classes included in the fee, but couldn’t promise that without looking into the cost.

Dunsden said they are looking at setting up an advisory board so students will have ongoing input into program structure.

Chappel said she had questions submitted by the Physics & Astronomy Rep, Aaron Maxwell, who will be late to the meeting. She read the questions:

How long will the fee continue?

Simpson said they would continue for the life of the building.

Chappel asked if it would end once the building was paid off.
Simpson said the building was expected to be paid off in 25 years, and that they would need to discuss the fee again at that time.

Chappel said Maxwell asked if there would be interruption of service at MacKinnon or Ian Stewart while the new building was constructed.

Simpson said there would be no interruption of service, with one possible exception that the squash courts might be repurposed to be used as classrooms as more teaching space is needed.

Chappel said Maxwell asked about maintenance costs on the old buildings in the mean time, and whether the current fee would be increased to assist in covering this.

Dunsden said if costs go up the current fee would be increased to help cover costs.

Canning asked whether other users would also be paying higher membership fees.

Simpson said yes.

Stypka asked whether other sponsors had been approached.

Simpson responded that the university hoped to raise a total of 59.7 million for the building, of which 21.6 million would be covered by a new student fee, 21.6 million would come from UVIC, and 15.5 million would come from fundraising.

Parl asked what would happen to existing facilities.

Simpson said the ice rink and offices at Ian Stewart would remain, but the rest of the building would be repurposed. There is not a specific plan right now for the purpose, but one option is student housing.

Chappel suggested childcare.

Martin suggested a campus community garden.

McCluskey asked what would happen if the fundraising campaign raised more than $15.5 million — would the student contribution be reduced, or UVIC’s?

Simpson said they were just hoping to reach the goal, and would have to see.

McCluskey asked what would happen if the fundraising was not successful?

Simpson said that UVIC takes the risk for fundraising for the building.

Chow said there will be open houses to view the plans at the following times:

- Friday, October 2, Grad Centre Lobby, 11:30 – 1pm
- Monday, October 5, Cadboro commons Dining Room 5-6:30 pm
- Thursday October 15, SUB Vertigo, 11:30 am – 1pm

All info is also available at http://vikesrec.uvic.ca/ourvision he noted there is also a student advisory facebook group linked off that site.
II. Approval of Agenda
M/S
Agenda was approved
CARRIED

III. Minutes
M/S
September 22, 2008 Grad Rep Council Minutes are approved with the following corrections:
- Leslie Rietveld, Biology Rep and Duncan MacLeish, Earth and Ocean Sciences rep had attended but were not listed.
CARRIED

M/S
March 24, 2009 Grad Rep Council Minutes are approved with the following corrections:
- add Tak’s comments that though there was conflict, the GSS had accomplished a lot and he had enjoyed himself.
CARRIED

IV. Business Arising from the Minutes
Canning noted that the task assignment in the minutes was for grad reps to circulate questions to the students in their department, and it seems this has been done. Thanks everyone!

V. Executive Report
Canning referred to written reports.
M/S
Executive reports are received and tabled to the Annual General Meeting
CARRIED

VI. Committee Reports
a. UVIC Childcare Action Committee

Stypka reported she has been attending the UVIC Childcare Action Committee. This is a joint effort of students, staff and faculty. Currently UVIC has an excellent facility but it does not meet the demand for space. The Childcare Action Committee has launched an awareness campaign. A survey was done about childcare needs, and of 203 participants, 74 were graduate students—the remaining were staff and faculty. The results showed that many parents had given up on UVIC due to the waitlists and cost. They also showed childcare is an issue for recruitment and retention of faculty. The report is posted to the GSS website. On September 24, the committee hosted an event called “don’t burst our bubble” where staff, faculty and students brought their children, distributed information and blew bubbles. This was to show support for childcare in advance of the Board of Governors meeting Sept 29. On Sept 29, Lynne Marks from the committee spoke to the Board about the need for quality childcare.
Chappel thanked our Senate rep, Leanne Wiltsie, GSS Exec members Agata Stypka, Adrienne Canning, and grad reps Kalin McCluskey and Matthew Park for attending the meeting.

VII. **Department Reports**

**Social Work:** Gaede reported there had been no meeting in the department yet. There was no big interest in the athletics proposal, no one wanted to pay a higher fee, and only one person uses the facility.

**Philosophy:** Riddett reported students echoed the concerns of those in social work, and the students wished everything was included in one fee.

**Nursing:** Martin reported the research unit has moved back to the HSD building, which is nice. There is a new PhD room on the HSD second floor—any HSD student can use it. This is a big improvement. She noted she had made her points about athletics in the discussion previous.

**Computer Science:** Schroeter reported most students didn’t care as they would be gone by the time the fee is implemented, and they felt helpless to oppose if on the same ballot as the undergraduates anyway.

**History:** Hough reported the department has been told the numbers are too low—they are four short of the number they hoped to enroll—and UVIC will significantly cut funding to grad students if enrollment doesn’t increase.

Shiota asked if this had been said by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Hough said he would confirm. He asked if anyone else is having this same problem.

Ruta from Pacific and Asian Studies said they were also having a major problem, and are talking about cutting funds to special programs—such as Indonesian language.

Asimakis from History in Art said the students had learned that the department must keep 32 seats or they will reduce funding. They lost fellowships this year, and no one told the students the funding would be gone. Seems about half the funding is gone and has been used to recruit first years.

Hough said students were told that funding wouldn’t change for students in History.

Canning said the funding letter has a caveat that funding is conditional to availability. The GSS has received a promise from Dean Aaron Devor that students will get a funding letter for their second year, and the GSS will raise this issue with the Dean.

Ruta said the History in Art students originally thought they could lose their funding only due to failure to maintain the correct GPA. Knowing the situation in advance would have changed what many students did over the summer.

**Political Science:** Park reported the students are opposed to the athletics fee increase, unless all programming—courses, intramurals, etc—is rolled into the fee. The department is also facing funding problems. The program was changed from a two year to a one year program, without changing requirements. The result is that only 8% of students are graduating within 1 year, and once you go over 1 year your funding is taken back and given to first year students. In past some students got a written promise saying students would receive comparable funding in their second year, now the
department wants to renege on the agreement. The chair, advisor and grad secretary are also all new, so no one seems to know.

Canning said the TA contract includes a provision for seniority. So TA concerns need to be followed up with CUPE.

Chappel asked if the students have a copy of the funding agreement.

Park said he would get a copy of agreement.

Exercise, Physical & Health Education: Dickau reported students do use the facility, but there are not as many grads as undergrads in the program. (6 last year, 10 this year). Even EPHE students didn’t know about the vote. No one wants the fee to be increased. They do support increase to facility and research area.

Biology: Rietveld reported she sent an email with the questions to 100 students and five replied. One is all for the increase, the other four are opposed.

Studies in Policy and Practice: McCluskey reported the GSS BBQ was appreciated by students in SPP. On athletics, many second year students are distance students, so not affected. For the rest, there was support if everything was rolled into one fee, but otherwise no support. On the issue of funding, there are very few students with funding, most are on student loans. The students are very interested in more social events!

Visual Arts: Press reported the big issue for students in the department is securing access to the woodshop. On the athletics issue Press said currently she is the one student using the facility, although two other students use an off campus facility.

Mechanical Engineering: Fox reported the MA students were more supportive of the athletics facility, but preferred having everything included in the fee, but for some there was no support. Amongst PhD students, they were mostly older and wouldn’t use the UVic facility.

Economics: Lee reported she received email from or spoke to 15 students. None of them use the Ian Stewart facility. Two use McKinnon for basketball or swimming because it is free and included. One student said “I am satisfied with my scholar’s body”

[laughter]

Lee reported that in response to the question about whether the new fee, when it included the weight room, was fair the response was that the fair amount was what people were willing to pay—and that those who used it would be subsidized by those that don’t. The students asked why not offer it by choice at market price—otherwise the students who are enthusiastic to use it will come out and vote, while the others will pay for the benefit on their behalf. The other feedback was that the current facility is fine. Finally, one student said the library doesn’t have the books they want, and they would prefer UVIC buys books.

Sociology: Cram said the questions received a good response. No one wants to pay the increased fee. One person used the facility in first year a couple of times, many students were annoyed the fee doesn’t cover all services and classes. A lot of students look outside for family friendly services, or services in their neighbourhood. In other issues, students would like fellowship cheques issued on the last day of the month, which would give people time to deposit them before rent is drawn.
Chappel reported there had been a campaign to create auto-deposit of scholarships and fellowships, and as of yet it is not successful.

**English:** Van Orden reported he was very new, so didn’t have a report yet. He did post the questions, but there had not yet been a response.

**Earth and Ocean Science:** McLeish reported that some students were opposed, while others though all services were rolled into one fee it might be reasonable.

**History in Art:** Asimakis reported the students in the department are happy in terms of the space, access to photocopiers and mail, and that the admin staff are from heaven. Concerns about funding with fellowships are constant. There seems to be very little communication from the department to graduate students about changes. For example, the department decided to eliminate the thesis option and has shifted current students into new requirements without any consultation or the students knowledge. This happened to all students registered in thesis.

Canning noted this was not allowed according to the calendar—students are governed by the course requirements in the calendar the year they begin their program.

Asimakis said students felt backed into a corner, that they had no choice or appeal. A final concern was that all the students were registered during the summer, there was no response to email by the supervisors.

Chappel asked if courses were offered and Asimakis said they were.

**Pacific & Asian Studies:** Ruta reported a few people who live on campus use the gym, but many also go to the gym in their neighborhood with their families. The department has good communication. Nothing more to report.

**Environmental Studies:** Duncan reported there are eight new students and two new progs, which is good news. Everyone has space. There was no feedback on athletics as many students are out doing fieldwork. Many students in Environmental studies would be doing fieldwork 4-5 months per year, which limits use—but get lots of exercise outdoors! One student expressed strong opposition to any fee increase. In department events news, every Wednesday from 12:30-1:30 a MA, PhD or professor presents in the “Wheat in the field” series.

**Electrical & Computer Engineering:** Zakeri reported most students knew little about the fee proposal. Most were unhappy with the idea of the new fee, but one or two were in favour of the facility, especially it moving on campus. They currently use it. They didn’t think the fee increase was fair.

**Mathematics & Statistics:** Mann reported students said if they still had to pay more for participating in intramurals they don’t want it.

**Germanic & Slavic Studies:** Bhandar reported there are 6 MA students and 4 new students. 3 are older and don’t use UVic’s gym. One student had just arrived and had no info. There was an ethical concern raised about approving a fee on behalf of future students. In other issues, the department now has a student rep sitting in meetings (Colleen Allen).

**Linguistics:** Young reported she was only elected late Saturday night so has no info. She noted many linguistics students have young families so may run into the same issue of wanting the neighbourhood facility with childcare. Young says she is the youngest in the department and she does use the facility. She said the major concern in the department was that second year students have no funding. Otherwise there is a good rapport with faculty.
Law: Large reported the response in the Law department was that students weren’t currently using the facility and the fee is too expensive. Another student noted there is a better deal at the Y. Students were most worried about others who can’t afford to pay the additional fee, who may not wish to identify themselves and speak out. Further, it sets a precedent of students paying for capital expansion.

Anthropology: Carlson reported she linked the info to moodle. The feedback she received said few are using the facility and didn’t like paying extra drop in fees. A major concern in the department was they have the largest incoming cohort ever, and TA hours have been cut—incoming students used to get 100 hours, now get 50. The space allocated to grad students last year was all taken down over the summer, after already having to move office three times last year. Now they have a small space next to the dean’s office and are told to “keep it down”. It seems the faculty are also short on space. One question was raised about athletics—would students be able to opt out while away for field work?

Psychology: Caldeira reported she is very new, but the students who she spoke to were mostly opposed to the fee increase. Those who use the facility now are only attending drop in activities. Another department issue is the planned shutdown of the IKONPS printer. Students managed to save it for a few more months, but it will be gone December 15.

**TASK:** the IKONPS printer petition will be circulated to grad council

Physics & Astronomy: Maxwell reported the colloquia series run by the department now has student planning involvement. He had prepared a written report on Athletics.

**TASK:** Chappel to circulate written report on Athletics to grad reps

VIII. **Athletics Campaign**

Canning called for a closed session.

Canning called to move to an open session.

M/S

The Grad Council formally opposes the athletics fee increase and approves the campaign strategy proposed; and

Mike Large, Takuto Shiota, Kalen McCluskey, and Stacy Chappel will sit on the campaign committee.

CARRIED

IX. **Election of Director of Services**

Canning opened the floor for nominations for Director of Communications.

Amy Cox (Sociology) and Kalen McCluskey (Studies in Policy in Practice) were nominated.

McCluskey and Cox introduced themselves.

A vote was held.

M/S
Amy Cox is ratified as the new Director of Communications.

CARRIED

Canning thanked the candidates.

X. Childcare Campaign

Stypka referred to her earlier report on the Childcare action committee.

XI. Draft Audit

Shiota reported the audit is not complete, so will be circulated when finished.

XII. Draft Budget restatement

Shiota reported the Executive will submit a restated budget in light of enrolment increases. He noted GSS policy is that changes to the budget in excess of 10,000 have to be approved by an AGM. Right now it seems enrolment increase is near 12%, but the executive will wait until registration deadline and consult with UVIC about a final figure.

XIII. Bylaws submission

Canning opened the floor for submission of motions to change the GSS bylaws at the AGM. Hearing no submissions, Canning closed the period for submissions.

XIV. Other Business

Canning noted the AGM will be held October 27 at 5pm in lieu of the next Grad Council meeting. All members are encouraged to attend. She asked Grad Reps to remind members about the AGM.

Stypka circulated flyers about upcoming events. She said there is a volunteer group working on events and she encourages everyone to volunteer. She noted there will be a Halloween Howl on Friday October 30 at the Grad House.

XV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Sign in sheet vote:
Shaken:16
Stirred:8
Lightly moddled:1
Other

Minutes approved by:

Adrienne Canning, Chair                     Stacy Chappel, Executive Director

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