UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA GRADUATE STUDENTS’ SOCIETY

GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Present:
Anthropology: Claudine Gravel Miguel and Elly Carlson
Biology: Leslie Rietveld
Child & Youth Care: Jessica Evans
Computer Science: Adrian Schröeter
Earth and Ocean Sciences: Nastasja Scholz
Economics: Narwin Chipani
Exercise Science, Physical & Health Education: Emily George
English: Leina Pauls
Environmental Studies: Ashley Park
Geography: Hawley Beaupre
Germanic & Slavic Studies: Veronica Bhandar
History: Adam Hough
History in Art: Magdalyn Asimakis and Veronica Best
Law: Mike Large
Mathematics & Statistics: Rena Mann

Mechanical Engineering: Conrad Fox
Nursing: Wanda Martin
Philosophy Rep: Matthew Riddett
Political Science Rep: Matthew Park
Psychology: Valerie Caldeira
Sociology: Stephanie Cram
Studies in Policy and Practice: Kalin McCluskey

GSS Chair: Adrienne Canning
GSS Director of Communications: Amy Cox
GSS Director of Services: Agata Stypka
GSS Director of Finance: Takuto Shiota
GSS Director of Student Affairs: Yifan Wang
GSS Executive Director (Ex-officio): Stacy Chappel

Guest: David Huxtable, Sociology
Leanne Wiltsie, Grad student Senator

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm with Canning in the chair.

I. Approval of Agenda
M/S Schröeter/Pauls

Agenda was approved

CARRIED

II. Minutes
Corrections were noted:
p 6 GSS let Dean Devor re reduction he said his office is “willing to conduct a review”.
p 3 Psychology department: students pay for photocopies

M/S Park/Conrad
January 26, 2010 Graduate Representative Council minutes are approved with minor corrections.
CARRIED
III. Business arising from the minutes
Shiota invited people to contact him regarding the finance report if they had further questions.

Canning noted volunteers are still needed for the space audit. She noted there is still an opening on the Welcome Centre Committee, if anyone is interested.

Shiota reported there was a low turn out for the Food and Beverage Committee consultation, but some sent email feedback (and missed out on the cookies)

IV. SFU event
Canning invited David Huxtable, from Sociology to address the meeting.

Huxtable reported there is a project underway at SFU amongst the English grad students and the TSSU to invite students organizing the University of California shut down, the York T.A.s, the CUNY student organizers and T.A.s from UBC to speak.

CUPE 4163 and SFU grad students want to know if the GSS UVIC is interested in hosting a panel at UVIC with these speakers. Unfortunately, the event date would be in June, so he was unsure what the turnout could be on campus.

Canning asked for a straw poll of how many departments would have students present in June.

Few members thought their department would have many students.

Stypka asked if the dates are flexible.

Huxtable said the talk could be on the Thursday but they would need to return to Vancouver for a Friday evening, and the date is dependent on the Vancouver event.

Cox suggested the UVSS might be interested.

Pauls suggested the English union rep might know whether English T.A.s are interested.

Huxtable suggested members ask in their departments and if there is interest he can be contacted by email.

V. Senate Representative presentation
Canning introduced Leanne Wiltsie, graduate student senator.

Wiltsie reported the last Senate meeting was very quick, and the major issue was the use of Turnitin software to catch cheating. There was lots of debate about this issue.

Wiltsie noted that next year there will be two additional seats. Two have been elected, with herself and Kalin McCluskey taking the seats, and a third will be elected by by-election in September.

VI. Executive Reports
Director of Communications: Cox referred to her written report. She highlighted work on the media which will result in coverage of the Athletics campaign in the Victoria news, Saanich News and Oak Bay News this Friday.
Director of Services: Stypka reported there will be one last social event for the term, a Casino Night, using pretend money (GSS Bucks). Volunteer dealers to work part of the evening are being sought!

Director of Student Affairs: Wang referred to written reports. Noted this Saturday at 2:45pm there is a Lion and Dragon Dance taking place and it is open to all.

Chair: Canning referred to her written report.

M/S Caldeira/ McCluskey
Executive reports are accepted as presented
CARRIED

A request was made that future executive reports be presented in the same format.

VII. Department Reports

Economics: Chirpani reported the students are glad about the space audit and Grace lee brought up the issue with the department chair.

Sociology: Cram had nothing to report

Psychology: Caldeira reported the election of the department chair is ongoing.

Law: Large reported the space audit was completed, and was easy, so encouraged everyone to do one in their department.

Biology: Rietveld had nothing new to report.

Germanic and Slavic Studies: Bhandar said the department is happy except with the dental coverage.

Canning noted the dental referendum is on the agenda later.

Political Science: M. Park reported a department review is ongoing until Lord knows when. The department is hiring new faculty with expertise on the Global South and students plan to give input.

Exercise Science, Physical Health & Education: George reported 75% of the students visited the Olympics!

Mechanical Engineering: Fox reported that not all students have access to a printer, and the department welcomed the opportunity to give input on the food services.

Chapple noted Mechanical Engineering’s request for shawarma was noted.

Fox emphatically reiterated the department wants take out shawarma.

Anthropology: Carlson reported the communal space has been rescued from seismic upgrading. Department hiring is ongoing, and the department was reorganized. Students were involved in consultation.

Miguel noted there is a conflict between graduate/undergrad students and the faculty over the process of hiring a new professor. On one hand, the students are complaining that they were integrated in the hiring process too late to see its faults, on the other hand, the Faculty mentioned that they presented the process to the department meeting, where students sit, at the beginning of the year. Therefore, a lack of
communication within the department has led to a conflict over the hiring process. This conflict is in the process of being resolved.

**Mathematics & Statistics:** Mann had nothing new to report.

**Child & Youth Care:** Evans reported it had been a good month, and members are interested in the space audit.

**Studies in Policy & Practice:** McCluskey reported the department is still in the process of an external review and students are involved in giving input. There is a concern the new Public Health department will be overlapping academically. There is also concern about space for the graduate students. There have been many social events involving students and faculty.

**History:** Hough reported the seismic upgrade is ongoing and disruptive. The students are working on a colloquium in April.

**Earth & Ocean Sciences:** Scholz had nothing new to report.

**Environmental Studies:** A. Park reported the department had narrowed its director search, and students are attending open sessions. There are two new positions for senior instructors, with a focus on teaching undergraduates.

**Geography:** Beaugrand reported the climatology professor hiring is ongoing.

**Philosophy:** Riddett reported hiring is ongoing. He noted there is concern there is lack of clarity regarding program requirements. Students are starting a review to present their concerns.

**Nursing:** Martin reported a visiting scholar is starting this month. There have been department “chocolate and research” meetings.

**Computer Science:** Schröeter reported that a software engineering program is in the process of being accredited. The department works with Vancouver Island Tech (VITECH) and students met with them. The graduate students have been doing outreach to undergraduates.

**History in Art:** Asimakis reported students are organizing their annual symposium. Faculty called a town hall to talk about moving forward, graduate students were invited. A brown bag lunch is beginning for PhD students to give “dry run” PhD presentations. There has been some serious issues with mis-communication between students and faculty where it seemed information was vague about grades and wages, and people were left confused. She reported she called a department meeting and as a result, she Veronica Best and Robert (the CUPE rep) will be meeting with the department chair.

**VIII. GSS Elections & Referendum**

Chappel circulated information on how to run for the GSS Executive Board.

Executive members described their experiences and took questions.

Canning explained the grad council elects an electoral officer. She called for nominations. Sara Duncan was nominated and accepted the nomination.

**M/S Schröter/Caldeira**
Sara Duncan is elected to act as the GSS Electoral Officer for the Executive Elections and Referendum in March 2010.

RESULT

Chappel explained an electoral committee is also struck in case the result is disputed. This committee rarely needs to meet, but needs to be elected before a dispute takes place. The Grad Rep Council elects on member of this committee.

Emily George was nominated to be the GRC rep to the Electoral Committee, and accepted the nomination.

**M/S Schröter/Caldeira**

Emily George is elected to act as the GRC rep to the Electoral Committee for the Executive Elections and Referendum in March 2010.

RESULT

IX. **Health and Dental Referendum**

Canning reported there would be a referendum on the Health and Dental Plans along with the election. She asked if there was any feedback the GSS should consider when renewing our contract.

A member mentioned she had problems using the plan card.

Chappel asked the member to speak to her after the meeting.

McCluskey said she appreciated having a referral requirement for chiropractic removed.

Chappel asked reps to encouraged students in their departments to send feedback on the health and dental plan to the GSS at this time.

X. **Semi-Annual General Meeting**

Canning reminded the members the SAGM is on March 30 in place of the regular Grad Council meeting. Grad reps are asked to attend and to encourage grad students in their department to attend. The meeting is open to all GSS members.

XI. **Stipend Review Process**

Canning noted at each year a two grad reps are elected to conduct a review of the Executive Board stipends, and their proposal is voted on at a general meeting.

Canning asked for nominations. Schröter and Martin were nominated and accepted the nominations.

**M/S**

Adrian Schröter and Wanda Martin are elected to the stipend review committee.

**CARRIED**

XII. **Campaign updates**

Canning reported all BC graduate student societies had submitted a joint letter to the Ministry asking the University Act require all provincial and federal student groups with mandatory fees be required to present audits as a condition of the universities and colleges collecting their fees. This is a requirement of all student societies in the province currently, except for provincial and federal student organizations, and it protects students from mismanagement of mandatory fees. The graduate student societies feel extending this protection to the provincial and federal groups would be an asset.
XIII. **Campus Garden**

Martin reported she met with Dan Pollock and Christine Comrie, who are student reps on the Campus Planning Committee.

Martin asked the GSS support the garden in remaining on campus, and reported she will be bringing information to the executive board in April, once UVic has decided on its next steps.

XIV. **Senate Elections**

Canning reported the GSS victory on Senate representation had resulted in our first election of more than one graduate student senator. Kalin McCluskey and Leann Wiltsie have been acclaimed. Additional senators are being elected March 3-4-5 on webvote. One more graduate student seat is unfilled and will be elected in September.

XV. **Athletics campaign**

Canning reported the GSS had recently received a letter from the Minister of Advanced Education finding in the GSS favour in the matter of whether UVic’s proposed athletic fee increase was acceptable under the BC Tuition Limit Policy.

Canning read the letter into the record:

*February 15, 2010*

*Dear Ms Canning:*

*Further to your letter of October 19, 2009, sent to the honourable Moira Stilwell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour market Development, and written on behalf of members of the Graduate Representative Council, we have reviewed the proposed increase to mandatory fees at the University of Victoria (UVIC).*

*In completing the review, it has been determined that the proposed mandatory fee increase (introduction of a new athletics and recreation building fee) at UVIC is not in keeping with the current tuition limit policy. A student consultative ballot or other referendum format cannot be used as a sole basis to introduce the proposed new athletics and recreation building fee.*

*In relation to the Ministry’s contribution of funds for this capital project, the Ministry has informally advised UVIC that it is not Ministry policy to fund athletic buildings.*

*Thank you again for writing,*

*Sincerely,*

*Susan Brown*  
*Acting Deputy Minister*

*cc.*

*Honourable Moira Stilwell*  
*Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development*

*Mr. Ray Protti, Chair, Board of Governors*  
*University of Victoria*

*Mr. Jim Dunson, Vice President Academic and Provost*  
*Division of Student Affairs*
Canning thanked all the grad reps for their hard work, and especially the campaign team.

XVI. Space Audit
Pauls reported she had received several reports of concerns about the space audit she wished to address.

She said the intention of the audit was simply to assess the situation for space in all departments so we could pressure to improve the departmental situations that were very bad using the others as a good example. The intention is not to take away anyone’s space, or redistribute offices.

Pauls reported that when the Law building was expanded, they took graduate students into account. She hopes a space audit will help provide a standard of graduate student space for future buildings.

Miguel reported she helped with a department and it really did take only one hour of her time.

Canning pointed out the uneven service to students in different departments made a difference at the Faculty of Graduate Studies when taking on the issue of departmental representation, and it could help with space as well.

XVII. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 7pm.

Minutes approved by:

Kalin McCluskey, Chair
Adriene Canning
February 23, 2010 GRC Minutes
sc/SC

Stacy Chappel, Executive Director