UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA GRADUATE STUDENTS' SOCIETY

EXECUTIVE BOARD

MEMBER REPORT TO GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

From: Brian A. Pollick, Director of Finance

To: Graduate Representative Council

REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2013 – OCTOBER 9, 2013

SUMMARY: My major tasks are to oversee financial operations and participate in the governance of the GSS at the Executive level. In addition to sitting on Executive Committee, which involves about 6 hours a month, I Chair three internal committees: Finance; Food & Beverage; and the Health & Dental/Bus Pass Appeal Committee. The first two generally meet monthly but the Appeals Committee only meets as required, generally twice per semester. I sit on two Liaison Committees, Operational Relations and UVic/GSS Executive. I am also the GSS Representative on the Senate Committee for Academic Standards.

I participate, as do all Executive Members in meetings and activities that are pertinent to the mission and well-being of GSS.

Additional information about my specific activities and issues is noted below.

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**ISSUE AREA: GSS PRIORITIES 2013/14**

Discussion: Last year's GRC identified four priority areas for the development of action plans in this current year. I am involved with the issue of GSS Structure

Actions: . I prepared the meeting format and agenda, chaired a general meeting on August 9 and reviewed the Report and expect to be involved in some of the follow-up activities. Time: 7 hours

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**ISSUE AREA: LABOUR RELATIONS**

Discussion: I get consulted on issues related to the interpretation of the Collective Agreement and specific cases involving labour relations issues, such as the disciplining of staff. The Collective Agreement is still not signed although we are not sure if there are unresolved issues we need to discuss or if it is just the processing lag on the part of the Union.

Actions: We are operating as if the Collective Agreement were fully in operation and our labour relations with staff and the Union are excellent, thanks to everyone’s commitment to providing a respectful and effective workplace. Time: 5 hours
ISSUE AREA: HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN

Discussion: We have moved to a different type of accounting re the Health and Dental Plan (Retention Accounting) and the establishment of a Health and Dental Stabilization Fund. Our goal is to avoid having to increase the cost of the Plan to members in the long term, and hopefully to look at ways in which members can benefit from any surpluses. I also regularly discuss Plan Issues with Mary Shl, our Plan Coordinator.

Actions: We will be striking a Committee to make recommendations in this area for approval at the March semi-annual AGM. We will be meeting in November with our Plan Broker to review the overall experience for the Plan Year Sept. 1/12 -- August 31/13, which will give us information we need for planning and budgeting purposes next year.

I also Chair the Appeal Committee and we met in May and have our next meeting on October 30/13. This Committee has also taken on any appeals of the Bus Pass Assessment. Last year we developed decision-making guidelines for the Appeals Committee and the Committee is functioning well. Membership of the GRC and Member representatives needs to be finalized. Time: 12 hours

ISSUE AREA: FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

Discussion: This involves regular tasks such as cheque review and signing, financial statement reviews and budget forecasting, participating in the preparation and review of the audit, cash management and any other issues that may arise which are directly related to the management of our finances. The Society is in excellent financial shape.

Actions: These are regular and ongoing activities and form a significant part of my duties as Director of Finance. I spend about 8 hours a month on these tasks.

ISSUE AREA: OPERATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Discussion: This Committee meets regularly to discuss issues of administration and mutual concern with the University. We are deeply imbedded in UVic infrastructure and they collect and remit all fees for the GSS. Our Society has been pushing for a defined protocol that would see us receive these fees at the earliest possible time and in the greatest possible amount, recognizing that there needs to be some holdbacks to ensure the University does not suffer any loss due to changes in registration after the fact.

Actions: It looks as if we are close to receiving the information we have been requesting as part of a special data run and early indications suggest that we will be able to negotiate a protocol which will see us paid our money based on what has actually been paid at a much earlier stage. Time: 6 hours
ISSUE AREA: UNIVERSITY'S DRAFT POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR STUDENTS

Discussion: We had provided feedback to the Senate Committee on Academic Standards that we had concerns that parts of the draft policy were clearly inappropriate for Graduate Students and were not stringent enough. The Sub-Committee for this particular policy were given a summary of our concerns but did not make any changes to the draft policy based on our issues.

Actions: We met again on April 17/13 and the final draft went to senate, and the Convocation lists were approved.

Time: 5 hours

MEETINGS ATTENDED

GSS MEETINGS

My internal committee meetings consist of Executive Committee, and chair of the Finance Committee and Food and Beverage Committee. I also meet regularly with the Executive Director, the Operations and Services Manager, and the Health & Dental Plan Coordinator to discuss issues, problems and resolutions, and to plan. These types of meetings account for much of the overall time I spend on GSS business. I also participate in GSS events and programs such as our Departmental Orientations to graduate students in early September. There was also the GRC Orientation Meeting in September. This accounts for approximately 9 hours a month.

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

In addition to the regular meetings I attend of the Standing Committees I am a member of, there are special meetings called by the University as part of issue development. Over the period of this Report, I met on such issues as the Graduate Student Accommodation Policy, establishment of a GSS-funded travel grant program for Distance Education Students, and consultation re the position and hiring of the Vice President of research. I also participated in our annual review and issue meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Time: 12 hours

CONCLUSION

As always, I want to thank our excellent staff for the fine job they do in enabling the GSS to run smoothly, efficiently and professionally, with a particular thanks to Stacy and Brandy who make my job easy. We are well served indeed. I also want to thank my four colleagues on the Executive Committee whose dedication and hard work makes it a pleasure to be part of this team.

Respectfully submitted

Brian A. Pollick, October 9, 2013
From: Brian A. Pollick, Director of Finance

To: Graduate Representative Council

REPORTING PERIOD: OCTOBER 10 – OCTOBER 20, 2013

SUMMARY: My major tasks are to oversee financial operations) and participate in the governance of the GSS at the Executive level. In addition to sitting on Executive Committee, which involves about 6 hours a month, I Chair three internal committees: Finance; Food & Beverage; and the Health & Dental/Bus Pass Appeal Committee. The first two generally meet monthly but the Appeals Committee only meets as required, generally twice per semester. I sit on two Liaison Committees, Operational Relations and Uvic/GSS Executive. I am also the GSS Representative on the Senate Committee for Academic Standards.

I participate, as do all Executive Members in meetings and activities that are pertinent to the mission and well-being of GSS.

During this reporting Period I spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the Audit and preparing for its presentation to the Semi-Annual General Meeting.

ISSUE AREA: HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN

Discussion: We received the contract moving us to retention accounting which was approved at the Semi-annual General Meeting last March and which will decrease the cost of the Plan to our members in the long term. The Health and Dental Plan Appeal Committee met on October 30th and reviewed thirteen appeals, including two bus-pass appeals.

Actions: The guidelines which this Committee developed last year are serving us well and provide a framework for making decisions that are consistent and based on clear principles. There are currently three Appeals outstanding and the Committee will meet the first week of December.

Time: 3 hours

ISSUE AREA: FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AND BUDGET PREPARATION FOR 2013/14

Discussion: This involves regular tasks such as cheque review and signing, financial statement reviews and budget forecasting, cash management and any other issues that may arise which are directly related to the management of our finances. The Society is generally in excellent financial shape although the restaurant continues to be volatile and is likely to require a larger subsidy than
originally approved. The Finance Committee met on November 7th and most of its discussion was focused on the Budget preparation process for the coming fiscal year.

**Actions:** The Committee is particularly concerned that the budget process provides an opportunity for input from the membership as well as its governance bodies. A budget preparation timeline has been produced and includes an open meeting on January 14th.

I spend **8-10 hours** a month on these tasks.

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**ISSUE AREA: REMITTANCE OF COLLECTED GSS FEES**

**Discussion:** This issue is overseen by the joint GSS-UVic Operational Relations Committee, which meets regularly to discuss issues of administration and mutual concern with the University. We are deeply imbedded in UVic infrastructure and they collect and remit all fees for the GSS. Our Society has been pushing for a defined protocol that would see us receive these fees at the earliest possible time and in the greatest possible amount, recognizing that there needs to be some holdbacks to ensure the University does not suffer any loss due to changes in registration after the fact. This seems to have been successful in that we received a much larger payment than usual and got it in October instead of November. There are still some outstanding issues, including access to the actual data and clarification of what happens when fees are only partially paid.

**Actions:** We will continue to press for clarification on these outstanding issues and will hopefully get to the point where we can sign a memorandum of agreement re the remittance of fees. The next meeting is scheduled for November 29th.

**Time:** **2-3 hours per month**

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**MEETINGS ATTENDED**

**GSS MEETINGS**

My internal committee meetings, in addition to Graduate Representative Councils consist of Executive Committee, and chair of the Finance Committee and Food and Beverage Committee. I also meet regularly with the Executive Director, the Operations and Services Manager, and the Health & Dental Plan Coordinator to discuss issues, problems and resolutions, and to plan. These types of meetings account for much of the overall time I spend on GSS business. This accounts for approximately **10 hours** a month.

**EXTERNAL MEETINGS**

In addition to the regular meetings I attend of the Standing Committees I am a member of, there are special meetings called by the University as part of issue development. I was not involved in any such meetings during this Reporting Period.

Respectfully submitted

**Brian A. Pollick, November 20th, 2013**
From: Brian A. Pollick, Director of Finance

To: Graduate Representative Council

REPORTING PERIOD: November 21st, 2013 to January 21st, 2014

SUMMARY: My major tasks are to oversee financial operations and participate in the governance of the GSS at the Executive level. In addition to sitting on Executive Committee, which involves about 6 hours a month, I chair three internal committees: Finance; Food & Beverage; and the Health & Dental/Bus Pass Appeal Committee. The first two generally meet monthly but the Appeals Committee only meets as required, generally twice per semester. I sit on two Liaison Committees, Operational Relations and UVic/GSS Executive. I am also the GSS Representative on the Senate Committee for Academic Standards.

I participate, as do all Executive Members in meetings and activities that are pertinent to the mission and well-being of GSS.

My major tasks in the period covered by this report were the recruitment of a new Supervising Chef for the Restaurant and the preparation of the Draft 2014/15 budget.

ISSUE AREA: HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN

Discussion: The Health and Dental Plan Appeal Committee met on December 4th and reviewed five appeals, including two bus-pass appeals.

Actions: The guidelines which this Committee developed last year are serving us well and provide a framework for making decisions that are consistent and based on clear principles. We also continue to refine administrative policy decisions so that some matters do not have to go to appeal, but can be accepted by the Co-coordinator. At this past meeting we agreed that any International student who was provided coverage by their home country, and who had failed to opt out of our Plan because they were unaware that they had been charged (their fees are paid directly by their home government or sponsoring organization) could opt-out once they learned they had other coverage provided they had not used our Plan. Our next meeting is January 30, 2014.

Time: 2 hours

ISSUE AREA: FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AND BUDGET PREPARATION FOR 2013/14

Discussion: This involves regular tasks such as cheque review and signing, financial statement reviews and budget forecasting, cash management and any other issues that may arise which are directly related to the management of our finances. The Society's finance are healthy and our latest projection is that we will finish the year in a surplus position. The restaurant continues to remain volatile and unpredictable which is making it very difficult to accurately
forecast our year-end position. As noted above, much of my time has been focused on the budget preparation process.

**Actions:** The budget process is underway and by the time you read this Report we will have a first draft ready for the Finance Committee to review on January 23rd. This will result in a next draft which will go to the Executive for review on February 5th. GRC will have a special opportunity to review the budget at a micro level at 3:00pm on February 20th and any budget issues/decisions that need to be presented to the Semi-annual General Meeting in late March will come before GRC on February 25th. Unfortunately, no one came to the General Budget Session held on January 14th.

**Time: 26 hours**

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**ISSUE AREA: REMITTANCE OF COLLECTED GSS FEES**

**Discussion:** This discussion takes place in context of the joint Operational Relations Committee between our Exec and Uvic's senior managers in the Student Affairs Division. Although we received our money sooner than usual last term (early October instead of November), we still do not have the data we have asked for to verify that we are receiving the right amount, nor do we yet have an agreed on formula and formal Memo of Understanding about the remittance of the fees collected on our behalf.

**Actions:** We will continue to press for clarification on these outstanding issues and will hopefully get to the point where we can sign a memorandum of agreement re the remittance of fees. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24th.

**Time: 2 hours**

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**ISSUE AREA: PERSONNEL & LABOUR RELATIONS**

**Discussion:** The GSS has a considerable number of staff, most of whom are associated with the Restaurant, and all our staff except the executive Director, Operations Manager, and Executive Administrative Assistant are unionized and covered by our Collective Agreement. The Director of Finance usually functions as the Personnel Officer for the Society and am involved as required or requested in labour relations issues.

**Actions:** During this reporting period I was involved in the hiring process for a new Head Chef, (to replace Lee Bretschneider who has gone to Vancouver to be a Chocolatier) who also functions as the Kitchen Supervisor. We interviewed four candidates, and have hired Mike Ronning and we are confident he will continue our strong tradition of quality cooking and service.

**Time: 7 hours**

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**MEETINGS ATTENDED**

**GSS MEETINGS**

*GSS Grad Council Agenda* January 28, 2014
My internal committee meetings, in addition to Graduate Representative Council, consist of Executive Committee, and chair of the Finance Committee and Food and Beverage Committee. I also meet regularly with the Executive Director, the Operations and Services Manager, and the Health & Dental Plan Coordinator to discuss issues, problems and resolutions, and to plan. These types of meetings account for much of the overall time I spend on GSS business.

**Time: 16 hours**

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

The Executive Committee met with the UVic president and Senior Administration as part of its usual liaison on December 5th. I also attended a meeting with Reeta Tremblay, Vice-president Academic and Provost, on January 17, who expressed her desire to work more closely with GSS and issues of mutual interest.

The GSS Executive had an opportunity to meet with the BC Minister of Advanced Education, Amrik Virk, on December 9th. He seemed to express some interest in looking at the possibility of facilitating the creation of a single Student Health and Dental Plan, which would significantly reduce costs both for premiums and administration charges.

I sit on the Senate Committee for Academic Standards, which met on January 16th. The major issue discussed at that meeting was the impact of the new grading structure, which saw a shift in the percentages attached to some letter grades. Because most of the changes were at the C & B grade levels, there does not appear to be any impact on graduate students as few students would ever be getting this low a grade.

**Time: 7 hours**

As always, I would like to express my deep thanks and appreciation to our staff my Executive colleagues and those Grad Students who sit on the Finance and health and Dental Committees. Thank you for making my job manageable and satisfying.

Respectfully submitted

Brian A. Pollick, January 21st, 2014
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT TO GRC FOR PERIOD: JANUARY 23-FEbruARY 25, 2014

1. PREPARATION AND CONSULTATIONS RE 2014/15 BUDGET—12hrs.

The budget occupied most of my time during this reporting period. This included working sessions with the Executive Director, meetings of the Finance Committee and consultations with Executive Committee and an open session for GRC members.

2. OTHER INTERNAL MEETINGS—18hrs

This includes all the preparation and attendance at the following internal Committee meetings: GRC (Jan.28 & Feb.25); GSS Executive (Feb.5 & Feb.19); Health & Dental Appeal (Jan.30); Food and Beverage (Feb.25)

3. EXTERNAL MEETINGS—1.5hrs

This was the regular meeting of the GSS and UVic Executives

4. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS—3hrs

This includes cheque review and signing and review of monthly Financial Statements, as well as any other issues related to financial operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian A. Pollick, Director of Finance