University of Victoria Graduate Students’ Society

Graduate Representative Council

FEBRUARY 27TH, 2018

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm with KIM in the Chair, making the acknowledgement that the GSS convenes on the traditional Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land continue to this day.

Official Dept Reps Present:

Anthropology: Luke Kernan
Art History and Visual Studies: Lindsay Kaisla
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Karen Lithgow
Biology: Malcolm Cowan and Lucianne Marshall
Civil Engineering: Pejman Azarsa
CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst
Economics: Tien-Yun (Arielle) Shih
Education Curriculum and Instruction: Beth Tuinstra
Educational Psychology & Leadership: Cortney Baldwin
English: David Eso
Exercise Sci, Physical & Health: Stephen Luehr (ONLINE)
Germanic and Slavic Studies: Tessa Coutu
Greek and Roman Studies: Lee Anderson
History: Carla Osborne
Linguistics: Adar Anisman
Mathematics and Statistics: Joseph Horan
Mechanical Engineering: Markus Sommerfeld
Neuroscience: Chad Williams
Physics and Astronomy: Maan Hani
Political Science: Ryan Broe and Stephanie Gruhlke
Psychology: Myles Maillet

Social Dimensions of Health: Lindsay Shaw
Social Work: Madeleine Harber
Sociology: Elaine Laberge
Visual Arts: Marina DiMaio
Writing: Janet Munsil
Member-at-large: Mahsa Mahtab

Guests:
Theatre Studies: Arash Isapour

GSS Executive and Staff:

Chair: Susan Kim
Director of Communications: Quirin Holendorf
Director of Finance: Olga Gould
Director of Student Affairs: Gillian Dornan

Executive Director: Stacy Chappel (ONLINE)
Office Coordinator, Governance: Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

Business Administration: Harleen Randhawa
Community Development: Mike Butler
Environmental Studies: Tanya Tran
Law: Ngozi Nwoko
Philosophy: Gennady McCracken
Public Administration: Leila Bautista
Social Work: Madeleine Harber
Director of Services: Jessica Wyatt

Absent:

French: Emma Kwasnica and Regina Grishko
STANDING ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

*Motion:* RESOLVED to approve the agenda.
*M/S WILLIAMS/GOULD
CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*Motion:* RESOLVED to approve the minutes of 2018-01-30 as presented, with minor amendments.
*M/S HANI/HORAN
CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

ASSIGNMENT OF TIMEKEEPER

SOMMERFELD volunteered.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KIM reported on several events, calls for input and news from UVic and GRC members, including:

- Sociology is having a Grad Student governance building event on March 13, 2018. All are welcome.
- SHAW following up on Period Posse's Menstrual Product Drive, now involved with Tampon Tuesday and asking for further donations.
- Grievance of supervisory policy from faculty so please keep attuned for that.
- EQHR 5 days of action seeking interested graduate student as volunteers or event organizers.
- WYATT, Director of Services, has had baby, Rory.
- Listening Campaign update – KIM has met with Greater Victoria Acting Together to update question development for departments.
- Election – vote! Voting opens 9am Wednesday February 28th.
- New residences input – new BC budget will allow borrowing for more residences on campus. UVic looking for input.
- UVic considering Mystic Market as a graduate student commuter space, seeking input.
• UVic requesting input on legalization of marijuana on campus.
• Questions to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Advanced Education, following up on his visit to campus – forward to KIM.
• UVIC draft strategic plan framework input sought.
• OSBORNE’s birthday last Thursday.
• Grad House had a revenue day $43 short of $4000 – previously last day of classes might have hit $4000, so to come that close in February is amazing. Generally $1500 a day would be expected.

### MEETING BUSINESS

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

GRC members in attendance shared news and events from their departments.

Any member who would like their update recorded in the official minutes is invited to email their report to gssgov@uvic.ca.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Communications:** HOHEN DORF reported that there have been some issues getting information onto social media. This is being worked out. Goal is to have something out once a day.

**Events:** HORAN reported that the only two people attended the Board game night at Interactivity were volunteers. March 28th is tentatively scheduled for pancake breakfast. Wednesday Coffee back to weekly. Events Committee looking for feedback. March 10th is an all-welcome hike at PKCLS (Mount Douglas).

**Finance:** ANDERSON reported that work is underway on new budget. A potential drop in enrollment is concerning. Grad House sales have been good, but can’t be sure it will be sustained. Decision to add funds to department and travel grants for next year.

**Appeals:** KIM reported that problems with committee member attendance are creating a backlog.

**Student Affairs:** OSBORNE reported that Committee was presenting the Student Advocate position paper today. Also looking at a survey on graduate student issues.

**Bylaw and Policy:** BALDWIN reported that the committee is looking at “what is a policy, what is a mission statement”, who the group is, and the scope of its responsibilities etc.

**Stipend Review:** HORAN reported the Committee is looking at Executive Reports for past months, and looking at documentation and a manual for committee process.

**Faculty of Graduate Studies Council:** HORAN reported on approvals of: a new degree program of Applied Data Science in Engineering, new management degree for people who aren’t business students, and a degree program name change to Theatre Studies.

**Campus Planning:** TRAN reported via email on the last campus planning committee meeting regarding:
**Student Residence Project:** the committee voted in favour to move forward with the recommendation put forward by the consultants for a two-phased plan in developing two residences. The first site is just outside ring road North of Cadboro Commons, which will take down some old residences. Once that is complete, they will move towards decommissioning Cadboro Commons and replace it with a new building. The provincial government has announced funding for student housing, though none is earmarked for UVic right now.

What is important for grad students: 1) the a new food/eating area will be located in the second building, and 2) the potential for more "academic space". What this means right now is unclear, and could mean more offices as well as a large lecture hall. Currently, this label is more of a "placeholder" for this space until there are more negotiations with the University. This two-phase plan also means that there will be no loss of parking spaces in Parking lot 1.

**Cycling Plan:** A summary of the phase 1 of the cycling plan can be found here:
https://www.uvic.ca/campusplanning/current-projects/campus-cycling-plan/

There will also be open houses looking for feedback for different options for improving cycling and pedestrian traffic. On campus consultations are happening from 11-2 at the library (Feb 27), the SUB (Feb 28) and CARSA (March 1). It would be great to have lots of graduate student responses! There will also be an online survey launched Feb 27. TRAN to circulate the link.

**Changes to committee membership:**

*Motion: RESOLVED to elect Beth TUINSTRA to the Communications Committee.*

M/S HOHENDORF/ANISMAN
CARRIED

*Motion: RESOLVED to elect Lindsay KAIsla to the Communications Committee.*

M/S DORNAN/WILLIAMS
CARRIED

*Motion: RESOLVED to elect Maan HANI, Lindsay SHAW, and Cortney BALDWIN to the Appeals Committee.*

M/S TUINSTRA/ESO
CARRIED

*Motion: RESOLVED to accept Seth Greylyn’s resignation from the 2017-2018 Graduate Representative Council as the Computer Science representative and from the Communications Committee.*

M/S HANI/HORAN
CARRIED.
D. UPDATE: DRAFT BUDGET

GOULD presented an update on the work of the Finance Committee for next year’s draft budget, including the following information:

Assumptions that the Finance Committee is working around:

- Enrolment estimated to drop 1% (Consistent with past two years)
- Conservative estimate for Food and Beverage revenue based in past audits
- Health and Dental to have stable administration budget, no significant revenue
- Begin repayment of loan on 7 year plan, with goal to shorten repayment period
- Maintained past practice in allocating expenses across funds.

Risk Areas and Considerations:

- New restaurant operations, with additional outlet, longer hours, additional staff
- Drops in Graduate Student enrolment affect membership revenue
- Collective bargaining in April – May 2018
- Health and Dental Fund fee referendum (for less than $5) will be needed to ensure we don’t draw on Health Plan Stabilization Fund to cover expense.

Highlights of the Finance Committee’s draft 2018-2019 GSS budget:

- Loan financing
  - borrowed 200,000 for renovation
  - repayment at 5.95%
  - repayment over 7 years, in order to maintain healthy reserve fund
  - after two years, could repay more quickly
  - with 7 year repayment, interest paid would be $32,000
- Capital plan for in 2017-18 budget
  - Fee revenue of $82,000
  - Repayment of loan will cost $46,400/year, including interest
  - Computer upgrades (annual expense of up to $3,000)
  - Kitchen equipment (annually up to $20,000)
- Expenses anticipated for 2018-19
  - Replace restaurant tables
  - Upgrade point of sale system to tablet-based system
  - Annual computer and kitchen equipment updates

CHAPPEL offered to send around details if GRC members wanted to review and provide input prior to AGM.

E. DECISION: COLLECTION AND REMISSION OF STUDENT FEES

The Board of Governors, through the University Secretary’s office, requires letters outlining the GSS plan on next year’s collection and remission of student fees, as items regarding changes to student fees require their approval. GSS fees will be changing, as they do every year, to reflect the increase in BC consumer price index (CPI). The deadline for submission of this letter is March 12th, but we can only confirm our fee changes with the GSS membership’s approval of the budget at the March 27 Semi-Annual General Meeting.
Motion: RESOLVED to increase GSS core membership fees (Operating Fund Fee and Capital Fund Fee) will be increased by BC CPI (2%) in May 2018 accordance with Policy 3.5 and Bylaw 14.3.b and subject to approval of the GSS budget at the Semi-Annual General Meeting; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that in accordance with the fee referenda in November 2015, the fees for the Conference Travel Grant, distance student travel grant, CFUV and University 101 are increased by BC CPI for 2017; and

RESOLVED to authorize the GSS to notify the Board of Governors of these pending changes.

M/S ESO/OSBORNE

Discussion: last year this motion was discussed at the AGM. CHAPPEL is recommending that this process of bringing advance notice of motion to the GRC before the AGM should be a standing item with presentation of draft budget.

CARRIED.

F. UPDATE & DISCUSSION: EXTENDED HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN

1. 2018 Health and Dental plan renewal timeline

KIM spoke to an update provided by CHAPPEL, including a timeline for renewing the GSS plan.

- February 22 meeting with the broker to review the requested renewal quote from Blue Cross and discuss bargaining options. Items for discussion include renewal price, plan usage information (which can inform any changes we need to make should a fee increase be rejected) and options to change the plan.

- February 28 report to GRC about the initial offer and schedule for renewal negotiations.

- Mid-late March, Director of Finance, staff, and broker will bring final proposal together to the Executive who will then 1) approve it for referendum, and 2) report it at the SAGM; GRC will be notified immediately after the referendum is approved.

- March 28 SAGM presentation on the renewal and planned referendum.

- April will see the referendum notice issued, and the referendum itself.

- Once referendum is complete, send notice to broker, and notice of any fee changes to Board of Governors by May 11.

- Received opening offer through our broker on Feb 22.

- Opening offer from insurer is for a minor increase, and our broker continues to bargain to lower this.

- Currently we anticipate holding referendum to rebalance the fees, recuperate our reserve so we don’t have to draw on it again, and add a very slight increase to the health fee to end reliance on Health Plan Stabilization Fund (less than $5). We’ll have an exact number for them at the AGM.

- Dental fund is doing well, health fund is not. Broker has recommended a two-step referenda: 1. first vote on decreasing the dental fee, increasing the health fee of the same amount to balance.
2. then having a second referenda vote for a general increase to avoid taking more money out of the stabilization fund.

CHAPPEL reminded GRC reps that we are in negotiation so details are confidential. What can be shared publicly is that we can expect to go to referenda and the expected increase is anticipated to be $5 or less.

2. **Seeking input on the values that inform any decisions and changes to the plan**

Given that there will be a referendum to increase health and dental plan fees, students will need to know what will be removed from their coverage if the referendum fails. Prior to the referendum, Executive Board will have to decide what changes will be made to the plan. What values will guide these decisions?

KIM asked for GRC to share ideas to help inform what decisions will be made should the referenda fail.

**Discussion points:**

- Strike the balance between the extremes of what a few individuals need, and accessible and manageable for all members.
- Use research to inform what benefits should be kept/cut. Example used was the importance of dental hygiene to overall health and wellness.
- Frame the Health and Dental Plan as mental health support. You may not be using it now, but it is security to know it is there.
- Research any gaps between what is offered in service, and what is pragmatically available to people in Victoria e.g. problems of getting a hygienist appointment once a year, never mind 3 x a year.
- CHAPPEL reported on principles from last year:
  - Share the impact of changes across all sections and services, not target one service to be deleted entirely.
  - Good maintenance of the plan – stability in coverage prevents panic and irresponsible use which ultimately causes the plan to become more expensive.
- CHAPPEL advised against two tier plans currently being considered by the undergraduates – She advocated that all graduate students have equal access to services irrespective of income.
- Should decisions be made only on what grad students need, or should dependents be considered?

3. **Seeking assistance in collecting queries for health coverage, e.g. vaccines and increased coverage for counselling services, hearing aids, diabetes test strips and testing device, etc.**

CHAPPEL requested that all GRC reps bring forward member concerns and ideas promptly as the deadline for negotiations is nearing.

G. **DECISION: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BYLAW & POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Bylaw & Policy Committee was tasked with providing recommendations on procedures to better inform the GRC of changes to the extended health and dental plan. Below, underlined, are the proposed changes to the GSS bylaws. The motion is to accept these recommendations and have them added to the SAGM agenda as a motion for approval by the membership. Otherwise, any concerns with the recommendations may be sent back to the Bylaw & Policy Committee.

Proposed bylaw changes to take to the AGM for approval:
Motion: RESOLVED to submit the following proposed changes to the GSS bylaws for consideration by the general membership at the March 2018 Semi-Annual General Meeting.

4.3 Referendum
[...]
b. Referenda questions shall be phrased by the Executive Board. However, where a referendum is initiated by petition, the phrasing shall not alter the original intent of the petition.
c. Where the referendum is initiated by the Executive Board, the Graduate Representative Council will be notified within 48 hours.
and
5.6 Procedure at General Meetings:
a. Quorum for all General Meetings shall be twenty-five (25) members. In the event that attendance at a General Meeting is above fifteen (15) but below twenty-five (25) members, the meeting will continue for the purposes of fulfilling the Society Act of British Columbia, but shall be limited to the following items of business:
i. reports of the Executive Board;
ii. reports of committees of the Society;
iii. adoption of the budget;
iv. appointment of auditor;
v. approval of the audited statements;
vi. ratification of acclaimed nominees for election; and
vii. reports on the status of the extended health and dental plan.
and
9.4 The Director of Finance shall:
a. Present budgets and audited financial statements to General Meetings for ratification by the members;
b. Report on the status of the extended health and dental plan at General Meetings;
c. Act as chair of the Food and Beverage Advisory Committee of the Society;
d. Be responsible for development and negotiation of staff and external contracts in conjunction with Executive Board;
e. Act as primary signing authority for the Society;
f. Normally act as the Personnel Officer for the Society; and
g. Be responsible for other duties as agreed upon and assigned by the Executive Board.

M/S HANI/ANISMAN

Discussion re: 48 hour rule. If the 48 hour notice was not met, a complaint could be filed with the Electoral Officer. Intent of adding 48 hour statement was to make visible what is considered reasonable notice. If complaints are filed in bad faith, Roberts Rules allow for a censor motion.

CARRIED.

H. DECISION: STUDENT ADVOCATE PROGRAMME FROM STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (DORNAN)

The Student Affairs Committee has spent the last two years researching and working towards a proposal for the creation of a graduate student advocate position. This position is intended to provide a service to graduate students to fulfill what is currently an unmet need: an advocate whose sole purpose is to assist a
student/s with issues when they arise. This position would complement that of the Ombudsperson’s, but with the distinction that the advocate would be able to attend difficult meetings with students and advocate directly for the student. They are not duty-bound to being impartial. Further information is included in the proposal and feedback is encouraged.

Material (link): Draft Advocacy Programme Proposal

Discussion and Questions:

- Ombudsperson is an impartial body, funded jointly by UVic, UVSS, and GSS. Human Rights and Equity is a UVic position. Neither can actually go with students to meetings, work on the side of the student, as both maintain impartiality.
- Everyone else on campus essentially has someone (who is trained and paid) who can act as their Shop Steward, except students.
- Hoping to have the programme jointly with UVSS. Current UVSS Director of Outreach and University Relations is supportive, but has to be re-elected.
- Whether there is a possibility to cooperate with another body and incorporate International Student representation. Currently the percentage of international students requiring support and advocacy is quite high. CHAPPEL reported that there was a time this year where 100% of the students she was advocating on behalf of were international students.
- No way to accurately predict the usage of the service. Anticipated that more Graduate Students may be in need and use the service than Undergraduate. How funding would be divided would have to be an ongoing consideration.
- Is there potential to overlap job descriptions between the Ombudsperson and Advocate? Would two people have the potential to cause more confusion, referrals and overlap? There may be some overlap. Clarity needs to be made that this position is clearly to be partisan, on the side of students.
- Caution against overemphasizing the differences between undergraduates and graduate students. A complicated graduate student issue that is resolved, creates a better environment for undergraduates currently and moving into graduate studies. The program is an opportunity for solidarity for all students, bridging undergraduates and graduates.
- Asked: are there any circumstances that a partnership with UVSS might end badly for GSS? It is hard to imagine a situation that was so bad that incorporates all of the advocate’s time and nothing left for grad students. And to imagine an issue that bad that did not have implications for grad students. A clause could be in the agreement to always reserve the Advocate’s time for each partner.
- If there is a line up down the hall then this provides evidence of the need of the service and would indicate the need the increase the position.

Motion: RESOLVED to endorse the student advocate programme proposal as put forward by the Student Affairs Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED to support Student Affairs Committee as they proceed in the creation of a student advocate role with the input and assistance of other relevant GRC committees.

M/S BALTWIN/GRUHLKE

CARRIED.
I. DISCUSSION: STUDENT SURVEY FROM STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (DORNAN)

The Student Affairs Committee has spent time producing a draft survey, which they hope to launch in the coming month. This survey, in conjunction with the listening campaign, will help the GSS identify key issues facing graduate students and provide data that can be taken forward to support policy changes at multiple levels of the university. The data can be used to inform future organizational decisions and strategic planning.

**Material:** Draft survey circulated to members attending.

Draft was put together reviewing many of the departmental surveys currently underway.

Feedback sought from GRC on the broad question areas, not question style, consistency.

Hoping to get UVic’s help to use Fluid Survey and distribute via email.

**Comments:**

- To decrease the vagueness for the commitment to confidentiality and data security.
- To include space for people to identify as indigenous who might not see themselves as domestic or international.
- Balance between gathering data that is easy to analyse vs. allowing respondents to provide details.

GRC reps were invited to fill out the draft survey, without a name, and leave the responses as a test pilot of the survey and what it yields.

J. DISCUSSION: MAKE TRANSIT WORK COALITION SURVEY

OSBORNE provided an update on the Make Transit Work survey, with potential for release the week of the SAGM. Survey was circulated in hard copy to GRC members in attendance. Intention was to have it available for people in hard copy and by email.

**Material (link): Updated Draft BC Transit Survey for Graduate Students**

*Motion: RESOLVED to endorse the Make Transit Work Coalition survey with minor amendments.*

*M/S KERNAN/GOULD

*CARRIED.*

K. UPDATE & DECISION: (ANDERSON AND ESO)

At the January GRC, Councilors ANDERSON and ESO were empowered to meet with UVic Libraries to pursue discussions for promoting graduate student research, and ESO has since then reported that the conversation with UVic Libraries went extremely well. The Librarian assigned felt a project such as graduate student journal was very feasible and could take advantage of capturing graduate student content that already exists such as the 3-minute thesis presentations. As a result, Councilors ANDERSON and ESO would like to go on as representatives of the GSS in further conversations with other potential allies to further explore the idea of a digital anthology that profiles a variety of graduate student work. Such groups and organizations include, but are not limited to, The Arbutus Journal, existing graduate journals, and the Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI).
As well, Councilors ANDERSON and ESO hope to establish an informal working group with representation from members of each faculty represented within the GRC. Such a group would lend greater strength to the conversations being had with UVic Libraries and other ally groups, while also ensuring parity among forms of graduate student research being highlighted. Moreover, UVic Libraries is currently seeking input from graduate students for their own strategic planning purposes, so such an informal working group would be well-positioned to provide useful input. Dependent on the success and vision of this group’s work in the coming month, a formal Ad Hoc committee may be proposed at the March GRC meeting.

The motion passed at the January meeting on this work is as follows, “BIRT until the end of the 2017-2018 GRC term, the GSS ratify David Eso and Lee Anderson as its representatives in approaching UVic Libraries for collaboration on projects that would promote graduate student work and the value of open-access publishing.” The motion proposed below is meant to expand on the original motion and allow the establishment of a working group to get started on a graduate student journal, especially from disciplines other than Humanities (Eso and Anderson are both Humanities), and would be open to all graduate studies not just GRC representatives.

Motion: RESOLVED to appoint David Eso and Lee Anderson as representatives to approach relevant groups, organizations, and units on campus for collaboration on projects that would promote graduate student work and the value of open access publishing until the end of the 2017-2018 GRC term.

M/S HORAN/DORNAN

Discussion on the Motion: concern that it might set a precedent of giving GRC reps a very wide scope without a lot of parameters.

Motion to amend: strike “until the end of the 2017-2018 GRC term” and replace with “until such time that terms of reference for a working group can be brought forward to the GRC”.

M/S GRULKE/ESO

AMENDMENT CARRIED

MOTION CARRIED

L. DISCUSSION & DECISION: EXTERNAL GRC APPOINTMENTS (MUNSIL AND KIM)

MUNSIL and KIM asked GRC for their input on the creation of standing seats on the GRC for equity-seeking groups. This conversation comes from KIM’s relationship-building with the Native Students’ Union and their desire to have greater graduate student involvement in governance, and MUNSIL’s conversations with the Society for Students with Disabilities while serving on the Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodation and Access for Students with Disabilities. (n.b. There are currently 42 PhD students, 107 Master’s students, and 51 law students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning, and the total of ~200 students has been about the same for the last few years.)

KIM discussed the precedent of having CUPE 4163 being a voting member at the GRC, who is not associated with a particular academic department.
Motion: RESOLVED to assign the task of providing recommendations on the creation of standing GRC seats for equity-seeking groups to the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED the Bylaw and Policy Committee will bring these recommendations back to GRC for discussion during the summer 2018 term.

M/S BALDWIN/WILLIAMS

Discussion: Caution expressed from GRUELKE with experience in opening up a Board to move away from academic department representation to the equity. It maybe a larger discussion and larger implications than first anticipated. Offer to assist after April.

Motion to amend resolved to strike “these recommendations” and replace with “updates on the committee’s work”.

M/S HORAN/GRUHLKE

AMENDMENT CARRIED

MOTION CARRIED.

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATES

Next meeting: March 20th, 2018

SAGM: March 27th, 2018 in the Grad House with food provided

BIKE RACK (NOTICE OF MOTION)

1. TRC Workshop
2. Long-Term Strategic Plan
3. SAGM Items – DEADLINE CLOSED FOR BYLAW CHANGES. FORWARD ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY
4. 2018-2019 GSS Board Election Results

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

M/S HAN/HOHENDORF

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Approved, Chair

Approved, Executive Director

KLP/SK/sc

February 27th, 2018