University of Victoria Graduate Students’ Society
Graduate Representative Council
MARCH 20TH, 2018
MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm with KIM in the Chair, making the acknowledgement that the GSS convenes on the traditional Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples.

Present:

Anthropology: Maya Cowan
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Emily Koide
Biology: Malcolm Cowan
Community Development: Mike Butler (ONLINE)
CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst
Economics: Tien-Yun (Arielle) Shih
Education Curriculum and Instruction: Beth Tuijnstra
Ed Psych & Leadership: Cortney Baldwin (ONLINE)
Environmental Studies: Tanya Tran
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
Philosophy: Gennady McCracken
Physics and Astronomy: Maan Hani
Psychology: Myles Maillet
Sociology: Elaine Laberge

Visual Arts: Marina DiMaio
Writing: Janet Munsil

Guests:

Electrical Engineering: Mahsa Mahtab
History/UVSS Staff: Kelly Clark
SEOS: Sandy McLachlan
Theatre Studies: Arash Isapour

GSS Executive and Staff:

Chair: Susan Kim
Director of Communications: Quirin Hohendorf
Director of Finance: Olga Gould
Director of Student Affairs: Gillian Dornan
Director of Services: Jessica Wyatt

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

Regrets:

English: David Eso
Political Science: Ryan Broe and Stephanie Gruhlke
Public Administration: Leila Bautista
Social Dimensions of Health: Lindsay Shaw
Social Work: Madeleine Harber
Neuroscience: Chad Williams

Absent:

Art History and Visual Studies: Lindsay Kalsla
Business Administration: Harleen Randhawa
Civil Engineering: Pejman Azarsa
Electrical & Computer Engineering: Priyani Vanaparthi
Exercise Science, Physical & Health Ed: Stephen Luehr
French: Emma Kwasnica and Regina Grishko
Law: Ngozi Nwoko
STANDING ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: RESOLVED to approve the agenda as presented.
M/S HORAN/M. COWAN

Discussion: CUPE AGM begins at 5:45 pm. Many GRC are members of CUPE 4163 and would like to attend.

Friendly Amendment: RESOLVED to move items containing motions to the front of the agenda.
M/S HOHENDORF/HANI
CARRIED as amended.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion: RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2018 GRC as presented, with minor corrections.
APPROVED by consent.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
None.

ASSIGNMENT OF TIMEKEEPER
HOHENDORF volunteered.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KIM ceded the floor to UVSS Communications staffer (and incoming GSS Director of Communications), Kelly Clark. CLARK spoke to the issue of the upcoming tuition fee increase for International Undergraduate Students. The Board of Governors will be formalizing a decision March 27th to increase tuition by 20% instead of the 4% previously indicated. Only current international undergraduate students will be grandparented with a fee increase of 4%. CLARK reported that there is no designated need for this money. The rationale presented so far is that this increase is in keeping with tuition rates at other schools. CLARK referred GRC reps to the ‘UVic DON’T CLOSE THE DOOR ON EDUCATION’ Facebook page. CLARK requested support for the UVSS initiatives to protest this decision.

KIM took the floor and provided the following report:

Adding to the presentation by CLARK, on March 27th the Board of Governors along with increasing International undergraduate tuition for new students by 20% (except for the Bachelor of Commerce program which will increase 6%), will also be approving Masters of Global Administration tuition to increase 20%, and Masters of Global Business will to increase 14%, because of their status as professional degrees. KIM strongly encouraged all GSS members to act in solidarity with UVSS.
The University continues to seek input on the legalization of marijuana and what that might look like on campus. They are also looking for input on an off-campus risk activity management policy.

Strategic Enrollment Management process has kicked off. It is a part of the University-wide process that involves an external consulting company from the United States. Different committees are tasked with determining the real processes by which senior-level administrators’ goals for the university can be reached, or – as the meeting with the Graduate Committee for the SEM process indicates – cannot be reached. Impression is that focusing on graduate student enrolment falls to address the needs of students already enrolled, and most committee members feel the same way.

The Department of Sociology had a Lunch and Learn event where students, faculty, and staff from around the campus discussed shifting the department culture. It seems to have created a buzz, as the Martlet has reached out, and several students were debriefing at Side Project after the event.

There will be an election for a new Director of Finance. Any GSS member can submit their intent to run to ANISMAN before March 27th, or can self-nominate from the floor at the SAGM.

MEETING BUSINESS

UPDATE & DECISION: HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN

CHAPPEL provided a general update from the plan negotiations and what to expect at the SAGM. Previously it was hoped the potential increase could be contained to $5. It is now known that a larger increase will be needed to keep all current benefits. May 14th is the deadline to give UVic notice of fee changes for fall registrations. Therefore a GSS member referenda will need to be held in April.

KIM presented the values discussed at the last GRC meeting to guide decisions in designing plan options:

To Preserve:

- Things that maintain overall health and wellness
- Basic dental hygiene and cleaning
- Stability (for the purpose of long term costing)
- “All in this Together” attitude

To Consider:

- What is actually accessible for GSS members (access of services)
- How dependents may be affected (different issues for children vs. graduate students)
- What provides peace of mind for people to know is there in an emergency
- Collective decisions, but not to where someone’s life is endangered at the cost of collectivity.

Discussion: are there any services that are not being used that could be cut? The phone-in consultation service was not used, and was dropped last year already.

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS adopt the values presented to inform decisions on the graduate student extended health and dental plan.

M/S HORAN/HANI
CARRIED

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UPDATE & DECISION: LISTENING CAMPAIGN

KIM provided an update and suggested timeline for the GSS to begin a Listening Campaign, as part of GVAT. BALDWIN spoke to her involvement with GVAT to date. BALDWIN highly recommended the training as an avenue to help build relationships within GSS and with other groups in Victoria.

Discussion on membership dues: Could student fees go up by joining GVAT? It would be referred to the Finance Committee to decide on the best way to finance membership. The Executive can approve of financing something up to $2000, after that it must be approved by the GRC. An amount of $1/member or 1% of operating budget would have to go to referenda. GVAT’s minimum annual dues are $700 per year.

Reference (link): GVAT Dues Structure
Reference (link): GVAT Funding Breakdown

Discussion on what is gained from membership:

- The training is excellent for anyone doing governance work, and on issues requiring an alliance. Access to the training and support is contingent on membership.
- Graduate students would be at the community tables where graduate students issues are being addressed e.g. housing.
- It may be that direct benefits attribute to GSS and GRC reps, but the benefits to all graduate students in general, may be indirect.

TASK: GRC reps requested that the Executive provide a document that clearly outlines what tangible benefits member organizations of GVAT have received, and whether membership is annual or continuing.

Draft Motion Presented: BIRT the GSS join the Greater Victoria Acting Together coalition as a partner organization.
BIFRT the Finance Committee provide recommendations for the most feasible membership dues model.

Motion: RESOLVED to table the Draft Motion until more information can be provided.
M/S TRAN/OSBORNE
CARRIED

C. DECISION: STUDENT AFFAIRS SURVEY

DORNAN presented an updated version of the Student Affairs Committee survey, with the last GRC feedback incorporated.

Reference (link): GSS Survey - FINAL

Discussion: GRC reps would still like to provide input. Housing was raised as an issue to be included. DORNAN will still accept minor changes until March 23rd. Student Affairs would like confirmation to proceed with circulating the survey online in the coming months.

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS adopt the Student Affairs Committee survey for circulation.
M/S M. COWAN/HOHENDORF
CARRIED
D. DECISION: MOTIONS FROM STIPEND REVIEW COMMITTEE

KIM, GOULD, and DORRAN recused themselves. HOHENDORF accepted the Chair position.

Reference (link): 2017 Summer Exec Reports
Reference (link): Sept 2017-March 2018 Exec Reports

HORAN (COWAN and DIMAIO) presented on the process for the Stipend Review Committee to formulate its recommendations. The rationale for stipend top-ups this year include:

- DORRAN’s work on student advocacy has greatly increased, she provided the stabilization and continuity spanning the Executive over two years, and has done great work with the Student Affairs Committee.
- GOULD stepped in as Director of Finance and immediately had to deal with the Grad House renovation. She also investigated how GSS runs as a society and began the preliminary work toward a code of conduct.
- KIM has been outstanding and doing far more than just what is required for GSS internally, but has been growing our relationships around UVic and in Victoria. This month alone has put in over 60 hours for the GSS. Her work is described as: “All kick ass, no half ass.”

Motion: RESOLVED that the GRC award a stipend top-up of $100 to Gillian Dorman.
M/S TUISTRA/KOIDE
CARRIED

Motion: RESOLVED that the GRC award a stipend top-up of $100 to Olga Gould.
M/S ANDERSON/SOMMERFELD
CARRIED

Motion: RESOLVED that the GRC award a stipend top-up of $300 to Susan Kim.
M/S TRAN/HORAN
CARRIED

E. 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.

F. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committees:

Student Affairs: DORRAN reported that the Committee was working on the survey as presented.

Events: WYATT reported that a new round of Events have begun. Hike has been completed. Trivia is back, as is Wednesday Coffee. Pub crawl, scavenger hunt, and breakfast are upcoming.

Finance: GOULD reported that Finance Committee has had extra meetings to work on the draft budget.

Bylaw and Policy: BALDWIN reported that work was done on the Declaration of Intent, to be presented.
Communications: HOHENDORF reported that the Committee brainstormed alternatives for the student planner. The Committee was under the belief that no one uses the planner, however, contrary views are now coming forward.

Appeals: GOULD reported that the Committee has not met since the last GRC. DORNAN reported on the resignation of the Ombudsperson. An interim will be hired, and work will be done redesigning the position.

Open Floor:

Make Transit Work: OSBORNE reported that the surveys have generated a fair bit of information. Now looking for a receptive audience.

G. UPDATE: 2018-2019 BUDGET

GOULD provided an update on major budget highlights since the last GRC meeting.

Reference (link): 2018-2019 Budget for SAGM - DRAFT

Forecasting is based on the past 4 years for revenue areas, and expenses. The Committee is also examining cash flow as well as balance sheet totals to forecast contingency fund amounts etc.

For the GSS, risk areas continue to be:

- The new food operation – upcoming revenue cannot be accurately predicted based on one month’s operation. As well, any increased revenue is accompanied by increased costs e.g. more hiring, more wear and tear on equipment etc.
- Renovation loan – previously determined for 7 years, but forecasting a 5 year repayment plan.
- Health and dental plan – will have more detailed information in the next couple of days. Also, this year GSS will have to hire a data consultant to help with the reconciliation.

Discussion on how Restaurant revenue forecasting is done: Used a number of forecasting models. Operational targets are set higher as goals to aim for. These are not used in forecasting. Also tried to break out Restaurant and Side Project. Side Project has lower costs, but higher potential revenue. It has not been earning as hoped. The Restaurant has higher input costs, but it has been earning better than hoped. The Finance Committee tried to be as conservative as possible in estimates and are keeping an operational fund contingency as the first year is a high risk year.

Straw poll was taken: do graduate students feel the ownership of Side Project? Will they walk the extra steps to purchase coffee at GSS? Recognition that GRC reps could do more to generate this feeling of ownership.

H. DISCUSSION: BYLAW & POLICY DECLARATION OF INTENT

KIM presented the “Declaration of Intent”, for discussion. This document came out of the discussion regarding a Code of Conduct. The purpose is to provide a set of expectations for all GSS volunteers, Graduate Representative Councillors, and the Executive Board to uphold when participating in all GSS activities, e.g. behaviour on social events, and how to deal with conflict at meetings, committees etc.

Reference (link): GSS Declaration of Intent – DRAFT

Discussion: Would there be consequences for GSS members who did not adhere? Response: these are intended as guidelines to make the discussion about behaviour and expectations visible. The suggestion was made to use ‘anti-colonial’ as a better value descriptor than decolonization.
The Bylaw and Policy Committee will continue working on this and have it merge into the Code of Conduct.

I. THANK YOU!

Thanks from the outgoing Executive Board to the GRC members for all of their Committee work, and meeting work providing support and feedback.

Reference (link): Thank You Doge

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATES

- Semi-Annual General Meeting; Grad House Restaurant, next Tuesday the 27th, 5 PM.
- Summer GRC meetings; Halpern 108; TBD by the incoming Board.
- Trivia night, tomorrow, Wednesday. HORAN to host.
- Pub crawl this weekend.
- Breakfast April 4th. Tickets at the GSS Office.
- Scavenger Hunt April 7th.

BIKE RACK

- Standing GRC-NSU Seat (by August 2018 from Bylaw & Policy)
- TRC Workshop – recommended for new GRC reps
- Graduate Funding Presentation from VP Academic & Faculty of Graduate Studies (tentative) to discuss how the grad funding model is impacting the Faculty of Humanities.

NOTICES OF MOTION

- Notice of Motion: Declaration of Intent (from Bylaw & Policy)

ADJOURNMENT

Special gavel privileges to DORNAN and ANDERSON.

Motion: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.
M/S DORNAN/GOULD
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Approved, Chair

Approved, Executive Director

KLP/Jh/SK

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