University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 24TH, 2018, 5-7 PM

Department Reps Present:

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Emily Koide
Biology: Malcolm Cowan
Chemistry: Charlotte Dewar
CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst
Ed Psychology & Leadership: Cortney Baldwin ONLINE
English: DELEGATE: Justin Foran
Environmental Studies: Tanya Tran
Exercise Science, Physical & Health Ed: Stephen Luehr ONLINE
Linguistics: Adar Anisman
Mathematics and Statistics: Joseph Horan
Neuroscience: Chad Williams
Philosophy: Gennady McCracken
Physics and Astronomy: Maan Hani
Political Science: Stephanie Gruhlke
Social Dimensions of Health: Lindsay Shaw

Sociology: Renay Maurice
Visual Arts: Marina DiMalo
Writing: Janet Munsil

GSS Executive and Staff:

Chair: Arash Isapour
Director of Communications: Kelly Clark
Director of Finance: Carla Osborne
Director of Student Affairs: Esmaeil Rahimi
Executive Director: Stacy Chappel
Office Coordinator, Governance: Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

Director of Services: Mahsa Mahtab
Anthropology: Maya Cowan
Community Development: Mike Butler
Education Curriculum and Instruction: Beth Tuinstra
Mechanical Engineering: Markus Sommerfeld

Absent:

Art History and Visual Studies: Lindsay Kaisla
Business Administration: Harleen Randhawa
Civil Engineering: Pejman Azarsa
Economics: Tien-Yun (Arielle) Shih
Electrical & Computer Engineering: Priyani Vanaparthi
Germanic and Slavic Studies: Tessa Coutu
Law: Ngozi Nwoko
Psychology: Myles Maillet
Public Administration: Leila Bautista
Social Work: Madeleine Harber

DINNER AND NETWORKING - 4:30 PM
CALL TO ORDER

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm with ISAPOUR in the Chair, making the acknowledgement that the GSS convenes on the traditional Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples.

Quorum Achieved: YES.

STANDING ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: RESOLVED that the agenda was approved as presented.

M/S GRUHLKE/OSBORNE
CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion: RESOLVED that the Minutes from the March 20, 2018 Grad Council meeting were approved as presented.

M/S TRAN/FORAN
CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

MEETING BUSINESS

A. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

ISAPOUR introduced himself as the newly elected Chair of GSS, and expressed his interest in working on issues important to all Grad Students. ISAPOUR also introduced the other newly elected Executive members.

B. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Members who would like their update recorded in the official minutes are invited to email their reports to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion.
C. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Motion: RESOLVED to accept the resignation of Marina DiMaio, Visual Studies, from the GRC and Stipend Review Committee, as of April 30, 2018, with appreciation for contributions made.
M/S TRAN/HORAN
CARRIED

Charlotte DEWAR, newly elected from Chemistry was welcomed.

Motion: RESOLVED to elect Charlotte DEWAR to the Student Affairs Committee.
M/S FORAN/HANI
CARRIED

D. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committees of GRC

Events: TRAN reported that the scavenger hunt was cancelled due to lack of interest. The brewery tour was successful. The Committee is struggling to meet in May. There will be a trivia night in May.

Student Affairs: GRUHLKE reported that the grad student survey is getting a good response but really want to make a last push to reach as many students as possible.

Open Floor:

Stipend Review: HORAN reported that the Stipend Review Committee is in need of a new committee member due to DIMAIO's resignation. He briefly explained the purpose and time commitment required.

Motion: RESOLVED that Justin FORAN, English delegate, be elected to the Stipend Review Committee.
M/S CLARK/GRUHLKE
CARRIED

Ad Hoc Library: FORAN reported the ad hoc committee on libraries had not met recently, but continued to be interested in working with the library to promote open source publishing.

Electoral: ANISMAN reminded the GRC that 5% of the GSS membership needs to vote in the upcoming referenda for the results to be valid.

E. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TUITION INCREASE

Arash reported that the Uvic Board of Governors voted to substantially increase undergrad student tuition again for the 2018-19 budget. The increase for most graduate programs is 4%, but for MBA, MGB and undergraduates the increase is 20%.
The stated position of the Board of Governors is that the money from the 20% increase will go to increased support for students, but so far no program or specifics of the money transfer to support services has been announced.

Discussion included:

CLARK reported that the usual argument for differential tuition fees is usually that Canadians pay the extra tuition costs through lifetime income taxes. However, when the UVSS directly asked about use for the money from increased fees UVic responded that the additional money was being generated to be used to increase UVic’s profile in the international community.

CHAPPLE noted that at the time the motion was discussed, Board of Governors stated that the tuition fee increase was part of a larger motion and without the increase approved, the Indigenous Justice program would not be funded.

MAURICE reported from the CUPE AGM meeting that TA positions were being cut back and the CUPE 4163 collective agreement determines structure of pay. Therefore the argument cannot be made that the money from the increased fees were going to TAs for additional student support.

ANISMAN noted that bursaries are becoming harder to access, not easier, so the increased tuition fee money is not going to bursaries.

FORAN asked if GSS could submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to ask for the documents showing the rationale and plan for where the additional money collected from international students will be directed for 2018/19. FORAN briefly described the FOI process, what can be requested, and usual timeframes.

Motion: RESOLVED to direct the GSS Chair be directed to file a Freedom of Information request in regards to any and all communication related to the Board of Governors’ decision to increase international student tuition.
M/S GRIHLKE/HANI
CARRIED

Motion: RESOLVED that the Grad Council opposes the increase in international student tuition approved by the UVIC Board of Governors in the 2018-19 UVIC Budget framework.

M/S HORAN/WILLIAMS
CARRIED. UNANIMOUS.

Motion: RESOLVED that Grad Councillors petition their department graduate councils and undergraduate course unions at the earliest opportunity to pass motions opposing the increase in international student tuition approved by the UVIC Board of Governors in the 2018-19 UVIC Budget Framework.

M/S HANI/WILLIAMS
CARRIED

Discussion: Petition refers to each GRC rep making a formal request to their home department student councils to pass a similar motion, and notify the GSS with the results. If there is no formal council, then any group of students can write a letter saying, e.g. "we are 5 of 7 grad students in X department and we oppose the international student tuition fee increase".
Request from reps that the Chair or designate prepare a one-page brief for GRC reps as to how to talk about this issue and provide a draft letter or motion to use as a template.

Discussion: Is it within our purview to approach the undergrad councils in home departments? Option to go to UVSS to request/announce our intent, but also for GRC reps to use personal connections if available.

Request that the Chair confirm UVSS support for this action before May 1st.

Discussion: A GRC rep who feels they are in conflict of interest can request the Chair to petition their department instead.

Motion: RESOLVED that the Grad Council strike an ad hoc committee with the following Terms of Reference:

Members: as selected by the GRC

Task: to develop a strategy for the GSS response to UVic’s increases in international student tuition and present at the next GRC.

M/S MAURICE/OSBORNE
CARRIED

Members who volunteered for this Ad Hoc Committee include: ISAPOUR, RAHIMI, BROE, OSBORNE, CLARK, HENDERSON (Political Science) and FORAN (English)

F. BC GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

ISAPOUR reported on a conference call held with the Ministry of Advanced Education April 24th. Prior to the meeting ISAPOUR contacted the other BC grad student societies to reconfirm commitment to joint proposal developed in 2013.

From the call, collective action with all BC universities was suggested including, a:

- Joint press release amongst main BC universities suggested on day of announcement
- Joint statement be made affirming principles of equal distribution of money across disciplines

CHAPPEL noted that the GSS first began work on this issue in 2009, and this is the culmination of many years of work and lobbying by many GRCs and Executive.

ISAPOUR and CHAPPEL committed to keeping GRC members informed as this initiative evolves.

G. HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN REFERENDUM

CHAPPEL: Reminder to all GRC members to vote and to encourage department members to vote.

Wednesday April 25 - Friday April 27 at: https://webvote.uvic.ca
H. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OSBORNE reported that members have been wondering how to operationalize the motion passed at the SAGM that land acknowledgements at GSS meetings be meaningful. GRC members were asked to brainstorm ideas, which included:

- Could the Executive, or other GRC members rotate with someone new at the beginning of each meeting talking about what land acknowledgement means to them.
- Some individuals have received excellent training through UVic on how land acknowledgements might be incorporated.
- The GRC could consult with the First Peoples House, and/or the Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement, but only after that GRC members do some basic work and not burden others with finding our solution.
- A preference was expressed that guidelines (vs. templates to script people’s statements) be provided for land acknowledgement statements.
- The potential for an internal GSS reading group to learn more about indigenous history in general to put the land acknowledgement into context was raised.
- More discussion time being needed, possibly a working group rather than coming to a quick decision.

Consensus was to request all GRC reps, as part of their department reports in the next GRC meeting, say something about the traditional territory they are ‘from’. OSBORNE offered to assist anyone with maps.

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATES

No GRC meeting will be held in May. Next meeting: June 26.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

M/S SHAW/KELLY
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Approved, Chair

Approved, Executive Director

KLP/jh/sc