

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 27TH, 2018, 5-7 PM**Council Members Present:****Anthropology:** Maya Cowan**Art History & Visual Studies:** Anahita Ranjbar**Biochemistry & Microbiology:** Jacob Imbery**Biology:** Keyrian Le Gratiet**Business:** Kathryn Jeffrey**Civil Engineering:** Kamran Tayyebi**Economics:** Ryley Erickson**Educational Psychology & Leadership****Studies:** Theresa Wanninger**Electrical & Computer Engineering:**

Muniyat Rafa

English: Janice Niemann, Kirsten

Schuhmacher

Environmental Studies: Tanya Tran**French:** Rachel Corwin**Germanic & Slavic Studies:** Jae Hyun

Kim

Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs:

Anthony Gavin

Law: Chinwendu Nwanisobi**Mathematics & Statistics:** Joseph Horan**Mechanical Engineering:** Rad Haghi**Neuroscience:** Chad Williams**Physics & Astronomy:** Maan Hani**Political Science:** Franziska Fischer**Psychology:** Tom Ferguson**Public Administration:** Charlie White**Public Health & Social Policy:** Anabelle

Bernard Fournier

Social Determinants of Health: Matty

Cervantes

Social Work: Sarah Krahn (ONLINE)**CUPE 4163:** Mitchell Haslehurst**GSS Executive and Staff Present:****Chair:** Arash Isapour**Director of Communications:** Kelly Clark**Director of Finance:** Carla Osborne**Director of Student Affairs:** Esmaeil Rahimi**Director of Services:** Mahsa Mahtab**Executive Director:** Stacy Chappel**Guest Present: Annette Fraser, Ombudsperson****Regrets Received:****Computer Science:** Olga Gould**Education Curriculum & Instruction:**

Meaghan Storey

Germanic & Slavic Studies: Lauren Thompson**History:** Sydney Fuhrman**Public Administration:** Grace Montemurro**Theatre:** Jemma Llewellyn**Absent:****Earth & Ocean Sciences:** Christiaan Laureijs

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm with ISAPOUR in the chair, making the following acknowledgement:

We acknowledge and respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the Graduate Students' Society exists, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land continue to this day.

CHAPPEL recommended the language learning site, firstvoices.com. She attempted a welcoming phrase in the local WSÁNEĆ people's SENĆOŦEN language: "ENÁ NUILEŦ I., EMET SW SIÁM", or "come and take a seat".

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Resolved to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S COWAN/WILLIAMS

CARRIED

GUEST: ANNETTE FRASER, OMBUDSPERSON

ISAPOUR welcomed Annette Fraser, the new Ombudsperson, to the meeting.

Fraser introduced herself and circulated some materials about the Ombudsperson's office and its services. As an alumni of UVIC's Masters of Dispute Resolution program, Fraser is familiar with the graduate student experience.

Fraser explained that Ombudsperson offices operate on three important principles: independence, impartiality, confidentiality. As an independent and impartial office, her office is not a representative of the university, nor is she an advocate for students. The office focusses on fairness of processes and decisions. Fraser meets with students to discuss various issues that concern them. Information shared in her meetings is confidential unless she is given permission to mediate on behalf of the party.

The ombudspersons office can also initiate investigations where she finds there is a systemic unfairness at play. The result sought in an investigation is often an improvement to policy. For graduate students, for example, the focus is often on supervisory or committee work, or progress to completion. The previous Ombudsperson was consulted on the development of the new Supervision Policy. Now, as the new policy is implemented, Fraser will be interested to hear from students about how the new policy is working.

Fraser invited questions from GRC members.

TRAN asked about the difference between the Ombudsperson and grad advisors. Fraser said grad advisors are responsible for advising students on program requirements etc., while the Ombudsperson office is not in a role to guide students in their academic requirements. Instead the Ombudsperson could advise on how a student could address a problem they are facing, or assist in mediating or finding a remedy.

HORAN asked if there were any outstanding projects from her predecessor. Fraser responded that one ongoing process is a review of the Request for Academic Concession process, and how requests proceed for students who register for the Centre for Accessible Learning. Questions that are being considered in the review include how much a student needs to disclose about their personal situation in order to allow the decision maker to decide on appropriate accommodations. The recommendations are now under review with the VP Academic Planning.

HANI asked if the Ombudsperson is consulted prior to UVic policy changes. Fraser said she tries to be involved in committees related to university policy, attending meetings without a vote, as her predecessor did, and speaks to administrative fairness. It is not always standard that the Ombudsperson is invited, but she has been welcomed.

ISAPOUR asked if the Ombudsperson office could address UVIC on behalf of groups of students. Fraser said she always gathers her own stats and communicates through her annual report, as well as through bi-semester meetings with AVP Student Affairs and UVIC's Student Affairs Executive Council.

ISAPOUR asked if she can intervene when a student finds it hard to communicate with the people involved in their situation. Fraser said the Ombudsperson cannot act on behalf of a student (as she is impartial) but she can facilitate and try to assist with communication. She might also investigate if she is concerned about fairness.

HANI asked if the Ombudsperson is open to consultations that are not arising from a student case, such as advising on a review of department graduate student handbook. Fraser said that yes, she is happy to advise. She said she is a jack of all trades and comfortable talking to students about fairness in a wide variety of processes. For example, she often talks to students about residential tenancy rights.

ISAPOUR thanked Fraser for her presentation.

STANDING ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*Motion: RESOLVED to approve the minutes from the October 16th, 2018 GRC with minor corrections.
M/S RAHIMI/HORAN
CARRIED*

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

ASSIGNMENT OF TIMEKEEPER

TRAN and COWAN volunteered as timekeepers.

REPORTS

1. Executive Board Reports

ISAPOUR reminded the members that Executive Board reports are on the Connect site for their review. Feel free to bring questions to GRC as needed.

2. Chair's Remarks

There is an update/change for our Director of Student Affairs, with a co-op position in January. RAHIMI reported he has a new co-op job in January 2019 in Vancouver. He is planning to maintain his duties, but is working on a strategy to address the logistics and issues arising from not being in Victoria.

HAGHI asked how realistic it is to manage the work of Student Affairs with learning and doing a new full time job. RAHIMI said has a plan, and accepts the responsibility to manage his work hours in order to participate in GSS meetings and fulfill his duties. In terms of a specific schedule RAHIMI is willing to present this at the next GRC.

HAGHI commented that seeing a specific plan and schedule would help, but asked about alternatives if the plan is not viable. RAHIMI said other options included his resignation, taking a leave, trying to travel back and forth between the two cities, or having someone assist. However, RAHIMI emphasized that he felt most of his work is done by email, except when chairing meetings.

CHAPPEL briefly described the process of mid term elections or unpaid leave for any director.

HANI noted that responsibilities to the GRC can be flexible, but expressed concern about UVic external committees and meetings. RAHIMI said most committees are done by end of December. The most important are the GSS Executive and UVic Operational Relations which he plans on joining remotely. For the Ombudsperson Advisory Committee RAHIMI will need to discuss options with the committee chair.

WILLIAMS reported that with the Student Affairs Committee is happy to work with RAHIMI to accommodate.

HORAN said he has concerns but is happy to hear RAHIMI is committed to the work, and believes he is sincere.

MAHTAB asked RAHIMI to follow up by bringing a written, detailed plan, describing how each responsibility will be addressed, to the December GRC meeting.

3. Executive Director Report

CHAPPEL referred to her written briefing on Connect. *Reference document: "2018-11-27 ED report to GRC.pdf"*

CHAPPEL noted that current risk areas for the GSS are the difficulty in finding kitchen staff, the impact of the drop in enrolment on membership revenue, and managing the re-launch of the restaurant. She noted that the staff have been instrumental in navigating these difficulties.

CHAPPEL reported the GSS had achieved much in the first half of this term, including:

- Issuing \$7,450 in department grants;
- Upgrading the point of sale system one year early;
- Completing collective bargaining; and,
- Updating the health plan billing reconciliation system.

Upcoming operational priorities include completing the request for proposals (RFP) process for health and dental insurance brokerage services, a staff review of the GSS policy manual, and the review of elections processes.

GRC AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Grace Montemurro to the 2018-19 Student Affairs Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Sarah Krahn to the 2018-19 Communications Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Kathryn Jeffrey to the 2018-19 Bylaw and Policy Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Christiaan Laureijs to the 2018-19 Stipend Review Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Rad Haghi to the 2018-19 Bylaw and Policy Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to release Muniyat Rafa from the Appeals Committee and elect her to the 2018-19 Student Affairs Committee;

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Kamran Tayyebi to the 2018-19 Communications Committee; and,

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Keyrian Le Gratiet to the 2018-19 Student Affairs Committee.

M/S HANI/WANNINGER

CARRIED

UVIC COMMITTEES

ISAPOUR referred members to the UVIC committee vacancies appended to the agenda, and called for nominees.

1. Senate Standing Committee on Continuing Studies

No candidates.

2. Bookstore Advisory Committee

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Carla Osborne to the Bookstore Advisory Committee.

M/S HORAN/HANI

CARRIED

3. Childcare Services

No candidates.

4. Grad Fee Reductions Appeals Committee

No candidates.

5. Student Mental Health Steering Committee

No candidates.

6. Vikes Nation Steering Committee

MOTION: RESOVLED to election Kamren Tayyebi to the Vikes Nation Steering Committee.

M/S TRAN/WILLIAMS

CARRIED

7. Search Committee, Dean of Science

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Maan Hani as graduate student representative to Dean of Science Search Committee, and

FURTHER RESOLVED to elect Mitch Haslehurst as the alternate graduate student representative to the Dean of Science Search Committee.

M/S WILLIAMS/RAHIMI

CARRIED

8. Review Committee, Dean of Social Sciences

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Maya Cowan as the graduate student representative to the Review Committee for the Dean of Social Sciences.

M/S GAVIN/MAHTAB

CARRIED

9. Faculty of Social Sciences Awards and Recognition Committee

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Ryley Erickson to serve as the graduate student representative on the Faculty of Social Sciences Awards and Recognition Committee.

M/S HANI/WANNINGER

CARRIED

GRC COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Appeals Committee

MAHTAB reported the committee has completed its training.

2. Event Committee

MAHTAB reported on the committee meeting in October, and new ideas are welcome for events.

3. Bylaw and Policy Committee

CERVANTES noted she circulated a questionnaire regarding department election processes at the beginning of the meeting. This data will inform the new GSS policy on GRC rep department elections.

4. Communications Committee

CLARK reported the committee has worked on streamlining our social media on a new platform and on the podcast.

HORAN asked what happened with CFUV regarding a way to work together on the podcast ideas. CLARK reported he had reached out but not yet heard back from CFUV.

5. Finance Committee

OSBORNE reported that the committee meeting provided an orientation to new members and this led to a fruitful discussion about the role of the committee and the financial statements. There was also discussion of risk areas, which were also covered in the Executive Director's report earlier.

6. Student Affairs

RAHIMI reported that the committee is working on the proposal to create a campus student advocate. The Student Affairs survey is in progress to becoming a written report.

7. Ad Hoc Committee on International Tuition Fee Hikes

RAHIMI reported that this committee will be using "Slack", a project management system for groups working on projects remotely, and he invited any GRC or GSS member to join. An FOI request has been submitted to UVIC as per direction from GRC. RAHIMI also reported that he consulted with his counterpoint at SFU.

HANI offered to help orient anyone who wants to join, to Slack.

COWAN noted that domestic students should also join the committee.

ISAPOUR reported he spoke with the Graduate Student rep on the BOG about the process for submitting motions regarding putting a cap on international tuition.

8. Stipend Review Committee

HORAN reported the committee met in November for orientation and training. The Committee will review reports in its December meeting.

HANI asked about the executive review process. He suggested it would help to have a more systematic plan for reviewing the executive's work, such as a randomized survey of GRC committee members for feedback, which could then be shared with the Executive and Stipend Review Committee.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Bylaw and Policy Committee, in consultation with the Stipend Review Committee, and in consultation with the GRC and previous board members (when possible), establish a model by which the GRC members report on their committee's progress to the Stipend Review Committee in a procedural, systematic and meaningful manner, to improve transparency and facilitate an equitable review process.

M/S WILLIAMS/RAHIMI

Discussion: HANI advocated against too tightly defining the procedure, allowing it to be functional.

COWAN said that as a Stipend Review Alumni, this would be very helpful, and felt it would be useful for GRC to know how much time the Executive is spending on their duties.

HORAN agreed there was very little formal feedback provided from council members, and a process to receive feedback would be welcome.

CARRIED

9. Other Committee Reports

Campus Planning: TRAN reported the committee has a final Cycling Plan, and it will be made public soon. It is a staged plan to improve infrastructure over time, and is quite positive. A workshop was held in October about the Grand Promenade and TRAN was part of this design charrette. As well, BC has approved funding for 600 beds in UVIC residences.

OSBORNE asked whether there was anything said about finding a Lekwungen name for the university at the consultation. TRAN said the Lekwungen name had not come up, but she would raise it.

Academic Standards: FOURNIER reported on a presentation from Institutional Planning and Analysis on grading pattern reports. Those who teach will have access to the reports. These give average grades by year, course, and program. The system flags anomalies and any known reason, which can be interesting for instructors. The Committee is also looking at procedures for cancelling exams due to weather.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Council: HORAN reported that the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) report about candidacy was released. Information on the implementation of the BC Graduate Scholarship program was presented. Changes to UVIC's MPA program were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

DECEMBER GRAD COUNCIL MEETING

A straw poll was conducted to test whether a December meeting would make quorum. Most members present committed to attending on December 18.

Members noted there was interest in discussing some new business at the meeting.

NOTICE OF MOTION/AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT GRC MEETING

RAHIMI to present on plan for managing his Director responsibilities after his move to Vancouver in January.

HORAN requested time for department reports be included in the next GRC formal agenda.

COWAN requested time to consider a motion to add a temporary academic unit representative for the Contemporary, Social, and Political Thought (CSPT) program on GRC.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

M/S CLARK/CHAD

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm

sc/KLP/jh

Approved, Chair

Approved, Executive Director