

To our GRC Colleagues,

It is no surprise that the Grad House and Side Project are experiencing severe financial strain. We understand that there have been rumours about the Board's plans for how to manage the financial strain on both outlets. In order to uphold our commitment to transparency, the Board has decided to make the following clarifications:

- The Board members, like any other graduate student on the campus, love the Grad House and the Side Project and want to see them succeed and continue their service to our community.
- The Board is committed to transparency and dialogue and that is the reason the current financial situation was openly communicated with the staff on the meeting on July 19th. The goal was to inform the staff of potential changes or interruptions to our operations.
- The sense of emergency of the situation is the result of the latest financial updates, and this is a situation that calls for an immediate response. Please note that the Board is responsible to cope with this financial situation in a short time frame with limited resources.
- The Grad House was struggling prior to the renovation, and both the Grad House and Side Project together have been struggling more and more since opening. It is for this very reason that operating hours of both have been cut so severely.
- The Board is committed to find a solution for the ongoing and deteriorating financial situation of the two food outlets. The Board has worked hard to ensure that neither outlet is being expected to cover costs that it does not control, such as utilities or legally required repairs.
- The Board understands that both food outlets are being run primarily as a service, but the Board needs guidance from the membership about how high they are willing for the subsidy to go, especially since we are already seeing that we will have to go *significantly* beyond the budget approved subsidy-envelope for this year.
- The Board has been working really hard to access accurate information and have proper consultations from all parties involved (accountant, management, staff, members, and external resources).
- The Board *has not made any decisions* yet because we believe that for making a decision for the future of the Grad House and the Side Project, we need to have the aforementioned information and consultations.
- The Board will bring the issue to a GRC meeting to seek guidelines about our current financial situation and the fact that continuing our operations would require a stronger support and cleared guidelines from the membership and their representatives in the GRC.
- Despite the fact that we have enough time (7 days notice required) to call for a GRC meeting on July 30th, the Board has decided to call for a GRC meeting on August 13th so that our GRC members have enough time to hear their fellow graduate students' voices prior to the meeting. The Board is open to take the issue to the membership through a referendum upon the request of the GRC. Please bear in mind that a referendum does requires significantly more notice.
- The Board will present the current financial situation to the GRC, but it *will not advocate* for any of the possible options on the table, nor is a permanent closure one of the possible options on the table identified by the Board.
- While a temporary closure of the two outlets will be presented as a last resort, a *permanent* closure of the Grad House and the Side Project has never been an option for the Board, and it will certainly not be one to put forward to our Graduate Representatives Council meeting.
- Meanwhile, the Board remains open to have constructive conversations with all the parties involved, and is committed to hear from all the members and those who care for the two food outlets.

We believe that this is a conversation that we must have. Despite all the current pressures that the Board is currently experiencing, we are confident that this conversation can serve as a light for the years to come. We are committed to keep working hard to find a solution and a proper plan for our lovely Grad House and Side project.

Warm regards,

The Executive Board of Directors

Graduate Students' Society at the University of Victoria