

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society
Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 28TH, 2020, 5-7 PM

Elected Academic Unit Reps (1 vote per academic unit) Attending:

Anthropology: Rae Dias	Alexandros Dimopoulos	(ONLINE)
Art History & Visual Studies: Arash Eghbal Jahromi	English: Adrienne Jenks	Political Science: Sydney Krill
Civil Engineering: Shervin Shameli	French: Angélique Rose, Tiffany Kuo	Psychology: Connor Leshner, Thomas Ferguson
Earth & Ocean Sciences: Rebecca Morris	History: Tim Cunningham	Public Administration: David Foster
Economics: Brooklynn Trimble	Law: Eva Linde	Social Work: Diana Baskier (ONLINE)
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: Mónica Carbajal Uribe	Mathematics & Statistics: Joseph Horan	Sociology: Alison Barnard
Electrical & Computer Engineering:	Mechanical Engineering: Rad Haghi	Visual Arts: Lauren Brinson
	Neuroscience: Chad Williams	CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst
	Physics & Astronomy: Maan Hani	

GSS Executive Board (1 vote per elected board member) Attending:

Chair: Mehdi HASHEMI	Director of Student Affairs: Saeed REZVANI
Director of Communications: Elaine LABERGE	Director of Services: Sima SHANJANI
Director of Finance: Carla OSBORNE	Executive Director: Stacy CHAPPEL (non-voting)

Guest: David Capson, Dean of Graduate Studies

Recorder: Office Coordinator, **Governance:** Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

Education Curriculum & Instruction: Jeffrey Bruton, Hossein Ghanbari
Geography: Parnian Rezanian
Social Dimensions of Health: Anabelle Bernard Fournier, Daniel Gudíño

Absent:

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Jacob Imbery
Biology: Nicholas Planidin
Chemistry: Talita de Francesco
Computer Science: Omer Wasim
Greek & Roman Studies: Allie MacIlroy
Pacific & Asian Studies: Zhuangyuan Wang
Public Health & Social Policy: Juliana McPhail
School of Music: Rachel Burtman
Theatre: Devon Goldie

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HASHEMI called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

LABERGE provided a personal land acknowledgement.

STANDING ITEMS / GUEST

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S: HORAN/LESHNER

CARRIED.

2. PRESENTATION – DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES, DR. DAVID CAPSON

Dean CAPSON presented on the developments for the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) in past year. Dean CAPSON's presentation slides are available in the GRC 2020-01-28 Connect folder. Highlights included:

1. Strategic Enrolment Management Plan implementation is underway. The graduate component is most elaborate and ambitious. By 2029, goal is to increase the graduate student population at UVic from 16% to 20%.
2. Under the Graduate Supervision Policy, updated in 2017, almost 100% of academic units now have their required graduate student handbook written and in place.
3. The new FGS internal enrolment based funding allocation model is now in effect for 2020-21 graduate student recruitment. FGS is not involved in adjudicating individual awards, but does want to hear if students are concerned about how this model is being implemented in their academic unit.
4. BC Graduate Scholarships – currently we are in year 2 of a 2 year commitment from the provincial government. No information if the program will be continued. This program has provided 150 \$15,000 scholarships, largely to graduate students with a STEM and/or indigenous focus. Dean CAPSON requested that anyone who has received a scholarship send FGS their story to contribute to the argument for his program to be continued: graddean@uvic.ca.

Dean CAPSON opened the floor to comments and questions which included:

- Appreciation for CAPSON's efforts to increase grad funding and improve distribution fairness.
- That international students experience a greater degree of funding insecurity when funding is based on receiving other funding only available to domestic students.
- That the goal of increasing the proportion of graduate students at UVic will have significant implications for resources, space, and GSS.
- That UVic is going through major changes in its senior leadership of deans and administrators. The vision for FGS to be pursued will be dependent on the incoming group.
- That GSS is working on a one-page information sheet for potential inclusion in all graduate student handbooks. CAPSON stated that FGS has no editorial control over what departments include, but is willing to talk about how FGS could help make this information available. There is not a standardized person responsible for the handbooks in each department.

Dean CAPSON is leaving his position in June 2020 after being the Dean of Graduate Studies for 8 years at UVic. CHAPPEL expressed her appreciation to CAPSON for his work and support over the years, particularly on improving transparency and fairness in funding, and work on the supervision policy.

3. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER

WILLIAMS volunteered.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Minutes from the November 26th, 2019 Grad Council meeting are approved as presented.

*M/S: HORAN/TRIMBLE
CARRIED.*

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

Reminder: please notify gssgov@uvic.ca to opt-in your email address on the GRC Connect list.

HORAN reported that the FGS presentation was completed.

ROSE stated that she was working on a possible French language acknowledgement statement.

TASK: LESHNER asked the GRC to revisit the possibility of an opt-out email list.

6. REPORTS

A. CHAIR'S REMARKS

HASHEMI welcomed new GRC members, co-reps and alternates.

HASHEMI expressed appreciation to the GRC, GSS management and staff for the support he, Saeed, Sima and the Iranian-Canadian community received after the Ukrainian Air tragedy.

B. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

HORAN noted that Director of Communications reports have now been received, and will be reviewed at the next Stipend Review Committee.

MOTION: RESOLVED that Grad Council approves the Executive Board Reports received for the months of November and December from the Chair and the Directors of Student Affairs, Finance, and Services.

*M/S: HORAN, as Chair of the Stipend Review Committee/WILLIAMS
CARRIED.*

C. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

MOTION: RESOLVED that Adrienne Carlson and Madeline Juba are excused from the 2019-20 Communications Committee, Samantha Davis is excused from the 2019-20 GRC Student Affairs Committee, and David Foster is excused from the 2019-20 Appeals Committee.

M/S: LESHNER/HASLEHURST
CARRIED.

MOTION: RESOLVED that David Foster, Elaine Laberge, Braden Russell, Diana Baskier and Rebecca Morris are appointed to the 2019-20 Ad Hoc Committee on Member Participation.

M/S: LESHNER/WILLIAMS
CARRIED.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Appeals – SHANJANI reported that there were no appeals in December and January.

Bylaw & Policy – HASHEMI reported that the Committee has held working sessions on the policy/governance manual and its other projects.

Communications – LABERGE reported that there was no January meeting but will have working sessions to help generate content for the e-bulletin and consider website improvements.

Events – SHANJANI reported that the Committee is happy with number and variety of events for the current semester included regularizing the Wednesday thesis writing space now happening every week after Wednesday coffee. The Committee is also cleaning up its Committee Connect site, collecting photos and making improvements to the Events webpage.

Finance – OSBORNE reported that members have compiled data looking at history of GSS finances. The latest financials from the Grad House have been reviewed where things appear stable. The Committee is starting to work on 2020-21 budget.

Student Affairs – REZVANI reported that there was no formal meeting in January but Committee members are busy making progress on Student Affairs project. REZVANI reported that work was done to secure space for interdisciplinary committees.

Stipend Review – HORAN reported that the Committee worked on improvements to the Executive Report template as well as held a discussion on how to improve and make training more consistent for incoming Executive Board members.

*MOTION: BIRT that Grad Council approves a collection of training sessions for incoming Executive Board members, to take place during the week after the SAGM, with a stipend for those members to be paid per module attended at a rate of \$24.21 an hour.
Moved by: HORAN, as Chair of the Stipend Review Committee/TRIMBLE*

Discussion on the Motion:

WULZ expressed concern that this motion goes against volunteerism. HORAN responded that since the GSS pays its Executive, it could be paying for training time.

FOSTER asked for the maximum budget be included in the motion. FOSTER also asked that the maximum amount to be provided include total costs including the costs of trainers, materials etc.

CUNNINGHAM expressed that there should not be the need to incentivize people to be trained for the positions they were elected to, and also expressed support for the total cost to be in the motion.

LESHNER on a point of privilege asked that people restrain expressing personal feelings about concerns/discussion points not to discourage participation in the discussion.

ROSE explained that the impetus behind this motion was to ensure that there is a smooth transition, that incoming Executive attend training prior to their official time of office, and that staff should not be left to train the Board, who are their employers.

REZVANI emphasized that the funds received by the Executive are a stipend, not a wage; that there is little correspondence between the hours the stipend was based on and the actual number of hours required to fulfill the duties. He reported that in a recent survey of grad societies across Canada, most societies have paid executive, and they are paid for the actual amount of hours required.

REZVANI noted that the training model is being recommended as a pilot to see if this could improve the capacity of the incoming Board to have sufficient knowledge to carry out their duties from the start of their responsibility.

OSBORNE echoed that this training motion is about increasing the capacity of the incoming Board to hit the ground running when they take office and responsibility on April 1st, and therefore better serve GSS members.

Amendment to the Motion: add 'expenditure up to \$400 from the Operating Fund'.

M/S: FOSTER/OSBORNE

FOSTER suggested that this amendment would allow for 16 hours of training.

A question was asked about the amount of Operating Fund. CHAPPEL stated that there is usually \$500 flexible in the Stipend budget line item.

Vote on amendment:

CARRIED

Amendment to the Motion: add 'training will be provided by current GSS Executive and staff, and volunteer members, with no external contractors used.'

M/S: FOSTER/LESHNER

FOSTER argued that specificity is needed about whether the money could be used for training costs, other incoming Executive time.

TRIMBLE asked if people could volunteer. A friendly amendment to the amendment was made to add 'volunteer members'.

WILLIAMS suggested that more time is needed to consider this motion, and suggested tabling.

TRIMBLE, as Electoral Officer, stated she would like to be able to provide notice to prospective candidates regarding the schedule of any required training. The nomination period would be over before the next GRC meeting in February.

Vote on amendment:

CARRIED

WILLIAMS and OSBORNE abstained.

HORAN noted that the \$400 amount previously suggested was a calculation error as it only provided for 1, not 5, incoming Executive members.

Amendment to the amended motion: to change the maximum budget amount to \$2000 from \$400.

M/S: FOSTER/LESHNER

The question was asked as to what line item this amount would be taken from as it would exceed the \$500 mentioned as available in the Stipend budget line item. CHAPPEL noted that this would be an unplanned expenditure in this current fiscal year. OSBORNE noted that it is unlikely that the total amount would be spent as it is unlikely all Executive members would be both new members and/or able to attend all the training sessions.

Vote on amendment:

CARRIED

Amendment to the amended motion: add 'non-returning' before incoming Executive.

M/S: FOSTER/REZVANI

Vote on amendment:

CARRIED

SHANJANI pointed out that excluding returning Board members from the training sessions would disadvantage them from learning together with the new team.

Vote on motion as amended:

RESOLVED that Grad Council approves the expenditure of up to \$2,000 from the Operating Fund for a collection of training sessions for non-returning, incoming Executive Board members to take place during the week after the SAGM, with a stipend for those members to be paid per module attended at a rate of \$24.21 an hour.

Training will be provided by current GSS Executive and staff or volunteer members and no external contractors will be used.

CARRIED

HASHEMI and OSBORNE abstained.

Electoral Report - TRIMBLE reported that she has been working on updating the nomination forms, posters, and the information for history of referendum. TRIMBLE noted important dates related to the annual Elections and Referenda:

February 6th – Nomination Period Begins

February 12th – Meet the Electoral Officer Wednesday Coffee

February 25th – Nominations Close

February 26th – Campaign Begins

March 4th to March 6th – Voting Period

March 6th – Campaign ends

Preliminary results will posted within two days of polls closing.

TRIMBLE also noted bylaw and policy sources regarding election and referenda rules, including:

- All guidelines on the Electoral Office role and how elections are to be handled are outlined in the GSS Bylaws (Section 4).
- The GSS generally uses the Canadian elections guidelines as a reference for their voting and election expectations around procedure and conduct.
- Quorum for referenda is 5% of the GSS membership.
- Voting by proxy is not permitted.
- Voting will be online at <https://webvote.uvic.ca>.

Ad Hoc Committee on Participation – LESHNER reported that he has been meeting with Executive board members and new committee members to narrow in on a focus. Currently one idea is to focus on the Faculty of Human and Social Development graduate students as they are ¼ of our members, the majority of which are distance students, and are currently the least represented.

D. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Brooklyn TRIMBLE as the graduate student representative to the UVic Multifaith Services Advisory Committee.

M/S: TRIMBLE/LESHNER

CARRIED

E. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS – OPEN FLOOR

Senate Committee for Continuing Studies – LESHNER asked for expressions of interest from graduate students regarding teaching courses for Continuing Studies.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Council - HORAN reported that the graduate student survey results were presented and received a positive response. REZVANI reported that after this presentation, faculty members have contacted him to follow up on issues presented by the survey. The question as to how the graduate student handbooks are created or being maintained was not answered.

Senate Committee on Awards - FOSTER encouraged people to consider volunteering for this role.

Presidential Search Committee – REZVANI reported that the committee is ongoing with no information that can be publically shared yet.

Strategic Enrolment – REZVANI reported that he researched how other universities provide part time graduate programs for the committee to consider options for UVic.

CUPE – LABERGE reported that after the success at SFU, members of GSS and CUPE have been meeting to strategize unionizing Research Assistants at UVic.

Senate Committee on Appeals – HANI reported that the Senate is looking at issues of academic concessions. He asked for feedback on the draft document circulated by REZVANI to the GRC listserve.

Senate Committee on Academic Standards – SHANJANI reported that the committee is looking at developing standards and rules around the university response to emergencies e.g. snow closures.

F. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Members who wanted like their update recorded in the official minutes were requested to email their reports to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion.

MOTION: to extend the meeting by 30 minutes.

M/S: WILLIAMS/LESHNER

CARRIED.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

HASHEMI reported that quorum for the meeting had been lost. After the break, 15 voting members remained. Quorum for the meeting was 19, as very few absent members had provided notice/given regrets.

It was discussed that all items of new business listed on the GRC January 28, 2020 agenda were to be referred to the Executive Board if urgent/time sensitive, or will be tabled to the February 25th GRC meeting.

The agenda items will be referred or tabled as follows:

- DECLARATION OF INTENT – BYLAW AND POLICY COMMITTEE – tabled.
- CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY – BYLAW AND POLICY COMMITTEE – tabled.
- PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOUR – tabled.
- RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO STIPEND REVIEW POLICY AND COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - BYLAW AND POLICY AND STIPEND REVIEW COMMITTEES – tabled.
- GSS FEE SCHEDULE FOR 2020-21 – tabled.
- VIPIRG UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS – referred to Executive Board.
- PROPOSAL FOR A FEE REFERENDUM FOR WUSC – referred to Executive Board.
- GVAT MEMBERSHIP – tabled.

MOTION: that the meeting is formally adjourned.

M/S: LESHNER/WILLIAMS

CARRIED.

The meeting was formally adjourned at 7:05 pm. The remaining GRC members stayed for informal discussion to provide input on items that would now fall to the Executive Board for decision.

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS

Next GRC meeting: February 25, 2020.

GSS SAGM: March 24, 2020

Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of March 2, 2020.



Approved, Chair



Approved, Executive Director

klp/JH/KLP

