

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society  
Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES (ONLINE VIA ZOOM)

DECEMBER 14, 2021, 5-7 PM

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

<b>Anthropology:</b> Rae Dias (partial)	<b>Geography:</b> Wyatt Maddox	<b>Physics &amp; Astronomy:</b> Bobby Bickley
<b>Biochemistry &amp; Microbiology:</b> Michael Allison (partial)	<b>Health Information Science:</b> Dee Wong	<b>Psychology:</b> Tom Ferguson
<b>Biology:</b> Sarah Lane	<b>History:</b> Dax Tate	<b>Public Administration:</b> Christopher Jones
<b>Curriculum &amp; Instruction:</b> Sara Fallahi, Tahmineh Farnoud (partial)	<b>Law:</b> Carol Marinho-Ribeiro (partial)	<b>Public Health &amp; Social Policy:</b> Zackary Derrick
<b>English:</b> Julie Funk	<b>Linguistics:</b> Mona Sawan	<b>Sociology:</b> Tyler Branston
	<b>Music:</b> Kayleigh Francis	
	<b>Pacific &amp; Asian Studies:</b> Maeve Milligan	

**GSS Executive Board (1 vote per elected Board member) Present:**

<b>Chair:</b> David FOSTER	<b>Director of Student Affairs:</b> Nahid SAFARI
<b>Director of Communications:</b> Nicole KENT (partial)	<b>Executive Director:</b> Kyla TURNER (non-voting) (RECORDER)
<b>Director of Finance:</b> Ryan KHAN	

**Regrets:**

**Chemistry:** Greg Gaube  
**Exercise Science, Physical & Health Education:** Emily Magel  
**Physics & Astronomy:** Jess Speedie

**Absent without a proxy or notice:**

**Director of Services:** Adair NG  
**Art History & Visual Studies:** Mel Granley, Shruti Parthasarathy  
**Civil Engineering:** Ariya Eini, David Serrano  
**Earth & Ocean Sciences:** Moronke Harris, Chrissy Schellenberg  
**Economics:** Matheson Gillis  
**Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies:** Rohit Jain, Echo Huang  
**Electrical & Computer Engineering:** Amir Sepahi, Anushka Halder  
**French:** Alphonse Bode Abiodun  
**Greek & Roman Studies:** Alix Galumbeck  
**Neuroscience:** Hannah Reid  
**Political Science:** Lingyu Jing  
**Social Dimensions of Health:** Eli Verdugo  
**Theatre:** Vjosa Mala, Arash Isapour  
**Visual Arts:** Colton Hash

**Guests:**

Cole Freeman, Sociology  
Diana Bertuol Garcia, Environmental Studies

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CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FOSTER called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

ALLISON offered a land acknowledgement.

## STANDING ITEMS

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### 1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

*MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.*

*M/S: MADDOX/FRANCIS*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

### 2. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER (NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

FRANCIS volunteered.

### 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*MOTION: RESOLVED that the Minutes of the October 26, 2021 GRC meeting are approved as presented.*

*M/S: FRANCIS/DIAS*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

### 4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

The following updates to previously assigned tasks and motions were provided:

Sept 29, 2020: TASK re: Add to the Executive Board agenda the potential for an official request from GSS that UVic expedite its action on the VPN issue - Abandoned

Jan 26, 2021: TASK: RUSHFORD to look at how GSS can be responsible/accountable to graduate students who are medically compromised and at greater risk or disadvantage from any campus re-opening plan that does not include equal off campus options. (Specifically to review GSS bylaws for potential amendments at March SAGM.) – Complete

Jan 26, 2021: TASK: ALL GRC reps to email TURNER, as to whether academic unit has an association or not, formal or informal, active, inactive, and any contact information. TURNER will send out a formal request on the GRC listserv. – Complete

Feb. 23, 2021: TASK: GUDIÑO and RUSHFORD will contact all volunteers in the near future to meet to assist with the video creation and wording of the question for the President's Townhall.

Jun 8, 2021: TASK: FOSTER committed to asking about ventilation communication at the next UVic/GSS Operational Relations meeting. – Complete

### 5. REPORTS

#### A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

**GSS Membership:** As of December 2, 2021 there are 3208 GSS Members.

**GRC Membership:** GRC now consists of 51 voting members: 33 academic units (out of 46 academic units eligible), and 5 Executive Board representatives.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 2 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 19.

B. CHAIR'S REMARKS

See Appendix A for full text of FOSTER's remarks to the GRC.

C. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT

REF DOCS: Executive Board Reports September to December, 2021

*MOTION: RESOLVED the Executive Board Reports for July 2021, August 2021 and October 2021 are accepted, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.*

*M/S: DERRICK/BRANSTON*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

D. ACADEMIC UNIT & COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Breakout rooms were not used. Councillors reported to the full group, responding to questions on: GRC seat allocation and issues that are top of mind. Issues raised included:

GRC seat allocation:

- Some mid-sized, primarily humanities/fine arts units felt the current model of GRC seat allocation worked well. These reps were concerned that smaller units could lose power by being out-voted if larger department got more votes. Some suggested a cap of reps per population so large departments don't drown out small departments.
- Some faculties felt that larger faculties should get more representation to be more proportional. This would also allow larger units to represent the different cohorts/programs and capture the diversity of grad student issues. BPC members especially felt we should move to representation by population.
- One rep suggested allocating seats for special interest groups like international students, programs within a department, etc.
- Some reps did not express a preference re: GRC seat allocation. Hybrid delivery to allow distance students to engage was encouraged.

Other issues:

- There was concern around the lack of rapid testing for fully vaccinated and/or asymptomatic individuals potentially exposed to COVID-19 in the last month around campus.
- There was also a desire for rapid testing as a preventative measure should capacity and supplies allow. This would allow people with cold/flu etc. symptoms to be tested and not miss valuable in-person learning opportunities.
- Immigration support for international students remains a concern especially for study permits/visas.
- COVID closures affecting lab/practice/research space access.
- Program duration is extending due to COVID and that is leaving many grad students without funding and supervisors don't have capacity to improve completion speed.
- Grad student events are particularly challenging due to delays getting responses to GSS funding applications.
- There has been disappointment about event cancellations and a desire for ways to connect on campus more once safe.

Members who wanted their update recorded in the official minutes were requested to email their reports to [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) for inclusion.

BREAK

E. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Appeals: no report.
- Bylaw & Policy: BPC has been active, especially their working groups. They are revising out of date policies, such as the policy on electing reps to UVic committees. They have also defined “academic unit” as UVic has not offered a stable definition of this term in the last few years and it is required for GRC seat allocation and other GSS services.
- Communications: Is struggling to reach quorum. MILLIGAN requested members attend the meetings.
- Electoral Appeals: no report.
- Events: Did some brainstorming about events but is struggling to find a location to host events due to ban on in-person events at Halpern Centre. They are planning an orientation get together in January.
- Finance: Going well, though quorum has been an understandable issue given the pandemic, floods, etc. The next term’s goals are establishing Student Advocate Fund committee and budgeting. KHAN also requested members attend to have quorate meetings.
- Stipend Review: Like other committees, quorum is an issue. DERRICK requested members attend the meetings as SRC is an important accountability mechanism for the Executive Board and GSS.
- Student Affairs: Has sent a letter regarding availability of Food and Beverage services on campus during the evenings.

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:**

*MOTION: RESOLVED the resignations of Bruna BARUSCO from the Bylaw and Policy Committee and the Finance Committee are accepted effective November 9, 2021, and FURTHER RESOLVED the resignation of Tyler BRANSTON from the Bylaw and Policy Committee is accepted effective November 22, 2021, and FURTHER RESOLVED the resignation of Adelle JONKER from the Finance Committee is accepted effective November 23, 2021, and FURTHER RESOLVED the resignations of Saba KHOSRAVI from the Finance Committee, Eli VERDUGO and Lingyu JING from the Stipend Review Committee, and Dee WONG from the Student Affairs Committee are accepted effective immediately.*

*M/S: FRANCIS/WONG  
Approved by CONSENT.*

*MOTION: RESOLVED the following GRC Standing Committee members are ratified:*

*Appeals: Julie FUNK  
Student Affairs: Tyler BRANSTON  
Stipend Review: Kayleigh FRANCIS*

*FURTHER RESOLVED Kayleigh FRANCIS resignation from Events Committee is accepted effective immediately.*

*M/S: BRANSTON/BICKLEY  
Approved by CONSENT.*

F. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES

**REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:**

Members who wanted their update recorded in the official minutes were requested to email their reports to [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) for inclusion. See Appendix B.

Board of Governors: FOSTER reported BOG met in late November and the main focus is the development of UVic's new 5 year plan. There was some water damage due to the weather events in November to the new dorm building, but the construction remains on schedule.

Senate: FOSTER reported there was concerns about changing course/section designation between in-person and off-campus sections as some students were not appropriately notified of changes, especially for students on the waitlists. The Faculty Association has raised concerns about the timelines for consultation request are too tight to engage in fulsome consultation. Student senators are looking into establishing a student senate caucus to discuss priorities and emerging issues. This would allow organizations like GSS to formally contact student senators as a group. The caucus would not have a whipped vote.

[RIBEIRO and ALLISON left meeting at 6:27pm]

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:**

*Motion: RESOLVED graduate student representatives are elected to the UVic Appointment Committee, Associate VP Research – 1 member\**  
*M/S: FRANCIS/MADDOX*

*Tabled to the Executive Board meeting January 4.*

*TASK: LANE and BRANSTON to follow up before January 4 if they will accept a nomination to this committee.*

[KENT arrive 6:33. FARNOUD left meeting at 6:33 pm.]

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MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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1. UVIC COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT POLICY

REF DOCS: Interim Governance Manual, Policy 5 – (UVic) Committee Appointment Policy (pages 7-8), University and External Committee Representation Policy EXEC BOARD APPROVED

*MOTION: WHEREAS the Society currently has two policies regarding graduate student representation on UVic Committees, which are outdated, inconsistent, and contain overlapping material and unnecessary procedural detail, and  
WHEREAS Policy 5 – (UVic) Committee Appointment Policy was last amended by GRC, and therefore requires GRC approval to rescind, and  
WHEREAS the Executive Board rescinded Policy 6 – Procedures for Seeking Graduate Student Representatives for (UVic) Committees, on December 7, 2021, and  
WHEREAS the Executive Board approved a revised University and External Committee Representation Policy on December 7, 2021, and  
WHEREAS Policy 5 – (UVic) Committee Appointment Policy needs to be rescinded in order to implement the revised University and External Committee Representation Policy,*

*RESOLVED Policy 5 – (UVic) Committee Appointment Policy is rescinded, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

*M/S: DIAS/FRANCIS*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

2. ACADEMIC UNIT DEFINITION

REF DOC: Governance Definition – Academic Unit

*MOTION: WHEREAS Bylaw 6.3(a)(ii) was amended at the November 23, 2021 Annual General Meeting to reallocate responsibility for the definition of “academic unit” from the University to the Society’s policy,*

*RESOLVED the Governance Definition of “academic unit” is adopted, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee with an amendment that section (a) of the definition will include language stating that the “is the smallest available unit that is either a department, school, centre, or faculty or Interdisciplinary Studies Program.”*

*M/S: FRANCIS/BRANSTON*

*Amendment: To add "the smallest available unit that is either" after "is" in clause a).*

*M/S: FUNK/DERRICK*

*Approved by CONSENT as amended.*

[DIAS left the meeting at 6:49 pm]

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CLOSING ITEMS

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Next GRC meeting: **January 25, 2021, 5-7pm via Zoom**

Upcoming GSS Closures: December 18, 2021 to January 2, 2022 inclusive – Winter Break

ADJOURNMENT

*MOTION: RESOLVED the meeting is adjourned.*

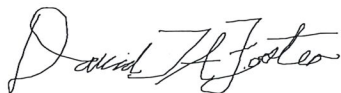
*M/S: TATE/FRANCIS*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

KT/klp

X



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David Foster  
GSS Chair 2021-22

X



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Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director

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## APPENDIX A: CHAIR'S REMARKS

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### Chair's Remarks December 14, 2021

- The GSS has hired Neil Barney, a long-time office and former restaurant staff member, as our Operations and Services Manager starting in November
- The GSS has also hired two part-time unionized staff, former GSS Director of Services Daniel Gudino as Events Coordinator, and Melissa Wotkyns as Office/Communications coordinator, to fill Neil's previous roles
- This brings the GSS up from four staff to six (two full-time, four part time)
- The Annual General Meeting was successfully held in November, where the audited financial statements and significant bylaw changes were approved
- Unfortunately, our special guest speaker, UVic Associate VP Indigenous Robina Thomas, was not able to speak at the AGM due to technology failure, and we will be rescheduling with her
- I participated in hiring for the new UVic VP Academic, and met with all shortlisted candidates
- Nicole Kent, our Director of Communications, has put in a huge amount of work on the VP Academic search committee
- The GSS spent half a day tabling in the Quad with CUPE 4163 in November and collected numerous signatures on the petition to eliminate international student MSP
- Work is underway to develop the referendum proposals regarding the fate of the Grad House Restaurant for a vote of the GSS membership in March
- We are planning to send out a survey and hold virtual town hall meetings early in the New Year regarding the Grad House referendum
- Since the Board has committed to holding this referendum no matter what, the timeline of other projects may have to be adjusted
- The GSS Board endorsed a letter to UVic on lack of hot food service supper options on campus
- GSS Board members have participated in UVic's consultations on course mode of delivery for September 2022 and later
- There has been lack of clarity on approval process for courses where some students attend in person and some attend online (multi-access)
- UVic said at one point this would depend on being able to book two classrooms that were outfitted with technology for multi-access teaching, however they have recently acknowledged that these larger classrooms would not likely be used for graduate level courses which are typically small
- There have been some concerns around BC Transit's decision to remove posted bus schedules from bus stops, including at the UVic bus loop, as there are dead patches of wifi and not everyone has access to a mobile device
- We have heard from BC Transit that they did not post the December bus schedule due to staffing shortages that caused it to no longer be accurate, however they have apologized for the difficulties that not having a posted schedule cause for some customers, and have told us there will be a posted schedule again in January
- Due to off-campus COVID-19 exposures, UVic recently cancelled in-person exams and moved them online
- With the new Omicron variant spreading, it's unclear what will happen to spring courses, but the federal government's modelling is concerning

## APPENDIX B: UVIC REPRESENTATION REPORTS

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### David Foster: Board of Governors Report December 14, 2021

- The Board of Governors met in November
- Currently a focus is on the first stages of developing UVic's strategic plan for the next five years
- Construction of residence buildings is proceeding on schedule

### David Foster: Senate Report December 14, 2021

- Concerns have been raised in Senate regarding what happens when a course changes from in-person to online or vice versa, since this year, it resulted in some students who were waitlisted losing their places because they had to register in a different course code
- UVic has committed to preventing loss of waitlist spaces due to changed course modes in future
- Students and faculty have expressed some concerns about the level of consultation happening regarding course delivery modes
- The UVic Faculty Association requested that the new course delivery modes framework be discussed at the January senate meeting with a decision in February
- UVic has said the proposal will be voted on at the February Senate meeting, but it's unclear whether it will be discussed at the January meeting
- UVic student senators are interested in creating a formal Student Senate Caucus, which exists at other universities (for example, UBC) but has never existed at UVic
- So far, student senators have been meeting informally as a group to discuss the Senate agenda prior to Senate meetings, and have also had joint meetings with interested members of the Senate faculty caucus