



Graduate Students' Society
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Phone (250) 472-4543
Fax (250) 721-6137
Web <https://gss.uvic.ca>

Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada

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Dear Graduate Students' Society (GSS) Members,

We are writing to you today to announce our formal endorsement of Organize UVic's campaign to unionize the University of Victoria's graduate student research assistants (RAs) under CUPE 4163. The GSS has had a long and healthy relationship with CUPE 4163 as they have fought to protect the working rights of graduate students that are teaching assistants, sessional lecturers, second language instructors, residence life workers and cultural assistants. We have full confidence in CUPE 4163's ability to protect the rights of graduate student research assistants. We strongly encourage you to circulate information about the unionization of RAs among your graduate student colleagues and join us in promoting this important initiative.

Similar RA unionization movements have taken place recently at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, while RAs at other major Canadian universities are already unionized. We believe that unionizing the graduate student RAs will be an important step towards ensuring fair and equitable access to graduate level education and fair compensation for research work at the University of Victoria. Unionization also brings with it increase workplace protections for employees, including support in reporting workplace health and safety concerns and supervisor harassment. With no current protections in place, the Graduate Student Society has become the de-facto mediator when issues arise, and as a society we remain ill-equipped and ill-placed to handle these problems. The GSS exists to help provide educational, social, economic and personal welfare of our members, we are not a labour union. CUPE 4163 would be much better placed to handle these concerns because graduate student researchers are not only students, but vital employees of the University.

The University of Victoria claims to be research-based university, however the people who conduct that research have been treated as an afterthought. Graduate student RAs are the backbone of research conducted at UVic, but their wages are set by their individual supervisors and often their compensation does not reflect the amount of time that goes into their work. Unionization of the graduate student research assistants would be an important first step towards ensuring the University can sit at the forefront of innovation.

Finally, we are encouraging all our members who are graduate student research assistants to sign a unionization card (<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/sign-a-card/>) to show their formal support of this cause.

Thank you,

Wyatt Maddox

Chair, University of Victoria's Graduate Student Society