

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 5, 2020

EXECUTIVE PRESENT: Mehdi HASHEMI, Chair (part); Elaine LABERGE, Director of Communications; Carla OSBORNE, Director of Finance; Sima SHANJANI, Director of Services (part); Saeed REZVANI, Director of Student Affairs (part); Stacy CHAPPEL, Executive Director.

STAFF AND/OR GUESTS PRESENT: Nancy PATINO, Restaurant Manager (part). Haneen Ghebari (UVIC PIRG), Seb Bonet (UVIC PIRG) (part), Kenya Rogers (UVIC PIRG) (part), Madi Knowles (UVIC PIRG) (part).

STANDING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm with LABERGE in the chair.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

LABERGE expressed gratitude for support and friendship.

OSBORNE recognized the traditional territory of the Lekwungen speaking people and Wsanec and Songhees. We are not invited guests but they are gracious with us all the same. The land has been giving us a dousing and we should be thankful for the end of drought.

[HASHEMI arrived]

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved with VIPIRG referendum earlier to accommodate guests.

Approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion: RESOLVED that the minutes from the January 22, 2020 Executive Board meeting are approved as presented.

M/S HASHEMI/REZVANI

CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

REZVANI talked to Catherine from UVIC Residence regarding the contract language and will provide an update later in the meeting.

BC MSP (provincial campaign) letter was posted; GSS letter was completed.

BARNEY is in progress on the Student Advocate Fund plain language information for the website.

LABERGE reported the website meeting had taken place today and there was a review of which changes are easy to manage, and which should be completed as part of a larger overhaul/structural change.

Other tasks were still ongoing.

TASK: LABERGE to share her notes from the Feb. 5 website meeting.

MEETING BUSINESS

A. REFERENDA

1. VIPIRG fee referendum

CHAPPEL gave a history as to why the referendum is on the table (GRC motion, lost quorum, UVSS decided to now allow independent society with grad and undergrad members)

BONET gave an overview of the history of PIRGs, which are campus organizations that conduct research to support community based social change. BONET said the hope of the group is to ensure a PIRG continues to exist on campus.

HASHEMI suggested changing to the referendum question to be:

Do you support:

a) elimination of the former VIPIRG fee of \$2 per student per term

or

b) redirect the VIPIRG fee, including fees already collected to the UVIC PIRG.

REZVANI asked how the UVIC PIRG would be structured. ROGERS stated the UVIC PIRG group had submitted an RFP to the UVSS for use of the fund, and the UVSS has conditionally accepted the proposal as an independent, student led organization.

ROGERS expressed concern about a referendum to support the group, when it is still forming.

[SHANJANI arrived at 3:23 pm]

OSBORNE expressed concern about the visibility of PIRG and confidence of members, and asked how the group would re-establish this. ROGERS said their idea was to establish the group, get some work sorted, and then have a referendum with an established body of work.

CHAPPEL asked if the UVSS was expecting to have a referendum on the fee, and ROGERS explained that the UVSS will no longer require a referendum to reallocate the VIPIRG fee to UVIC PIRG.

LABERGE asked how the UVIC PIRG will re-establish their resources. BONET said the existing fees collected by UVSS would be used to re-establish the resources, and he hoped the same would be true for the GSS fee.

HASHEMI said his sense of the feeling among GRC members was that there would be support for a referendum. He supports holding a referendum to redirect the fee.

OSBORNE said she agreed with simplifying the referendum question submitted to Grad Council previously, but noted the “eliminate the fee” option should include a plan for fees already collected. She felt there was broad support for the PIRG continuing.

ROGERS noted the conditions under which the proposed referendum emerged had changed.

REZVANI asked, since the UVIC PIRG will be independent, how the GSS can best communicate the benefits of the organization. CHAPPEL said that if the Executive wanted to support the continuing work the Executive Board could formally endorse the YES side and encourage GRC to do the same.

[PATINO left at 3:33 pm]

REZVANI was unsure how much the endorsement would make a difference.

OSBORNE said an endorsement alone would not be enough. It would be more important to state what practical, positive, things that come from PIRGs.

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS hold a referendum in to determine the future of the VIPIRG fee.

M/S OSBORNE/HASHEMI

HASHEMI said that given the discussions that have taken place at the GRC, and the level of awareness, it is fair to ask the question to the members. He supports maintaining the fee, but thinks the question should be put to the members in a referendum.

CARRIED

There was a discussion about whether to hold the referendum in March 2020, or postpone until November 2020.

REZVANI asked the guests from UVIC PIRG whether they would prefer. BONET said it would be easier for UVIC PIRG to prepare for a November referendum.

HASHEMI stated his support for a referendum in March. He thought the members deserved a chance to make a decision because we do not control what happens next year. While he supports the fee being redirected to UVIC PIRG, he thinks the members must be given an opportunity to resolve the issue.

REZVANI said after hearing from the guests present, he thought GRC might be the best venue to resolve the question.

Motion: RESOLVED to revoke the decision to go to referendum, and instead refer the matter of the VIPIRG fee to Council given the new information about the jurisdictional status changes.

M/S REZVANI/HASHEMI

FAILED

Motion: RESOLVED to add a VIPIRG fee referendum question to the March 2020 referendum ballot.

M/S OSBORNE/SHANJANI

CARRIED

Abstained: REZVANI

Motion: RESOLVED the VIPIRG referendum question will be:

“Do you agree to continue to direct the \$2 per term “VIPIRG” fee to support UVIC PIRG to fulfill the original VIPIRG mandate as an independent student-led public interest research group on campus.

YES

NO “

M/S OSBORNE/SHANJANI

CARRIED

[GHEBARI, BONET, ROGERS, and KNOWLES left the meeting.]

It was decided that referendum information will include clarification that a YES vote will result in redirection of previously collected VIPIRG fees since April 1, 2019 to UVIC PIRG, and a NO vote will result in a cancellation of the VIPIRG fee as of September 1, 2020, with a decision at a October 2020 general meeting of the members on where to redirect VIPIRG fees already collected.

Motion: RESOLVED the GSS Executive Board endorses the YES side of the VIPIRG referendum.

M/S HASHEMI/REZVANI

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. WUSC

MOTION: RESOLVED that the GSS hold a referendum with the following question:

“Do you support an increase to the student fee for World University Services of Canada (UVic WUSC) in the amount of \$2.00 per semester, and \$1.00 per semester for students on co-op, for the purpose of expanding the Student Refugee Program to sponsor one additional student per year and to extend first-year support for newly resettled students?

YES

NO”

M/S HASHEMI/LABERGE

CARRIED

B. INCOMING EXECUTIVE BOARD TRAINING

Motion: RESOLVED the training dates for the Incoming Executive will be March 30 and 31.

M/S HASHEMI/OSBORNE

CARRIED

REZVANI noted he will be available with Skype during that time, but will be in Iran.

C. MEICON

[HASHEMI recused himself due to a conflict of interest as one of the organizers of the event.]

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS donate \$300 to the MEICON conference.

M/S: OSBORNE/LABERGE

OSBORNE noted that while the event is not organized by graduate students, the conference is specifically focussed on graduate student work.

REZVANI asked whether the funds were available.

CHAPPEL asked whether the request falls within the purposes of the GSS.

There was a general discussion of budget priorities, and the nature of the event.

FAILED

TASK: CHAPPEL to write the MEICON organizers to let them know funding was declined.

[HASHEMI returned to the meeting.]

D. CAMPAIGN TO END TAX ON STUDENT LOANS

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS endorse the BC Federation of Students campaign to end tax on student loans.

M/S HASHEMI/OSBORNE

CARRIED

TASK: REZVANI will follow up with BCFS re: campaign to end tax on student loans.

E. OPERATIONAL RELATIONS AGENDA

Operational Relations Meeting: February 11, 2:30 – 3:30. Agenda items due Feb 7.

Motion: Items for the February 11, 2020 Operational Relations Agenda will include:

- *Pending fee referenda and fee change notice schedule for the Board of Governors*
- *Proposal to alter graduate students residence contract*
- *Follow up on meeting regarding MSP while on suspended study permit*

M/S HASHEMI/REZVANI

CARRIED

REZVANI reported he spoke with Catherine at Residence Life. In the near future the rules will be changed to allow move out for the same date in December, but all students can apply for to stay in the break with no charges. For May, there will also be improvements. Likely there will always be charges in August.

[REZVANI left at 4:50 pm]

F. ADVOCATE FUND ALLOCATION REQUEST

REF DOC: Student Advocate Fund Case 2020-02-05 Briefing

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS allocates up to \$2,500 from the Advocate Fund to assist a student with legal fees.

M/S HASHEMI/OSBORNE

CARRIED

TASK: CHAPPEL to arrange Advocate Fund allocation for the student in case briefing dated 2020-02-05.

[LABERGE left at 4:55 pm]

CLOSING ITEMS

EXECUTIVE INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATES/QUESTIONS

REPORTS TABLED

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

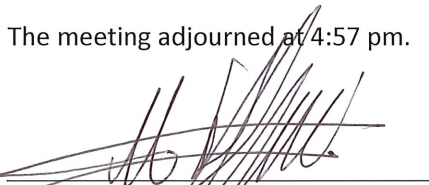
HASHEMI gave notice he would like to discuss the role of the managers at the next meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Next Executive Meeting: Feb 19 at 3:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 pm.



Approved, Chair

Approved, Executive Director

sc/KLP/SC