

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society
Graduate Representative Council
(ONLINE VIA BLACKBOARD) MEETING MINUTES
MAY 26TH, 2020, 5-7 PM

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

Anthropology: William Campbell	Electrical & Computer Engineering: Alexandros Dimopoulos	Physics & Astronomy: Maan Hani
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Jacob Imbery	English: Janice Niemann	Psychology: Connor Leshner, Thomas Ferguson
Biology: Nicholas Planidin	French: Tiffany Kuo	Public Administration: David Foster
Earth & Ocean Sciences: Rebecca Morris	Germanic & Slavic Studies: Braden Russell	Social Dimensions of Health: Anabelle Bernard Fournier
Economics: Brooklynn Trimble	Law: Eva Linde	
Education Curriculum & Instruction: Jeffrey Bruton	Mechanical Engineering: Graham Wilson	
	Nursing: Erin Donald	

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

Chair: Drake RUSHFORD	Director of Student Affairs:
Director of Communications: Matty CERVANTES	Director of Services: Angélique ROSE
Director of Finance: Jacob HUNT	Executive Director: Stacy CHAPPEL (non-voting)

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

Regrets:

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: Mónica Carbajal
History: Tim Cunningham
Sociology: Alison Barnard, Finn Deschner

Absent:

Art History & Visual Studies: Arash Eghbal Jahromi
Computer Science: Omer Wasim
Chemistry: Talita de Francesco*
Civil Engineering: Shervin Shameli
Geography: Parnian Rezaia
Greek & Roman Studies: Allie MacIlroy*
Neuroscience: Chad Williams
Pacific & Asian Studies: Zhuangyuan Wang*
Political Science: Rivka Landsberg, Sydney Krill
Public Health & Social Policy: Juliana McPhail*
Theatre: Devon Goldie*
Visual Arts: Lauren Brinson
CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RUSHFORD called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm, and gave a bilingual welcome.

Antoine ROSE offered a personal land acknowledgement.

STANDING ITEMS

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S BRUTON/CERVANTES

Approved by CONSENT.

2. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER (NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

BRUTON volunteered.

3. MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of the April GRC meeting were tabled as the minutes were not available.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

CHAPPEL indicated that outstanding tasks would be addressed during the meetings' agenda items.

5. REPORTS

A. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Provided in full in Appendix A.

B. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

MOTION: RESOLVED that Grad Council approves the Executive Board Reports received for the month of April.

M/S PLANIDIN, Chair Stipend Review Committee/NIEMANN

Approved by CONSENT.

C. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

MOTION: RESOLVED that Erin DONALD is elected to the GRC Appeals Committee.

M/S BRUTON/LESHNER

Approved by CONSENT.

MOTION: RESOLVED that Jeffrey BRUTON is elected to the GRC Events Committee.

M/S Angélique ROSE/Antoine ROSE

Approved by CONSENT.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Appeals: Angélique ROSE reported that the Committee has met for training and is hearing Appeals online on a regular monthly basis using procedures developed to ensure data security and confidentiality.
- Bylaw & Policy: RUSHFORD indicated that the work will be discussed later in the agenda.
- Communications: CERVANTES had nothing to report.
- Events: Angélique ROSE reported that Events have moved online. There are a variety of events being offered and turn out is good. ROSE provided an electronic poster of events for circulation.
- Finance: HUNT had nothing to report.
- Student Affairs: Antoine ROSE had nothing to report.
- Stipend Review: PALADIN reported that the Committee is compiling HORAN's material into a compendium of Committee procedures. PALADIN also reported the Committee remains concerned that there does not seem to be current procedures in the event that the SRC and GRC do not approve reports from any Executive Board member. This issue has been referred to the Bylaw and Policy Committee.
- Ad Hoc Committee on Participation: LESHNER reported that the Committee was working on researching how different departments ensure the participation of graduate students who may be distance students or on co-op. LESHNER reported that the Committee would be reporting its findings at the end of July.
- Electoral Officer: TRIMBLE expressed her hope that GSS would be having another 'chill' referenda experience. TRIMBLE gave the time frame for the June vote and requested GRC members help get the vote out to participate in these important decisions.

D. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES

Reference Document: <https://connect.uvic.ca/sites/vpac/studentaffairs/GSS/GradCouncil/Document/2019-2020%20Grad%20Council%20Documents/2020-05-26%20GRC%20May%20Meeting/2020-05-15%20-%20Senate%20Vacancies.pdf>

Annual appointments for graduate student representation on the 2020-21 UVIC Senate begin June 1. Some Senate Committee appointments have been accepted by Executive Board members including:

- Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching: Antoine Rose
- Senate Committee on Libraries: Drake Rushford

This left GSS with vacancies on 5 committees.

Incumbents were asked if they wished to continue. Nominations were requests and GRC members volunteered.

*MOTION: RESOLVED to elect Brooklynn TRIMBLE to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning;
FURTHER RESOLVED Jacob HUNT is elected to the Senate Committee on Awards;
FURTHER RESOLVED to elect ERIN DONALD to Academic Standards;
FURTHER RESOLVED Eva LINDE is elected to the Senate Committee on Appeals; and
FURTHER resolved JEFFREY BRUTON elected to Continuing Studies.*

E. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS – OPEN FLOOR

Make Transit Work Coalition: LINDE provided a summary report. See Appendix B. There is no automatic enrollment into the UPass for the summer term. GSS will offer an option for members to opt-in for the summer.

F. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

The GRC had a productive discussion regarding various issues raised by GRC members including:

- TAs being asked to fraudulently fill out time sheets for the university to avoid paying statutory pay for work on holidays. It was strongly recommended that members contact CUPE 4163 if this occurs.
- A perceived increase in work load with online course format versus in-class courses. It was recommended graduate students compile the workload from the total courses they are enrolled in, and send the totals through to the program manager.
- International students reporting a tuition increase over and above what was announced by the Board of Governors for this year (2%). CHAPPEL asked for international students to send her their tuition information if they were charged more than 2% so that this can be investigated.
- The concern about online work (as students, and as TAs/sessionals) needing to be coordinated over significant time zone differences. Antoine ROSE committed to the Student Affairs Committee taking up this issue.

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. FROM THE BYLAW AND POLICY COMMITTEE: INTERIM GOVERNANCE MANUAL

Reference Document: [2020-03-06 Interim Governance Manual](#)

*MOTION: WHEREAS the Bylaw and Policy Committee has updated the policy manual to create consistent formatting and coherent ordering of policies; and
WHEREAS the amendments do not include changes to existing policies; therefore
RESOLVED that the Policy Manual is replaced by the Interim Governance Manual as presented.
M/S: RUSHFORD, Bylaw and Policy Committee Chair/BRUTON
CARRIED*

2. FINANCE UPDATE – REVISED BUDGET AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING PROPOSALS

Reference: [March 31, 2020 Financial Statements](#). Presentation Slides can be found as Appendix C.

HUNT, Director of Finance, presented a financial update to the GRC, specifically to provide the context for the Executive Board's resolutions to the membership in the June Special General meeting. The Executive Board will be recommending that the membership approve the revised budget authorize borrowing funds under the federal government's COVID emergency small business program, and reallocate funds from the Building Fund to the Operating Fund to ensure adequate cash flow.

HUNT also provided information on the current context at UVic to explain the concerns regarding cash flow and rationale for not re-opening the Grad House Restaurant at this time. The limited numbers of members

on campus and lower enrollment specifically impact the GSS' Operating Fund, and have the potential to cripple the GSS Insurance Plans under the current provisions that only on-campus members are automatically enrolled. HUNT also outlined all the other actions that the Executive Board has taken for the financial security of the GSS including accessing the federal wage subsidy program, and initiating referenda to secure the GSS Extended Health and Dental Insurance Plans. The Executive Board has registered as the official proponent for the health and dental referenda.

3. RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE – JEFFREY BRUTON

BRUTON argued that the pattern of financial losses, not related to the COVID emergency, for Grad House Restaurant would indicate that the current management structure should be re-examined when the restaurant re-opens. One alternative suggested by BRUTON would be leasing the restaurant to a private operator.

FOSTER reminded Council that the Collective Agreement and wage structure for GSS staff would hold under any private contractor.

CHAPPEL stated that any suggestion that the new manager who started being paid in November 2019 made the financial situation worse would be unfair, as the September and October 2019 numbers do not reflect that the management work was done by staff paid under the Operating Fund.

TRIMBLE reminded members that the GSS does not own the Halpern Centre building. It is owned by UVic.

POTTS clarified that it is the Executive Board who maintains the fiduciary duty for the Society, the contract and personal liability for the GSS, not the GRC. However GRC members do have a duty to act in the best interest of the Society.

CHAPPEL confirmed that the Executive Board is well aware of the financial issues with the restaurant and will take this discussion for further consideration in its decisions about the restaurant's future.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT AVAILABILITY – JEFFREY BRUTON

BRUTON raised a concern that the most current monthly financial statements have not been made available for the monthly Finance Committee meetings. This has hindered the Finance Committee's ability to do its work. BRUTON asserted that this has been a continuing problem and asked for possible policy creation to resolve this issue.

CHAPPEL explained that there are some systemic issues which cause delays e.g. the UVic invoicing cycle, the payroll cycle, and that the GSS only has a 1 day a week bookkeeper.

TRIMBLE commented that there is often a trade off in non-profits between getting financial information quickly, or, waiting for the financial information provided to be complete and accurate.

BRUTON suggested that the Director of Finance move the Finance Committee meetings to later in the month. He also suggested that the GSS could spend more money for more bookkeeper time.

HUNT also stated that he would raise the financial statement availability issue with the auditors.

TASK: BRUTON and HUNT discuss possible policy changes in the Finance Committee to forward to the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

5. HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE PLANS REFERENDA Q&A

Reference: <https://gss.uvic.ca/referendum> Presentation slides can be found as Appendix D.

CHAPPEL reviewed the upcoming referenda questions on the GSS Health and Dental Insurance Programs, and the implications for both a yes and no vote. CHAPPEL also informed the GRC that part time students will now be eligible for automatic coverage (in keeping with UVic's adjustments to allow part time students access to scholarships etc.). CHAPPEL informed Council that Mindy Jiang has accepted the position of the Health and Dental Coordinator on a permanent basis.

GRC members provided some of their thoughts on pros, cons, of the referenda questions. FOSTER asked about the services that have limited availability under the public health emergency. CHAPPEL explained that the primary use of the plan by our members is for prescription coverage. As well, JIANG as information on the GSS website showing how a number of services now have expanded access. DONALD argued that supporting a yes vote on these referenda questions ultimately supports the ensuring the health security of more of our members.

6. BYLAW AND POLICY REVIEWS

RUSHFORD presented the following items which are being recommended to GRC for referral to the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

Procedural Note: All bylaw changes must be submitted to a general meeting for approval by a special resolution vote of the members. The Bylaw and Policy Committee can draft proposed changes, which, if accepted by the GRC, can be submitted to a general meeting.

a. Bylaw Review – Executive Roles (recommended by the Executive Board)

MOTION: WHEREAS the Director Roles as defined in the Bylaws are out of date; therefore RESOLVED that the Bylaw and Policy Committee review section 9 (and related sections) of the bylaws and propose amendments for consideration at the October General Meeting.
M/S: CERVANTES/BRUTON
CARRIED

b. Bylaw Review – Online Voting (recommended by the Executive Board)

Reference: [Societies Act](#) provisions for electronic means See: Part 2; Division 2, Section 11 (Bylaws) and Part 6, Division 3, Section 84, (Right to Vote).

MOTION: WHEREAS the Society's Act requires bylaws include specific provisions to allow online voting; WHEREAS online voting is required to meaningfully include distance students; therefore RESOLVED that the Bylaw and Policy Committee review sections of the bylaws that govern voting and propose amendments for consideration at the October General Meeting.
M/S TRIMBLE/FOURNIER
CARRIED
Abstention noted: CAMPBELL

(Note: Under special provisions of the COVID 19 public health emergency, member voting is permitted online.)

c. Policy on Grad Council Elections (recommended by FOSTER)

FOSTER stated that this motion came out of discussion at the Ad-Hoc Committee on Participation, recognizing the problem of the high GRC vacancy rate and the issue that there is a large discrepancy between the number of students that each academic unit has. Units with a small number of members do not have enough bodies/ time to participate on all the various committees and councils. Then it is difficult for graduate students to participate on GRC if they are in a large unit and only 1 member gets to have an official seat.

MOTION: Whereas the GRC has a total of 48 seats on the basis of one seat (voting member) per academic department, but in recent history there have consistently been numerous vacant seats; and

Whereas eight of the current GRC seats are filled by co-reps, showing that some departments have more than one member capable of serving on GRC, while 13 seats are vacant; and

Whereas the standardization of one seat per department, regardless of size, means large departments and faculties without departments (e.g., Business) are under-represented on GRC; and

Whereas the small size of other departments makes it difficult to fill their GRC seats, because of the very limited population of students from which a person able to sit on GRC must be found; and Whereas students in some departments find it difficult to sit on GRC due to the nature of their program (e.g., co-op, distance or practicum) but would still benefit from representation by someone in their faculty; and

Whereas this combination of factors results in the current status quo of numerous vacant seats, which leaves some members of the Society unrepresented and reduces the effectiveness of the Society; and

Whereas this situation could be remedied by replacement of the current structure of one seat per department with a new structure of representation by faculty based on the size of each faculty, with representation of multiple departments within faculties provided through the electoral system;

RESOLVED that the GRC tasks the Bylaw and Policy Committee with the creation of a set of bylaws for a new GRC structure, in conformance with the following principles and practices:

- 1. GRC representatives shall be allocated by faculty. Every faculty, as well as Interdisciplinary Studies, shall have a minimum of one representative.*
- 2. The number of GRC representatives per faculty shall reflect the proportionate size of the faculties, based on annual graduate student FTEs from the preceding year.*
- 3. Where a faculty has more than one representative and there are candidates from multiple departments, there will be multiple departments represented. This shall be done by adopting the following electoral system for multiple-seat faculties:*

1st seat: the candidate with the most votes is declared elected.

2nd and subsequent seats: the candidate with the most votes who comes from a different department from the candidate(s) already declared elected is declared elected.

If none, the candidate with the most votes is declared elected.

4. *The Bylaw and Policy Committee shall develop 3-5 models using these principles which shall be presented to all interested GRC members at a special open committee meeting for feedback at least one month prior to the September meeting of GRC.*
5. *The Bylaw and Policy Committee shall take feedback from GRC members into account in developing the final proposal which shall be submitted to the September meeting of GRC for inclusion on the GSS AGM agenda.*

M/S: FOSTER/KUO

CARRIED

TRIMBLE commented that if she had had to run for a GRC at a Faculty level, it would have probably prevented her from volunteering.

LESHNER argued that with the current vacancy rate, trying an alternate model is warranted.

Amendment: To change 'in conformance' to 'consider'.

M/S RUSHFORD/CAMPBELL

CARRIED

Motion as Amended:

CARRIED

MOTION: *To extend the meeting until 7:10 pm*

BRUTON/CAMPBELL

CARRIED

GSS Rep and Alternate By-Law and Policy Manual Conflict (recommended by BRUTON)

For discussion. See Appendix E for briefing.

CHAPPEL reminded GRC that in October GRC already recommended bylaw changes regarding reps, co-reps and alternates be presented to a general membership meeting. These changes should have been adopted at the March SAGM, however the sudden need to move the SAGM online meant that a shorten agenda was dealt with and these changes were bumped. CHAPPEL expressed concern that the changes being proposed with these motions may contradict the previous work and decisions by the GRC and the pending bylaw changes.

MOTION: RESOLVED paragraph two in Sec. 2.2. of the GSS Policy Manual that is struck out below:

"It is up to GSS members within each department to decide who will represent the department on Grad Council in a primary and/or alternative capacity. The method of selection is also up to these members, and the GSS will be informed of the identity of these individuals upon their selection. At a minimum every graduate student registered in the department will be notified by email of the opportunity to sit on the Grad Council, and the means to discover how they can be nominate for the position"

MOTION: RESOLVED that GSS Reps provide written notice to GSS staff if they want to appoint an alternate. This is important if any person currently thought to be an alternate is to have official standing.

MOTION: RESOLVED to direct GSS staff to inform departments that only GSS Representatives are elected, and they the elected Rep may appoint an Alternate if they choose.

MOTION: RESOLVED to omnibus the previous 3 motions into one.

FOSTER/CAMPBELL

CARRIED

MOTION: To extend the meeting until 7:30 pm.

TRIMBLE/BRUTON

CARRIED

FOSTER received confirmation that the intention of this motion was not to affect departments which elect co-reps.

CHAPPEL asked if the intention was to refer these to the Bylaw and Policy Committee for revision.

BRUTON asked that the GRC not refer and pass the motions to make the changes now.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

CARRIED

7. VIPIRG FEE

Request to refer to October General Meeting (recommended by FOSTER):

MOTION: Whereas the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) ended its status as a UVic-affiliated organization and stopped accepting student fees in August 2019; and Whereas the GSS continued to collect the VIPIRG fee of \$2 per student per term from September 2019 to April 2020; and

Whereas the GSS held a referendum on March 4 to 6, 2020 asking members if they approved continuing to collect the VIPIRG fee and directing it to a new organization; and

Whereas the referendum question on the VIPIRG fee did not pass; and

Whereas the GSS continues to hold the funds that were collected as the VIPIRG fee from September 2019 to April 2020; and

Whereas these funds should be reallocated to the GSS Operating Fund, given that the Operating Fund has been impacted by the pandemic closures, and the additional funding would assist the GSS in continuing to serve all its members;

RESOLVED that the following motion be added to the agenda of the next GSS Annual General Meeting:

“RESOLVED that all funds collected by the GSS as VIPIRG fees from September 2019 to April 2020 be reallocated to the GSS Operating Fund.”

M/S FOSTER/CAMPBELL

CHAPPEL confirmed that the last referendum did commit to members that if there was a ‘no’ vote, which occurred, that members could expect proposals to distribute the collected fees at a general membership meeting.

CARRIED

8. NEXT GRC MEETING

It was decided that the GRC will have a summer meeting on July 28, 2020.

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS

Special General Meeting – June 2, 2020

Health and Dental Plan Referendum June 3- 5, 2020

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

LESHNER requested graduate students make an effort to support their local businesses that are struggling during the pandemic.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

M/S CAMPBELL/Angelique ROSE

CARRIED

Meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

klp/

X 

Drake Rushford
Chair

X 

Stacy Chappel
Excutive Director

APPENDIX A: CHAIR'S REMARKS

May 26, 2020

First off, I would like to thank you all for attending our second online Grad Council meeting this evening. All of us are still feeling the stress and anxiety of COVID-19, but perhaps as places begin to reopen, we will regain a sense of normalcy. That said, I know there is still a feeling of uncertainty for many of our members around access to resources for research and funding. We have met with members of the UVIC administration in order to advocate for the needs of graduate students and we will continue to advocate going forward. Additionally, early today I met with executives from the Graduate Student Societies at UBC, SFU, and UNBC so that we may coordinate our efforts to voices and alert the BC Government to the needs of graduate students. The current plan is to write a incorporate our members concerns in a letter co-written by all four GSS's which we will be sent to the Ministry of Advanced Education.

Aside from this advocacy work, the GSS has been busy the past month. We have called both a Special General Meeting for next Tuesday as well as a Health and Dental Plan Referendum for next Wednesday to Friday. At the Special General Meeting we will be requesting permission to take advantage of the Canada Emergency Business Account Loan Program and make use of the Building Fund. Given the extraordinary circumstances we find our selves in due to COVID-19, these decisions are incredibly important. As such, I am asking you each to please attend the Special General Meeting and, if possible, bring a friend, or two, or five, so that we can reach quorum and pass these motions.

Similarly, the Executive Board is advocating for members to vote 'Yes' on the health and dental referendum regarding the automatic assessment of distance students. Passing this referendum is vital to keeping costs down and ensuring that none of our members accidentally lose their coverage. So I am once again asking that each of you vote in the referendums next week and encourage other voting members to do the same.

Finally, thank you all again for being with us tonight.

Drake Rushford

GSS Chair 2020-21.

APPENDIX B: MAKE TRANSIT WORK COALITION REPORT

May 21, 2020

The UVSS announced they are introducing an opt-in possibility for the bus pass for summer. (Note: The GSS has instituted a similar option for members.)

Also, UVSS has tried to talk with the Transit Commission about getting a partial refund for the spring term bus pass, because fares for busses were free for a few weeks and at the same time service was reduced. However, this attempt was unsuccessful.

Eva Linde

GSS Make Transit Work Coalition Rep

APPENDIX C: FINANCE UPDATE PRESENTATION – JACOB HUNT

YEAR END STATEMENTS: PROFIT (LOSS)

Fund	Year End (March 31)
Operating (1)	(1,326.77)
Food and Beverage	(60,075.13)
Health and Dental (2)	539,638.32
Capital	67,607.83
Building	3.78

(1) Inter-fund transfer of staffing and shared administrative costs off to be transferred from Health and Dental to Operating (~\$5,000)
 (2) Health and Dental surplus to be adjusted, and cover summer plan bills (~\$55,000)

BALANCE SHEET (EQUITY)

Fund	Equity at March 31 Year End
Operating (1)	\$ 452,568.54
Food and Beverage	-\$ 453,233.27
Health and Dental	\$ 578,757.52
(Includes Health Stabilization)	(Stabilization fund: \$39,119.20)
Capital	\$931,355.02 (Includes capital assets)
(Cash assets \$148,272.03)	
Building	\$ 7,526.20

(1) After year end transfers, Operating Fund begins year with ~\$5,000 equity available

CURRENT SITUATION

Current enrolment for Semester 2020 semester is at 87% of budget.
 University plans to conduct Fall classes online (primarily) in full semester.
 Until the University returns to on-campus the restaurant won't have the customer base it needs and this means it won't operate in the meantime.
 Students registered in online classes not assessed health and dental plan fees with tuition.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Cash flow projection – over three years
 Revised budget
 Initiate Special General Meeting
 Initiate Health and Dental distance student fee referendum

PLANNED RESPONSE: ENROLMENT

Scenario	Action proposed	Result (if actions taken)
Enrolment 87% of budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-fund cash flow management Reduce spending on events, dept grants Federal government 10% wage support Use \$26,000 Building Fund Reserve Federal government COVID-19 loan program (CFWS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating reserve reduced slightly Federal loan repaid by December 2021
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor enrolment and UVC COVID-19 response 	

PLANNED RESPONSE: HEALTH AND DENTAL

Referendum Outcome	Financial Impact
Distance H&D fee referendum fails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee increase for next members to join plan Usage rate could impact future renewal pricing Increase opt in admin fee by at least \$25/year Draw on Stabilization Fund to cover plan administration if needed
Distance H&D fee referendum passes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilization Fund is not used to cover administration Opt in fee remains \$10 above tuition rate

NEXT STEPS

Executive Board seeking **Special General Meeting** approval needed for:

- Building fund transfer of 26,000 to Operating Fund
- Approval to participate in Federal government interest-free loan (CFWS)
- Approval of revised budget (budget posted at <http://gsuvt.ca/sign/>)

Executive Board advocating **YES** vote on Health and Dental Plan referendum question on distance student assessment

How can you help?

We need quorum for the Special GM and to have a high turn out on the vote!

APPENDIX D: INSURANCE PLAN REFERENDA PRESENTATION

HEALTH & DENTAL REFERENDUM

Voting at <https://webvote.ubc.ca>

June 3 – 5

All currently registered graduate students are voting members.

Quorum required is 5% of voting members.

Election Officer is Brooklyn Trimble: brooklyn@ubc.ca

Fees charged with tuition must be approved by referendum.

Any change approved takes effect September 1, 2020.

6:30 PM

REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

Question 1

Are you in favour of automatically assessing graduate students who are enrolled full-time off campus (online) for GSS Extended Health and Dental Plan at the same rate as students registered full-time on campus or on co-op (\$407/year Extended Health Plan fee and \$236/year Dental Plan fee)?

Question 2

Are you in favour of increasing the Extended Health Plan fee \$0.17/month (from \$407/year to \$409/year) to include vaccine coverage for travel and influenza vaccine?

Question 3

Are you in favour of increasing the Dental Plan fee by \$1.00 per month (from \$236/year to \$245/year) to maintain current dental coverage rates?

QUESTION 1 – ASSESSING DISTANCE STUDENTS

YES VOTE

Every full-time graduate student assessed for the plan with tuition

Students who have comparable coverage can opt out in September

Students living outside Canada can opt out in September.

NO VOTE

Most students would have to opt in to obtain coverage.

Opt in rate would increase by at least 25% per year – in addition to any increases approved in this referendum

QUESTION 2 – HEALTH PLAN FEE INCREASE

YES VOTE

Fee (when charged with tuition) increases from \$407/year to \$409/year

Vaccines for influenza and travel are added to the coverage

NO VOTE

Same fee, same coverage

(Fee (when charged with tuition) remains \$407/year, coverage unchanged)

QUESTION 3 - DENTAL PLAN FEE INCREASE

YES Vote

Increased fee, same coverage:

Fee (when charged with tuition) from \$236/year to \$245/year

Coverage remains the same

No Vote

Same fee, reduced coverage

Fee (when charged with tuition) remains \$236/year

Coverage reduced from 70% to 60% coverage

OTHER HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN NEWS

Mindy Jiang is our new Health and Dental Plan Coordinator, in the permanent role effective June 1.

In 2020-2021 part time students will be eligible to opt in to the plan (temporary)

APPENDIX E: BY-LAW/POLICY MANUAL CONFLICT AGENDA ITEM

To: Drake Rushford, GSS Chair

From: Jeffrey Bruton, GSS Councilor, EDCI

Date: May 25, 2020

Re: By-Law / Policy Manual Conflict Agenda Item Request for May 26 2020 GSS Council Meeting

Per your request, this document is being provided to include in the agenda appendix of the GSS Council meeting of May 26, 2020, to provide information regarding my requested agenda item.

Historically, it was a common belief among GSS staff and Board members that both GSS Council Representatives and Alternate Representatives are elected by the various academic departments. This belief was based on Sec. 2.2 of the GSS Policy Manual which states "It is up to GSS members within each department to decide who will represent the department on Grad Council in a primary and/or alternative capacity."

The above section of the Policy Manual is in direct conflict with Sec. 6.3 (e) of the GSS By-Laws which states "Each Grad Rep shall have the power to appoint an alternate from their academic unit to act in their place and stead at Grad Council. The alternate must be a member of the Society, and the alternate shall have full voting privileges. The Executive Board may require the alternate to present a written authorization from the Grad Rep."

By-Laws are the highest governance document in a society or corporation and always take precedence if documents are in conflict, as they are in this case. Since By-Laws always prevail, this means Alternate Representatives are never elected. They are appointed by the GSS Representative if the GSS Rep. chooses to appoint one. Further, any current GSS Alternate Representatives that were "elected" have no official standing unless they are appointed by the sitting GSS Representative.

Another belief held by some past GSS Board members is that Representatives and Alternates (if appointed) are equal in status, and share the duties associated with GSS Council membership. This belief is not correct and has nothing in either the By-Laws, or the Policy Manual that supports it. Historically in all types of governance, Alternates only have authority when taking the place of a Representative that is not in attendance, and Sec. 6.3 (e) of the GSS By-Laws clearly states "... an alternate from their academic unit to act in their place and stead..."

Suggested Actions:

1. Remove the part of paragraph two in Sec. 2.2 of the GSS Policy Manual that is struck out below:

"It is up to GSS members within each department to decide who will represent the department on Grad Council in a primary and/or alternative capacity."

2. GSS Reps provide written notice to GSS staff if they which to appoint an alternate. This is important if any person currently thought to be an Alternate is to have official standing.

3. Direct GSS staff to inform departments that only GSS Representatives are elected, and that the elected Rep may appoint an Alternate if they choose.