*University of Victoria Graduate Students’ Society*

Executive Board

## (Online via Blackboard) MEETING MINUTES

## January 6, 2021

**EXECUTIVE PRESENT:** Drake RUSHFORD**,** Chair; Nicole KENT, Director of Communications; Jacob HUNT, Director of Finance; Daniel GUDIÑO, Director of Services; Antoine ROSE, Director of Student Affairs, Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (ex-officio)

# Standing Items

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm with RUSHFORD in the chair. Land acknowledgement offered by RUSHFORD.

## Approval of the Agenda

Motion: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S ROSE/KENT

CARRIED

## Approval of minutes

Motion: RESOLVED that the minutes from the [December 21st, 2020 Executive Board meeting](https://connect.uvic.ca/sites/vpac/studentaffairs/GSS/GradCouncil/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/sites/vpac/studentaffairs/GSS/GradCouncil/Document/2016-2017%20Grad%20Council%20Documents/2016-17%20Grad%20Council%20Minutes/2017-07-25%20GRC%20Minutes%20DRAFT.docx&action=default) are approved with minor corrections for the signatures to replace Matty CERVANTES with Kyla TURNER.

M/S ROSE/GUDIÑO

CARRIED

## Business arising from previous meetings

**Complete:**

TASK: TURNER to provide the bookkeeper with memo regarding additional $100 December stipend.

TASK: TURNER to look into Electoral Officer policies and documents on Z: drive, Connect, etc. for next Executive board meeting.

TASK: TURNER to grant KENT access to the D. Communications role-based email.  
TASK: RUSHFORD emailed President Hall’s office re: townhall before March. Will hear back regarding dates the week of January 11.

1. committee appointments

No appointments to be made.

1. correspondence received

REF DOC: UVIC/GSS Executive Meeting #4 time change to 1:00-2:00 on March 24th

REF DOC: ED monthly report

Motion: RESOLVED the correspondence presented has been received by the Executive Board.

M/S: ROSE/HUNT

CARRIED

1. Agenda planning, or meeting debrief (GRC, operational relations etc.)
   1. GSS/SWC Bi-Monthly Meeting – January 13th, 2021
   2. Operational Relations – January 18th, 2021
   3. GRC – January 25th, 2021
   4. UVIC/GSS Executive Meeting #3 – February 10th, 2021
      1. RA Legal Status
      2. Anti-racism Campaign

Discussion:

HUNT looking for clarification on SWC building updates and communication strategy regarding building completion and services.

TURNER looking to include Summer 2021 courses in Operational Relations.

GUDIÑO reminds board that Operational Relations requested a response re: Welcome letter asking President Hall to divest from non-renewal energies.

RUSHFORD clarified that he and CERVANTES spoke to many of the same committee members about this issue along with the UVSS at another meeting.

ROSE will set meeting re: RA legal status this week. RUSHFORD requested ROSE set meeting ASAP.

1. Lobbying Reports

RUSHFORD and CERVANTES met with President Hall re: divestment and climate emergency declaration December 18.

No other meetings to report.

**TASK: TURNER to clarify which meetings need to be reported as lobbying activities.**

1. Annual plan check-in  
   RUSHFORD has worked on organizing Bylaw and Policy committee work in order to lay groundwork for next committee meeting.  
   GUDIÑO will use events survey results to create action place for advertising events and including more members (especially distances/off-campus students) in events for subsequent board.

# meeting Business

## BC gss memorandum of understanding

REF DOC: [GSSBC MOU Draft](https://connect.uvic.ca/sites/vpac/studentaffairs/GSS/Exec/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/sites/vpac/studentaffairs/GSS/Exec/Document/2020-21%20Executive%20Board%20Meeting%20Documents/2021-01%20Exec%20Board%20Meeting%20Documents/GSSBC%20MOU%20Draft.docx&action=default)

Discussion:

RUSHFORD gave history of GSSBC re: COVID-19 measures and responses from the Ministry of Advanced Education Skills and Training being focused on undergrad needs only. This alliance allows for more collective action. RUSHFORD has concerns regarding the current draft of the MOU especially re: federating.

TURNER suggested an even cost share each year for the sake of consistency and predictable for budgeting.

RUSHFORD clarified this is still under consideration. He is requesting more transparency around finances and stronger language regarding costs and what would be done with any surpluses. However, he doesn’t want to trigger a federation vote by increasing the dues to this alliance.

GUDIÑO asked what the discussions have been like regarding chair position and financial obligations being tied together. How will the executive members of the GSSBC be elected? By the executive boards of each institute’s board? Will there be compensation for the GSSBC executives?

RUSHFORD each institute’s executive board will assign one voting member to the GSSBC. There needs to be corrected language regarding chair succession being linked to university, rather than individual. I.e. the chair will rotate by university. So far, work has been collaborative and the chair has not taken on too many additional duties above other board members.

GUDIÑO seeking clarification: do the GSSBC exec members have to be institute exec members?

RUSHFORD it was suggested the Director External be the GSSBC board member, but not all GSS’s have a Director External. It fits best with our Chair or D. Communications.

GUDIÑO how will the additional hours affect our operations if the Chair or D. Communications is committing to all this work?

RUSHFORD we are at a disadvantage because we don’t have a Director External, as the Chair leads or is responsible both internal and external bodies and committees.

GUDIÑO would our bylaws and budget allow us to have a director stationed for work with GSSBC to account for the additional hours (e.g. a Director External)?

RUSHFORD the workload has been 1-2 meetings/month plus some documentation preparation between meetings. But this is not an overwhelming amount of work so far. We should put the issue to the Stipend Review once we have a more solidified MOU. If the GSSBC decides to federate, they will need to have one elected official from each university, which will change the time/money considerations.

RUSHFORD Is the GSS able to afford say $250/year to support this alliance?

HUNT theoretically yes. It’s not a whole lot. But I don’t want to make comments beyond that.

**TASK: RUSHFORD will bring BC GSS MOU to grad council in February to see if they support this initiative. He wants more financial details in the MOU before bringing the MOU to GRC.**

## in-person summer courses

REF DOC: Appendix A

Motion: RESOLVED that the GSS does currently not support more in-person courses during the Summer term of 2021 until there are clear plans from the University regarding safety of in-person courses.

M/S: RUSHFORD/HUNT

Discussion:

HUNT re question 1: COVID has changed my risk tolerance regarding public health. This is a common experience and there may be reluctance to return to in-person classes. More safety information is required. Are masks required? What can we expect from other participants? It puts a lot of trust in fellow students to keep us well.

ROSE It’s important to continue preventing transmission of COVID-19. In support of more online events/course. It is better to wait and be safer. The risk of an outbreak at a point where the pandemic should be abating by returning too soon.

RUSHFORD It is better to hold off on returning to normalcy before normalcy comes.

GUDIÑO excited to hear from the University on their perspectives. What are THEY doing to have transmission controls rather than just putting it on the students (i.e. putting out a full safety plan for distancing by having few students in large spaces, outdoor classes, etc.). There could be an option for more choice. The university should be the one guiding the safety protocols rather than the students.

RUSHFORD to summarize: the University needs to own safety planning to prevent transmission.

HUNT The majority of students will be younger, lower-risk people, i.e. low priority for vaccines. Obviously there are higher risk members of the community who might have access to the vaccine before the start of Summer term. I’d like to see very clear language, obligations, priorities around vaccination contingencies. It is not a matter of student risk tolerance, it is a matter of the University’s obligation to promote safety on campus.

RUSHFORD there may also be vaccinated carriers.

KENT The new strain of COVID is alleged to be more deadly (more contagious), what are the contingency plans for housing, etc. in case a full course needs to isolate? What are the contingency plans? We need to look at students who need to travel to BC. How safe to the environment for them? The GSS needs to submit a strong position on the matter.

TURNER What is the finalized date that the University needs to submit a safety plan and the deadline to announce the plans that we will include in our response.

RUSHFORD A survey has shown that students don’t want to come to campus. Study spaces are not filling. The survey shows that students are not comfortable returning to campus. There is additional stress to students who don’t want come to campus.

HUNT if courses are only offered on-campus, will students have to choose between safety and academic record, graduation, etc.

RUSHFORD The return to in-person classes could also make it difficult for international students to get their immigration status approved if they are NOT in in-person classes.

GUDIÑO if the University is going to move to a norm of in-person class, they MUST have options in which students who cannot or will not attend campus have equal access to all services. If the University cannot guarantee that students will have equal access to services regardless of delivery platform, we cannot support a return to in-person courses.

ROSE: request a minute of silence for the fallen individual in the USA at the Capitol as a result of the violent protests of the confirmation of the election of President-Elect Biden in the Senate.

RUSHFORD The University should continue to make the courses that CANNOT be offered online available in person. A return to on-campus learning too soon jeopardizing the education of lab based programs. They need to consider the equity issue regarding internet access.

HUNT Does the University have plans to host vaccine clinics? RUSHFORD Wouldn’t be surprised. But not answers yet.

GUDIÑO Would it be appropriate to have a discussion on this with the SWC?

**Summer 2021 Planning Questions**

1. What concerns do you think students would have if we offered a lot more courses in-person?
2. Should we try to offer some sections online and in-person?
3. Would students want to come back for shorter terms (three weeks, for instance)?
4. Do you have advice on communicating to students about summer session?

CARRIED

**TASK: TURNER to draft In-Person Summer 2021 Course response letter for board feedback.**

# Closing Items

## Executive informal discussion/updates/questions

Chair: RUSHFORD: Focused on bylaw and policy committee work to set up the next meetings for success. Will review position statements and bylaw edits.

Director of Communications: KENT: Is following up on correspondence and monitoring social media to get a sense of our communication strategies.

Director of Finance: HUNT: No further work completed since last meeting. Except Labour Management Committee meeting today. Made headway of Work Study position and systemic issues with staffing and hours/workload.

Director of Services: GUDIÑO: The first training is next week! Naloxone Training with AVI. I’m concerned about the advertising for this event. So will be looking for support there. Looking for email by grad-sec, etc.

Director of Student Affairs: ROSE: Working with SFU on the creation of a BC Office of International Students as the linkages for these students are being cut-back. At the next SAC, we will start with the RA sub-committee and look at the creation of the BC Office of International Students to look at federal level advocacy to support this office.

RUSHFORD: One concern for the possible BC Office of International Students is that it would require a financial commitment. Are the advocacy services offered by ISS meeting the needs of our International Students so we don’t replicate services? We’d likely need a referendum for a fee increase to support the office financially.

Executive Director: TURNER: Focused on bylaw and policy work over the closure as well as labour management concerns. Need more time to focus on advocacy this month as this got de-prioritized.

Notice of motions, tabled agenda items for next executive meeting

Notice of Motion: BC Office of International Students lead by ROSE for next exec meeting.

Notice of Motion: Work Study positions.

Agenda consideration: Scheduling ICAT and EQHR training.

RUSHFORD: Please prep Annual Plan

## Upcoming meetings and important dates

Next Executive Meetings: January 20th at 3:00pm.

Next Operational Relations Meeting: January 18 ay 3:30pm.

adjournment

Motion: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

M/S KENT/ROSE

CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 4:29.

KT/klp



# Appendix A

**From:** Mandy Suen - Assistant to the AVP Student Affairs <stuaadmnasst@uvic.ca>   
**Sent:** December 24, 2020 11:47 AM  
**To:** Antoine Rose - GSS Director of Student Affairs <gssaff@uvic.ca>; Daniel Gudino - GSS Director of Services <gssserv@uvic.ca>; Drake Rushford - GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; Jacob Hunt - GSS Director of Finance <gssfinan@uvic.ca>; Jim Dunsdon - AVP Student Affairs <avpsa@uvic.ca>; Andrew Coward <acoward@uvic.ca>; Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>; Matilde Cervantes Navarrete - GSS Director of Communications <gssdcomm@uvic.ca>; Ron Proulx <rproulx@uvic.ca>; Stephen Evans – Acting Dean of Graduate Studies <graddean@uvic.ca>; Susan Lewis - Acting Vice Provost <viceprov@uvic.ca>  
**Cc:** Cheryl Lawrence - Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies <fgsadmin@uvic.ca>; Mandy Suen - Assistant to the AVP Student Affairs <stuaadmnasst@uvic.ca>; Maria Walker - FMGT Admin Assistant <fmgtaaed@uvic.ca>; Rhonda Ljunggren - vpfoasst <vpfoasst@uvic.ca>; Leanna Wong – Admin assistant to the Vice Provost <vpacadmin@uvic.ca>  
**Subject:** Summer 2021 Planning Questions [Due: Jan 11]

Dear GSS / UVic Operational Relations Committee members,

Jim Dunsdon requested that I share the below questions with you in hopes that you can respond to them by **noon on January 11, 2021**.  Your responses will be compiled and brought forward to the VPAC COVID-19 meeting in January.

**Summer 2021 Planning Questions**

1.            What concerns do you think students would have if we offered a lot more courses in-person?

2.            Should we try to offer some sections online and in-person?

3.            Would students want to come back for shorter terms (three weeks, for instance)?

4.            Do you have advice on communicating to students about summer session?

Thank you so much and I hope you have a restful break.

Best wishes,

Mandy

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| id:image001.jpg@01D2F4C8.5A5656D0 | Mandy Suen s*he/her/hers*  Administrative Assistant to the AVP Student Affairs  Division of Student Affairs  [University of Victoria](http://www.uvic.ca/)  T 250-853-3989  [uvic.ca/studentaffairs](http://www.uvic.ca/studentaffairs/index.php)  *Together, we transform students’ lives.* |

*We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day*