

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

(ONLINE VIA ZOOM) MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 28, 2021

EXECUTIVE PRESENT: David FOSTER, Chair; Nicole KENT, Director of Communications; Adair NG, Director of Services; Nahid SAFARI, Director of Student Affairs; Ryan KHAN, Director of Finance; Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting).

GUESTS: Karen L. POTTS, Office/Governance Coordinator (partial); Neil BARNEY, Office/Communications/Events Coordinator (partial); Mindy JIANG, Health and Dental Coordinator (partial)

STANDING ITEMS

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:33PM with FOSTER in the chair.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Land acknowledgement offered by KENT.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S: FOSTER/SAFARI

APPROVED BY CONSENT

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: RESOLVED the minutes from the April 21, 2021 Executive Board Meeting are approved as presented.

M/S: FOSTER/NG

APPROVED BY CONSENT

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

TASKS Completed:

2021-04-07 Follow up: FOSTER, NG and SAFARI, who were appointed as liaisons to external committees/organizations to contact the relevant committee or organization.

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Motion: RESOLVED nominations be opened for graduate student representatives to the following University of Victoria committees for 2020-21:

Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching – 1 member

Senate Committee on Planning – 1 member

Wellness Education and Health Promotion Advisory Committee – 1 member

Multifaith Services Advisory Board – 1 member

Childcare Services Advisory Board – 1 member

Social Sciences Equity and Diversity Committee – 1 member enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences

M/S: FOSTER/KHAN

Friendly amendment: to add Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses Project Steering Committee

Nominations: KENT to teaching and learning, NG to planning, SAFARI to Healthy Minds.

Motion: RESOLVED to table the following committees:

Wellness Education and Health Promotion Advisory Committee – 1 member

Multifaith Services Advisory Board – 1 member

Childcare Services Advisory Board – 1 member

Social Sciences Equity and Diversity Committee – 1 member enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences

M/S: FOSTER/NG

APPROVED BY CONSENT

Motion: RESOLVED to elect to the following members to the committees:

Nicole KENT, 2020-21 Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching

Adair NG, 2020-21 Senate Committee on Planning

Nahid SAFARI, 2021-22 Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses Project Steering Committee

M/S: FOSTER/NG

APPROVED BY CONSENT

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

No correspondence received.

OLD BUSINESS

1. ALLIANCE OF BC STUDENTS TRAINING CONFERENCE

Reference: Alliance of BC Students invited Executive members to a skills training conference.

DECISION: The GSS will not send any delegates to the Alliance of BC Students Training Conference.

NEW BUSINESS

1. SCHEDULING

Motion: RESOLVED the following dates are set for Executive Board Meetings:

Wednesday, May 12, 1:30pm

Wednesday, May 26, 1:30pm
Monday, May 31, 1:30pm
Wednesday, June 23, 1:30pm
Wednesday, July 7, 1:30pm
Tuesday, July 13, 1:30pm
Wednesday, July 28, 1:30pm
Wednesday, August 11, 1:30pm
Wednesday, August 25, 1:30pm

M/S: FOSTER/SAFARI

APPROVED BY CONSENT

Motion: RESOLVED the following dates are set for General Meetings:

Tuesday, October 25th, 2021

Tuesday, March 22nd 2022

M/S: FOSTER/SAFARI

Discussion:

TURNER presented the Societies Act, staff, and auditor perspectives on the AGM. The Societies Act requires AGM's to present the audited financial statements no more than 6 months after the end of the fiscal year (September 30). Options to comply with this are: meet in summer or September (with possible attendance and workload issues), meet in October and file a delay with Societies, or move the fiscal year.

DECISION: We will maintain October AGMs with an extension request filed annually to comply with the Societies Act. Intention to return to this issue later in the year.

TASK: TURNER to file for extension for the AGM with the Societies Act to allow for an October AGM.

APPROVED BY CONSENT.

Motion: BIRT the following dates are set for Executive Board training sessions:

EQHR, Indigenous Cultural Acumen, Sexualized Violence, Labour Relations

M/S: FOSTER/KENT

Motion: RESOLVED to table this motion.

M/S: FOSTER/KENT

APPROVED BY CONSENT

2. ANNUAL PLANNING "RETREAT" PLANNING

REF DOC: [Annual Planning Suggested Schedule](#)

Motion: *RESOLVED the following dates are set for Annual Plan meetings:*

May 5 1:30-3:30 Team Building

May 14 9:00-12:30 Restaurant Consultations and Referendum Preparation

May 21 9:00-1:00 Annual Planning "Retreat"

May 25 5:00-6:00 Games (attendance optional)

M/S: FOSTER/SAFARI
APPROVED BY CONSENT

3. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Agenda item tabled by consent, then brought back to discussion with the inclusion of staff guests.

DISCUSSION:

FOSTER brought up the Wednesday Coffee at Grad House as an excellent form of member engagement, along with social events such as nature hikes, tabling, etc. We could now focus on virtual town halls, virtual social events, virtual office hours. How do we engage people virtually? Are our virtual engagements as effective as in person? How do we encourage volunteers? Do we make GRC larger?

BARNEY offered the history of virtual social events, which have not brought in significant participation in the last year. We are partnering with Global Communities to improve engagement. Zoom fatigue is a key factor in engagement difficulties. We started looking at value added events, like the Speaker Series and the Training Series, including naloxone training. We've tried 3-4 things, and the Events Committee should be tackling this issue systemically. It is harder to offer incentives virtually (food, drink, etc.) How do we offer cheap/free and meaningful incentives? We should work on ensuring GSS info is going out through academic units. We also need to make sure our messaging is in plain language.

JIANG used to do introductions to Health and Dental in classrooms with informational hand outs. Relying on grad secretaries means we don't have all our information out to all membership. JIANG has included information re: bulletin sign up in her email signature.

POTTS provided written feedback on member engagement issues:

Who is a member – implications for service access, voting, who can be a GSS Director

Lack of control, access to our member list

Previously had illusion of member engagement but it was engagement with a very select demographic – on-campus, 'traditional' grad students

We need baseline information – what are the demographics of our current membership? Who are we connected to through our eBulletin, social media and who are we missing?

Member engagement needs priority consideration in all Executive work – at the GRC Committees, in how we conduct meetings, training for Executive in community building, in our budget. From training:

Arnstein's Ladder – very different levels/types of engagement/participation. Are we really set up to be member driven? Members only accessing services as customers or clients is not member driven! Are we just 'consulting' members about 'our' ideas? How are we hearing about member ideas? How are we supporting these members to run with these ideas?

Lack of volunteer supports – when we do have people come forward to be reps – there is no guidance, ongoing connection, or support.

Without our old ways of connecting with members – no physical location, no chatting when come in for services - what can we do instead to make sure every grad student who contacts the GSS understands that they are needed inside the GSS (not only as service users)? The GSS is not another UVic service. We are our members.

4. OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BC

DISCUSSION:

TURNER discussed the history of this advocacy: this office would do similar work to ISS and supporting it could indicate that GSS lacks support for ISS. We could also lobby UVic to increase support for ISS or we can lobby the government. If we move forward with this, we would need to pass a referendum for a fee to support this.

SAFARI discussed how Ontario's office saw 5000 student cases, and the office is willing to take up the MSP fees for international students. The office of international students is under the impression that we have 11000 international students who are GSS members.

FOSTER responded that it would be difficult to join a national or provincial student organization and agreed with TURNER re: ISS support.

TURNER mentioned there is a monthly ISS meeting to advocate for their services.

DECISION: SAFARI to seek further information from office of BC International Students and meet regularly with ISS.

5. EXECUTIVE BOARD 2021/22 OFFICIAL MASCOT

Motion: RESOLVED the nomination period for the 2021/2022 GSS Executive Board Official Mascot (the "Mascot") shall conclude on May 12, 2021,

FURTHER RESOLVED eligible candidates for the Mascot position shall be domestic animals who possess Executive Board members or GSS staff,

FURTHER RESOLVED the word "domestic" shall be interpreted loosely, and evidence to the contrary shall not be admissible,

FURTHER RESOLVED all candidates shall circulate photos to Executive Board and GSS staff members, along with a brief statement of candidacy which may be written or in multimedia format;

FURTHER RESOLVED the Mascot election shall take place at the May XX, 2021 Executive Board meeting;

FURTHER RESOLVED all GSS staff as well as Executive Board members are eligible to vote in the Mascot election;

FURTHER RESOLVED the Conflict of Interest Policy does not apply to the Mascot election;

FURTHER RESOLVED the Mascot election shall be conducted by the Electoral Officer, who shall have absolute power to determine the voting process, and shall not be bound by GSS policy, bylaws or anything else.

M/S: FOSTER/SAFARI

APPROVED BY CONSENT

6. STAFF MEET AND GREET

BARNEY, JIANG, and POTTS joined the meeting to formally introduce themselves, and their role at GSS. The need for structured means to keep communication and information flowing between Board and staff was discussed.

7. TRAINING: HISTORY OF THE GSS

Tabled by consent.

CLOSING ITEMS

EXECUTIVE INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATES/QUESTIONS

Chair: FOSTER trying to improve GRC experience.

Director of Communications: KENT no report.

Director of Finance: KHAN no report.

Director of Services: NG no report.

Director of Student Affairs: SAFARI no report.

Executive Director: TURNER busy with Board training planning.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Notion of Agenda Item: Member Engagement.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

****Task Reminder: Please keep your meetings and events up to date on the GRC Connect Calendar****

Next Executive Meetings:

May 14 9:00-12:30 Restaurant Consultations and Referendum Preparation

May 21 9:00-1:00 Annual Planning "Retreat"

Executive Board Meetings:

Wednesday, May 26, 1:30pm

Monday, May 31, 1:30pm

Wednesday, June 23, 1:30pm

Wednesday, July 7, 1:30pm

Tuesday, July 13, 1:30pm

Wednesday, July 28, 1:30pm

Wednesday, August 11, 1:30pm

Wednesday, August 25, 1:30pm

Last Scheduled 2020-21 GRC Meeting: June 8, 2021

AGM/SAGM: Tuesday, October 25th, 2021, Tuesday, March 22nd 2022

BCUWU GSS Bargaining Unit Days: Summer semester to be rescheduled from May 14, Nov. 10th 2021

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: Halpern Centre staffed only when needed.

GSS Online Office Summer Hours: Monday-Thursday 10 am – 4 pm. Closed Fridays.

UVic Meetings: Operational Relations: Other:

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: RESOLVED the meeting is adjourned at 3:30pm.

M/S: FOSTER/KHAN

APPROVED BY CONSENT

KT/klp/KT/kt

X

David Foster
GSS Chair 2021-22

X

Kyla Turner
Executive Director