

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society
Graduate Representative Council
([ONLINE VIA ZOOM](#)) MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 8, 2021, 5-7 PM

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

Anthropology: Robert Gustas	Alexandros Dimopoulos	Law: Adekunle (Kunle) Adewumi
Art History & Visual Studies: Mel Granley	English: Elyse Loewen	Medical Sciences (Neuroscience):
Chemistry: Gregory Gaube	French: Tiffany Kuo (Electoral Officer)	Hannah Reid
Economics: Gerard Mu	Geography: Brianna Brandon	Physics & Astronomy: Bobby Bickley
Electrical & Computer Engineering:	History: Michelle Snidal	

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

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

Recorder: GSS Governance Coordinator: Karen L. Potts

Regrets Received:

Earth & Ocean Sciences: Chrissy Schellenberg

Absent Without Notice or an Alternate:

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Michael Allison
Civil Engineering: Aryia Eini, Maryam Monazami
Educational Psychology & Leadership: Lauren Petersen
Music: Tiess McKenzie
Nursing: Erin Donald
Pacific & Asian Studies: Maeve Milligan
Political Science: Brianna Parent-Long
Psychology: Thomas Ferguson
Public Administration: Amanda Leclerc, Luisa Trux, Hannah Kim
Social Dimensions of Health: Courtney Majewski
Sociology: Talya Jespersen, Mandana Karimi
CUPE 4163: Christine Todd

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm with FOSTER in the chair.

SAFARI offered a personal land acknowledgement.

FOSTER acknowledged the recent discovery of the children's remains on the grounds of the Kamloops Residential School, and the impact of ongoing trauma on survivors. A minute of silence was held.

STANDING ITEMS

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.
M/S FOSTER/LOEWEN
APPROVED by Consent.

2. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER (NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

REID volunteered as timekeeper.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: RESOLVED that the approval of the Minutes of the April 20th, 2021 Grad Council meeting are tabled until the July 20 GRC.
M/S FOSTER/BRANDON
APPROVED by Consent.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

None.

5. REPORTS

A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

GSS Membership: As of May 28, 2021 there are 2536 GSS Members.

GRC Membership: GRC now consists of 32 voting members: 24 academic units (out of 47 academic units eligible), 1 additional academic unit, CUPE, and 5 Executive Board representatives.

Meeting Quorum: With 1 regret received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 15. The meeting is quorate.

B. CHAIR'S REMARKS

See Appendix A for the full text of the Chair's remarks.

Discussion:

DIMOPOULOS asked if consideration has been given to pool together with other graduate student societies in BC to try to provide insurance at a lower fee. TURNER explained that joining with another organization would require extra administration costs to have staff people in every organization to oversee the service. TURNER also explained that our members actively use the insurance and organizations with lower member use are reluctant to partner with us as their costs would increase. FOSTER also noted the restrictions in our bylaws regarding national or provincial organization affiliation that would be required to administer a shared plan.

BRANDON asked about the communication with TAs regarding the ventilation in specific classrooms. FOSTER was not aware of how this information was being communicated.

TASK: FOSTER committed to asking about ventilation communication at the next UVic/GSS Operational Relations meeting.

C. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING

Stipend Review did not have quorum and therefore have not reviewed, and are not able to recommend Executive Board reports from the past months.

6. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – RESIGNATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

MOTION: RESOLVED that the following resignations are accepted effective immediately:

- Erin Donald from the Student Affairs Committee
- Rachel Colquhoun from GRC and the Communications Committee

M/S FOSTER/KUO

APPROVED by Consent.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the following members are deemed to have resigned from the Communications Committee due to their failure to attend more than two consecutive meetings, as provided in GSS Committee Terms of Reference – General, section 1.4:

- Rachel Schneider
- Maryam Monazami
- Brianna Parent-Long

M/S FOSTER/ GUSTAS

As KENT was absent, TURNER read KENT's report from the previous Executive meeting minutes on the attendance issue. FOSTER noted that it is unusual to have to remove GRC reps from GRC Committees for non-attendance, but KENT needs to have people on the committee to move forward.

APPROVED by Consent.

[KENT joined the meeting.]

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

MOTION: RESOLVED that the following members are elected to the following 2020-21 GRC Committees:

Events: Nominated: Trisha Renken-Sebastian Elected: Trisha Renken-Sebastian

*Stipend Review: Nominations: Hannah REID Member elected: Hannah REID
FURTHER RESOLVED that Hannah REID's resignation from Bylaw and Policy committee is accepted effective immediately.*

M/S FOSTER/REID

APPROVED by Consent.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Appeals – NG reported that the Appeals Committee decided on two appeals this past month.
- Bylaw & Policy – FOSTER reported work has been done on the Policy on Policies to be discussed later in agenda, and work is underway on several bylaw amendments (online voting, outdated references to physical space, advertising, and clarifying Executive stipends) for the fall AGM.
- Communications – KENT again asked by volunteers to join the committee so that important communications projects can get underway.

- Events – NG reported that planning is underway for events in June and onwards.
- Finance – KHAN reported that the committee is still waiting for information from the GSS bookkeeper to be able to review the current financial status and prepare for the annual audit.
- Student Affairs – SAFARI reported that the April meeting was thwarted by technical difficulties, but the May meeting was well attended with a robust discussion of issues of the campus re-opening and accessibility.
- Stipend Review – GUSTAS reported that Stipend Review now has a full membership and will be able to meet in June.
- Ad Hoc Committees – none.
- Electoral Officer – TURNER reported that KUO has been working on overseeing the health and dental insurance referenda process.

7. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

Current vacancies are listed in Appendix C. Please help advertise among grad students and/or consider volunteering.

MOTION: RESOLVED that graduate student representatives are elected to the following UVic committees:

2021-22 Appointment Committee, Dean of Fine Arts – 1 member and 1 alternate in the Faculty of Fine Arts

Nominations: Melissa Granley Member elected: Melissa Granley

2021-22 Andy Farquarson Award for Teaching Excellence – 1 member

Nominations: Elyse Loewen Member elected: Elyse Loewen

2021-22 Senate Committee on Libraries – 1 member

Nominations: Jeffrey Bruton Election tabled.

2021-22 Campus Planning Committee – 1 member

Nominations: Jeffrey Bruton, Alex Dimopoulos Election tabled.

2021-22 Harry Hickman Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching and Educational Leadership and Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching Adjudication Committee – 1 member

Nominations: None.

2021-22 Make Transit Work Coalition – 1 member

Nominations: None.

2020-21 Wellness Education and Health Promotion Advisory Committee – 1 member

Nominations: None.

Friendly amendment: To add nominations and election to the 2021-22

Sexualized Violence Education and Awareness Advisory Council – 1 member

Nominations: None.

M/S FOSTER/GUSTAS

Discussion:

POTTS objected to nominations being presented at this meeting, without notice, that have not followed GSS procedures for non-GRC member application to UVic committee vacancies. Staff did not receive any applications and have not been able to verify eligibility.

FOSTER stated that nominations can be made at meetings and he was making these nominations.

DIMOPOULOS withdrew his nomination for the Campus Planning Committee.

TURNER objected that GSS procedures for committee appointments were not followed.

MOTION: to table appointments to the Senate Committee on Libraries and Campus Planning Committee.

M/S BICKLEY/ DIMOPOULOS

CARRIED.

Main Motion: APPROVED by Consent.

BREAK FOR 5 MINUTES

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:

POTTS presented a summary of current GRC reps' participation on GRC committees and UVic committees to date for the 2020-21 GRC year. POTTS noted that all GRC reps are required to participate on at least one GRC committee, and are strongly encouraged to contribute to at least one UVic committee. Several GRC members have gone above and beyond this contribution. POTTS asked that the summary be reviewed, and that any errors be flagged. See Appendix B.

SNIDAL – Humanities Hiring Committee – finished all site visits and will be recommending a candidate for ratification shortly.

8. DEPARTMENT REPORTS: NEW FORMAT - BREAKOUT ROOMS

Members were given the chance to informally discuss issues facing students in their department or other issues pertaining to graduate students at UVic in groups of 4-5 with one or more Executive Board member in each breakout room. From issues cited in the task/motion log, members were encouraged to further discuss:

- International student fees, tuition and other experiences
- Issues related to VPN and data security, specifically for international students
- Return to campus issues, specifically accommodations needed for medically at risk students

SMALL GROUPS REPORT BACK: Some of the discussion points reported included:

- Missing being able to have GRC committees meet in person
- Low engagement: Don't have members reaching out to GRC councillors on issues, and when they ask for feedback usually only get 1-2 members responding
- Stress on international students not being able to access financial assistance when they arrive, particularly the costs of quarantine hotels etc.
- Unequal application of TA requirements on hours in different departments
- Apprehension due to lack of communication about returning to on campus
- Lack of discussion about impact on program, research timelines

In an informal poll, members expressed support for continuing the use of small group discussion for department reports in future GRC meetings.

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. POLICY ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Lead: David FOSTER

REF DOCS: [Policy on Policies and Procedures](#); [Governance Definitions](#); [Interim Governance Manual](#)

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Policy on Policies and Procedures is adopted as presented, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governance Definitions are adopted as presented, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the existing definition of "Procedure" is struck from the Interim Governance Manual, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

M/S FOSTER, as Chair of Bylaw and Policy/BICKLEY

Discussion: BRANDON asked about help for Committees who do not have members with experience in policy writing. FOSTER suggested that policy writing training might be provided.

APPROVED by Consent.

2. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE STIPEND FOR APRIL 2021

Lead: Robert GUSTAS

MOTION: RESOLVED that Grad Council approves the payment of \$375 to Ryan KHAN in compensation for hours worked as Director of Finance during the month of April, 2021.

M/S GUSTAS/BRANDON

Friendly Amendment to note that this motion is for APRIL 2021, not 2020.

APPROVED by Consent.

3. 2021-22 GRC ACADEMIC UNITS

Lead: Kyla TURNER

REF DOCS: [GRC Academic Unit Eligibility Briefing Note](#)

Following past GSS practice, as outlined in the linked briefing note, TURNER provided the list of academic units that will automatically have GRC seats for 2021-22.

Anthropology	Computer Science	Electrical & Computer	Germanic & Slavic
Art History & Visual	Curriculum &	Engineering	Studies
Studies	Instruction	English	Greek & Roman
Biochemistry &	Earth & Ocean	Environmental Studies	Studies
Microbiology	Sciences	Exercise Science,	Health Information
Biology	Economics	Physical & Health	Science
Business	Educational	Education	Hispanic & Italian
Chemistry	Psychology &	French	Studies
Child & Youth Care	Leadership Studies	Geography	History
Civil Engineering			Indigenous Education

Interdisciplinary
Studies
Law
Linguistics
Mathematics &
Statistics

Mechanical
Engineering
Music
Neuroscience
Nursing
Pacific & Asian Studies
Philosophy

Physics & Astronomy
Political Science
Psychology
Public Administration
Public Health & Social
Policy

Social Dimensions of
Health
Social Work
Sociology
Theatre
Visual Arts
Writing

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS

Health and Dental Insurance Referendum June 9-11, 2021

Next GRC meeting: July 20, 2020

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR NEXT MEETING

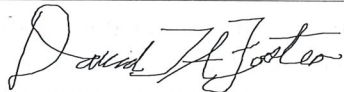
None.

ADJOURNMENT


MOTION: RESOLVED that the meeting is adjourned.
M/S FOSTER/ DIMOPOULOS
APPROVED by Consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

klp/KT

X 

David Foster
GSS Chair 2021-22

X 

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX A: CHAIR'S REMARKS

As reported by David Foster, GSS Chair 2021-22 at the June 8th, 2021 meeting of the GRC:

- The Executive Board has been busy with renegotiating the GSS Health and Dental Plan and organizing a referendum for GSS members to vote on the fee amount and coverage. A town hall meeting was held on the referendum questions earlier on June 8, and voting is June 9, 10 and 11 via Webvote. All information can be found on the GSS website.
- Persephone Be-YELLS-abub Turner (Kyla Turner's cat) has been elected as the 2021/22 Executive Board Mascot.
- Discussions are ongoing with the University administration, UVic faculty and staff unions, and the UVSS regarding concerns with a full return to in-person classes.
- UVic has said they do not plan to require vaccination to attend in-person classes or events.
- However, UVic will facilitate international students getting their vaccine on campus, for those international students coming to Canada who were not able to get vaccinated at home.
- UVic is upgrading the ventilation system of as many buildings as possible, but it appears not all buildings will be able to have the ventilation system that is recommended for COVID-19 safety by September.
- UVic faculty have requested that instructors have the ability to require masks in their classes, or alternatively that masks be required when the ventilation system has not been upgraded.
- The University administration has indicated they are not willing to have mask rules that are stricter than the minimum requirements of provincial health orders, even though a number of other businesses and organizations have adopted mandatory masks over the previous year when it was not required by provincial rules.
- The University has said that if a professor has a medical/disability issue that makes them high risk for teaching in person, they may be accommodated by teaching the class online.
- The University has said they will accommodate international students who are unable to arrive in Canada by September due to travel restrictions in their home countries, but it's not clear what this means for graduate students. The University's solution of creating a separate course section for international students has been in the context of undergraduate classes.
- The main issue with hybrid classes is that additional staff time and resources are required, e.g., classrooms have to be set up with technology.
- As recommended by the Student Affairs Committee, the Executive Board wrote a letter to UVic Board of Governors opposing the increases to domestic and international tuition and residence rent, due to the financial hardships of students during the pandemic.
- The Executive Board voted to terminate the GSS' relationship with Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT), a coalition of unions, faith-based organizations and other groups in the Greater Victoria Area, that advocates on social and environmental issues.
- The GSS had joined GVAT in 2019/20 but in February 2020, GRC voted to postpone consideration of continuing membership in GVAT indefinitely. GVAT has asked the GSS to pay \$1200 per year in membership fees. The Executive Board decided against renewing the GSS' membership as GVAT's campaigns are not closely connected with graduate student issues or the GSS' own campaigns.
- The Executive Board is seeking updated legal advice and evaluating our options regarding the issue of Research Assistants' employment status.

APPENDIX B: GRC MEMBERS COMMITTEE WORK TO DATE

Academic Unit		GRC Rep	GRC Committee	UVic Committee
Anthropology		Robert Gustas	Stipend	
Art History and Visual Studies		Mel Granley	Appeals	Hiring
Biochemistry and Microbiology		Michael Allison	St Aff	
Chemistry		Gregory Gaube	St Aff	Hiring
Chemistry		Archita Adluri	St Aff	
Civil Engineering		Aryia Eini	St Aff	
Civil Engineering		Maryam Monazami		
Earth and Ocean Sciences		Chrissy Schellenberg	St Aff	
Economics		Gerard Mu		
Ed Psych and Leadership		Lauren Petersen	St Aff	
Ed Psych and Leadership		Meng Qi (Annie) Wu	St Aff	
Electrical and Computer Engineering		Alexandros Dimopoulos	Finance	
English		Elyse Loewen	St Aff	
French		Tiffany Kuo	Appeals	
			Stipend	
Geography		Brianna Brandon	Events	
History		Michelle Snidal	Bylaw	Hiring
				Faculty Council
Law		Adekunle (Kunle) Adewumi	Finance	
Medical Sciences, Neuroscience		Hannah Reid	Appeals	
			Stipend	
Music		Tiess McKenzie	Events	
Nursing		Erin Donald	Appeals	Senate
Pacific and Asian Studies		Maeve Milligan	Appeals	
Physics and Astronomy		Bobby Bickley	Bylaw	Hiring
			Events	Hiring
Political Science		Brianna Parent-Long		
Psychology		Tom Ferguson	Bylaw	

Public Administration		Amanda Leclerc	Bylaw	
Public Administration		Luisa Trux	Bylaw	
Public Administration		Hannah Kim	Bylaw	
Social Dimensions of Health		Courtney Majewski	Finance	
Sociology		Talya Jesperson	St Aff	Hiring
CUPE		Christine Todd	St Aff	