

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society
Graduate Representative Council
(ONLINE VIA ZOOM) MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021, 5-7 PM

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Anthropology: Zonke Guddah, Rae Dias | Electrical & Computer Engineering: Amir Sepahi, Anushka Halder | Music: Kayleigh Francis |
| Art History & Visual Studies: Shruti Parthasarathy | Exercise Science, Physical & Health Education: Emily Magel | Pacific & Asian Studies: Maeve Milligan |
| Biochemistry & Microbiology: Michael Allison | French: Saba Khosravi | Physics & Astronomy: Bobby Bickley, Jess Speedie |
| Biology: Sarah Lane | Geography: Bruno Barusco, Wyatt Maddox | Political Science: Lingyu Jing |
| Civil Engineering: Ariya Eini, David Serrano | Greek & Roman Studies: Alix Galumbeck | Psychology: Tom Ferguson |
| Curriculum & Instruction: Sara Fallahi, Tahmineh Farnoud (Alt: Oluwatosin Adeyemi) | Health Information Science: Dee Wong | Public Health & Social Policy: Zackary Derrick |
| Earth & Ocean Sciences: Moronke Harris | History: Dax Tate | Sociology: Tyler Branston (Alt: Cole Freeman) |
| Economics: Matheson Gillis | Law: Carol Marinho-Ribeiro, Paige Thombs | Theatre: Arash Isapour |
| Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: Rohit Jain | Linguistics: Mona Sawan | Visual Arts: Colton Hash |
| | Mechanical Engineering: Gerard Avellaneda Domeme | GSS Member GUEST: Tiffany KUO |

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

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

Recorder: GSS Governance Coordinator: Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

Computer Science: João Batista Rocha B Junior

Absent without Notice or Regrets:

Chemistry: Greg Gaube
Neuroscience: Hannah Reid
Nursing: Meghan Dewar

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FOSTER called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

FERGUSON offered a land acknowledgement.

FERGUSON and FOSTER both noted the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is upcoming on September 30.

ISAPOUR asked that GRC consider reinstating the practice of making land acknowledgements personal and meaningful. FOSTER noted that there is no GSS policy stating what must be included in a land acknowledgement, but asked if anyone had a further reflection.

ISAPOUR offered a personal land acknowledgement.

STANDING ITEMS

A. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER (NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

FRANCIS volunteered.

B. REVIEW OF ROBERTS RULES, USING ZOOM, FOR GRC MEETINGS

FOSTER provided a list of basic Roberts Rules procedures, and unique Zoom modifications that GSS has adopted to help standardize meetings.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S FOSTER/DERRICK

Approved by CONSENT.

D. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the July 20, 2021 are approved as presented [OR with minor corrections as provided].

Noted: GUSTAS moved acceptance of Board reports not FOSTER.

M/S FOSTER/THOMBS

Approved by CONSENT.

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

POTTS introduced the tracking document: GRC Motion/Task Log. This document is included as an appendix with every GRC agenda. Its role is to assist GRC reps keep track of decisions made and tasks assigned. Reps should review this document prior to any GRC meeting and come prepared to report on tasks assigned to them, or ask questions regarding the progress of other tasks and decisions that have been made. Tasks or motions that are reported as complete or actioned during this time on the GRC agenda, will have their status updated.

ISAPOUR asked about two items from the previous GRC year.

1. Investigation of possible hybrid (online and in person) models for GSS meetings: FOSTER reported that there was the intention for the Board to receive some training on best practices for online/hybrid meetings, but that other Board training needs have taken priority.
2. Status of the Grad House Restaurant: FOSTER noted that this item will be discussed in terms of the Board's draft Annual Plan, upcoming on the agenda in New Business.

D. REPORTS

A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT – KYLA TURNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GSS Membership: As of September 21, 2021 there are 3117 GSS Members.

GRC Membership: GRC now consists of 32 academic units (out of 46 academic units eligible), 1 CUPE rep (pending), and 5 Executive Board representatives.

Meeting Quorum: With 1 regret received, 35 voting members present, and quorum for tonight's meeting is 18, the meeting is quorate.

B. CHAIR'S REMARKS – DAVID FOSTER

FOSTER provided an update on GSS work that has occurred over the summer. The full text of FOSTER's remarks are in Appendix A.

Answering a question regarding when and how to add items to the GRC agenda, FOSTER asked that all items be sent to him at least a week prior to the GRC, preferably earlier as the Executive Board meets 10-14 days prior to the GRC to develop the agenda.

C. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS (ON CONNECT)

REF DOCS: [Executive Board Reports April to August 2021](#)

As the 2021-22 Stipend Review Committee has yet to be constituted, a motion regarding the summer's Executive Board Reports will not come forward until October.

Tiffany KUO, 2020-21 GRC rep, Electoral Officer and Stipend Review Committee member was present to introduce the GRC to the role of the Executive Board Reports.

KUO noted the importance of the Executive Board reports for organizational transparency and accountability. She emphasized that GRC reps are to read the Board reports prior to each GRC meeting and bringing forward questions or comments.

D. ACADEMIC UNIT & COUNCILLOR REPORTS – BREAKOUT ROOM(S)

GRC reps met in small groups and were given the chance to discuss: academic unit reports, outstanding member concerns, what motivated them to serve on GRC and what they hoped to work on during their GRC term.

E. ACADEMIC UNIT REPORTS: REPORT BACK

POTTS noted that to encourage a free sharing of ideas and concerns amongst GRC reps, the discussion arising from this time on the agenda is not attributed to any individual or academic unit (unless requested), but a summary of issues arising and any tasks assigned or decisions made are recorded in the minutes. Members who would like their update recorded in the official minutes are requested to email their reports to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion.

A designated member from each breakout group reported back to the full GRC meeting.

Issues arising from the groups:

- Funding or scholarship support for grad students volunteering for time intensive committees
- Importance of grad reps sending an email introducing themselves to all members of their departments
- Members outside of Canada are limited in accessing TA opportunities
- Expenses of being a grad student in Victoria (housing as the main factor) far exceed the funding available
- Lack of sense of community or unit within departments
- Lack of communication in some departments regarding the GRC and GSS

- Concern about the differential tuition fees for domestic vs. international students
- Concerns about funding cuts to some specific departments and faculties
- Discussion about resources to help cope with lack of funding, such as the food bank
- Importance of building strong communication links to all department members, and bringing information from grad students back to the GRC
- Concerns from some international students saying that they hadn't received a response back from GSS regarding insurance
- Concerns that many graduate students, into September, have still not been able to secure housing in Victoria. UVic has prioritized first year undergraduate and family housing.

FOSTER provided a clarification on the GSS academic unit grants that in-person events meeting specific criteria and the current public health regulations are now able to be considered.

SAFARI noted that the GRC Student Affairs Committee has been inquiring into the housing issue and expressed some frustration that the suggestions and requests made to UVic have been declined. TURNER reported that UVic has asked for GSS support for their lobbying efforts to secure funding for graduate specific housing and changing Saanich municipal bylaws that restrict housing options for students. PARTHASARATHY asked for more time on a GRC agenda to discuss the housing issue. FOSTER suggested that this issue will be pursued by the Student Affairs Committee.

BREAK

F. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Appeals: NG reported that the Committee last met in July and heard two extended health and dental insurance appeals.
- Bylaw & Policy: FOSTER reported that the Committee was very busy over the summer and worked on many policy issues including the new Policy and Policies, a framework for policy development and many bylaw amendments for the upcoming AGM. FOSTER also highlighted issues that will be considered in the upcoming year.
- Communications: KENT reported that there has not been an active committee for many months, but she has been working with staff on the digital handbook.
- Events: NG reported that plans are to hold on-campus events this semester (Wednesday coffee, walks) as well as some possible bigger events.
- Finance: KHAN reported that there has not been a recent Finance Committee meeting. Audit is underway. Upcoming will be looking at budgeting and ensuring the GSS is left in a good financial position.
- Stipend Review: KUO reviewed the work of the Stipend Review Committee.
- Student Affairs: SAFARI explained how issues raised by graduate students get translated into action and advocacy by the Committee.
- Electoral Officer: KUO explained what her role as the GSS Electoral Officer entailed over the past year. She referred reps to the Bylaw section 4 which outlines the elections role.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTION OF ELECTORAL OFFICER:

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT one graduate student is elected as the Electoral Officer for the 2021-22 term of Grad Council.

M/S BICKLEY/THOMBS

There were no nominations for this position at this time. Five people indicated interest on their Committee Preference Forms. However, 3 of the people who indicated interest declined to be formally nominated, and 2 were not present.

Motion to table to October GRC meeting: FOSTER/BICKLEY
CARRIED

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT graduate students are elected as follows to GRC Standing Committees:

Appeals: Mel Granley, Dax Tate, Mona Sawan, Meghan Dewar
Bylaw & Policy: Moronke Harris, Matheson Gillis, Bruna Barusco, Dee Dee Wong, Tom Ferguson, Tyler Branston, Stefanie Dorosz, Cole Freeman
Communications: João Batista Rocha Bezerra Junior, Maeve Milligan, Colton Hash Sara Fallahi, Anushka Halder
Electoral Appeals: Dax Tate, Rae Dias, Tahmineh Farnoud
Events: Sarah Lane, Rohit Jain, Wyatt Maddox, Sara Fallahi, Anushka Halder, Matthew Somerville, Oluwatosin Adeyemi
Finance: Amir Sepahi, Gerard Avellaneda Domeme, Bruna Barusco, Rohit Jain
Stipend Review: Alix Galumbeck, Lingyu Jing, Zackary Derrick, Hannah Reid
Student Affairs: Rae Dias, Ariya Eini, Tahmineh Farnoud, Dee Wong, Wyatt Maddox, Meghan Dewar, Moronke Harris, Maeve Milligan, Tyler Branston
M/S FOSTER/FRANCIS
Approved by CONSENT.

Motion to extend the meeting to 7:20 pm
M/S FOSTER/BRANSTON
Approved by CONSENT.

POTTS asked that the 15 GRC reps who had not yet submitted Committee Preference Forms submit those as soon as possible, and they will be added to fill outstanding committee vacancies and ratified at the October GRC meeting.

G. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:

Motion: RESOLVED to Table UVic Committee Reports
M/S FOSTER/DERRICK
Approved by CONSENT.

FOSTER presented a point of information that the Board of Governors meeting noted 24000 of 27000 persons on campus at UVic had reported their COVID vaccine status. Of those reporting, 98% reported being fully vaccinated.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT graduate student representatives are elected to the following 2021-22 UVic Committees:

- *Executive Director, Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation Search Committee: Saba Khosravi*
- *Convocation Committee: Dee Dee Wong*
- *Student Life Grants Committee: Zonke Guddah*

- Humanities Faculty Council: Shruti Parthasarathy
- Faculty of Humanities Associate Dean Academic Search Committee: Maeve Milligan
- SupportConnect Advisory Group: Kayleigh Francis
- Faculty of Social Sciences Awards and Recognition Committee: no nominations received.
- Faculty of Social Sciences Dean's Advisory Forum on Indigenization: no nominations received.
- Faculty of Social Sciences Equity and Diversity Committee: no nominations received.
- Faculty of Social Sciences Graduate Curriculum Committee: no nominations received.
- Vikes Nation Advisory Group: no nominations received.

M/S FOSTER/FRANCIS
Approved by CONSENT.

POTTS agreed to send out more information to Faculty of Social Science GRC reps for decisions regarding representatives to the 4 Social Sciences committees.

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. PRESENTATION OF 2021-22 GSS ANNUAL PLAN

Lead: David FOSTER

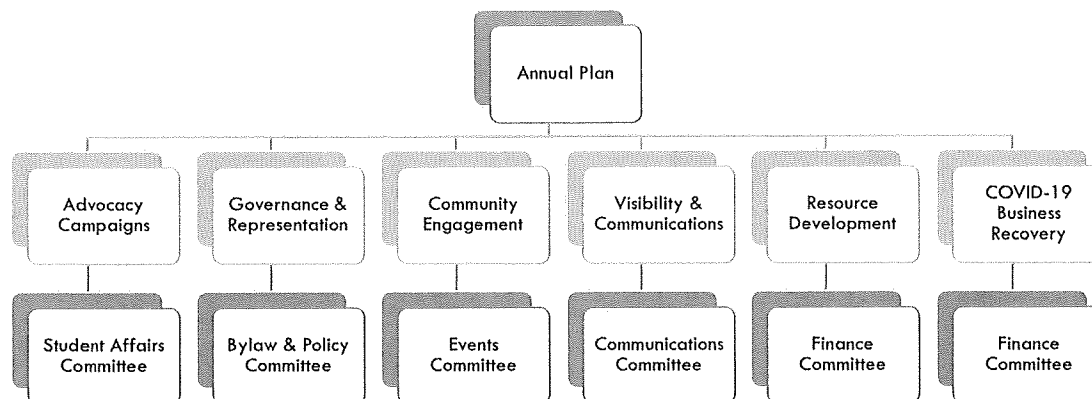
Purpose: for information

REF DOC: [GSS 2021-22 Annual Plan](#)

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT the 2021-22 GSS Annual Plan is received by Grad Council as information and published on the GSS website.

M/S FOSTER on behalf of the Executive Board/FRANCIS

FOSTER presented the Executive Board's 2021-22 Annual Plan, focusing on the priority areas and highlighted which GRC Committees would be working on which issues.



Discussion focused on the Grad House restaurant and the Halpern space in general. GRC reps expressed interest in knowing more about what is under consideration and how to engage more grad students in decisions on its future.

TURNER suggested having a restaurant review/update on a future GRC agenda.

Approved by CONSENT.

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS: **CHECK YOUR GRC CONNECT HOMEPAGE CALENDAR!**

Next GRC meeting: October 26, 2021, 5-7pm via Zoom

Reps are asked to look at the document on the Connect to sign up for providing a land acknowledgement and/or be timekeeper.

GRC training sessions:

- Understanding Consent Culture (Anti-Violence Project) – October 13, 2021, 5-7pm via Zoom
- Supporting a Survivor (Anti-Violence Project) – October 18, 2021, 5-7pm via Zoom
- Robert's Rules 101 – October 25, 2021, 5-6pm via Zoom

Upcoming GSS Closures:

- September 30 – National Day of Truth and Reconciliation
- October 11 – Thanksgiving

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR NEXT MEETING

Restaurant Status – review and update

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT the meeting is adjourned.

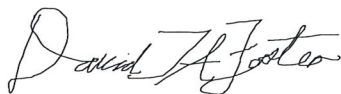
M/S FOSTER/FREEMAN

Approved by CONSENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

klp/

X



David Foster
GSS Chair 2021-22

X



Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX A: CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair's Remarks September 28th, 2021

- Welcome to new and returning GRC members!

External

- Over the summer, I worked with the Victoria Regional Transit Commission to add a GSS representative to their new Post-secondary Student Transit Advisory Committee
- The combined advocacy efforts of the GSS, UVSS, UVic Faculty Association, UVic staff unions and other student associations and unions resulted in the BC government allowing UVic to implement a requirement for either vaccination or rapid testing for all on-campus activities
- The GSS has joined the Access4All campaign of the UVic Society for Students with Disabilities to lobby the university for flexibility around remote attendance at in-person classes for students with disabilities and international students who are unable to come to Canada
- We have been seeing some resistance in certain programs to accommodation of international students who are outside Canada due to the pandemic, and continue to advocate for them
- The GSS launched our petition to the BC legislature calling for the elimination of Medical Services premiums for international students, and gathered many signatures during orientation
- UVic has started a working group on how courses should be delivered after the pandemic (in person, remote, hybrid) and this is likely to be a focus of GSS consultation and advocacy

Internal

- In early summer, we lost our external contractor who did our bookkeeping and financial statements, without warning or a contingency plan due to the contractor's lack of communication, causing us to be six months behind in financial statements by August
- The Board's ability to provide financial oversight of the Society has been impaired by not having any recent financial statements
- Additionally, some Board and staff members were either being paid incorrectly or not at all, and our Student Advocate Fund has not been reported properly in financial statements
- In August the GSS finally hired a new bookkeeping firm, which has been working to solve the payroll issues and get the February and March statements completed for our annual audit
- Currently the GSS is at the point where we should have been in mid-July in order to have the audited financial statements ready for the planned October Annual General Meeting
- As a result of the audit delay, we will be holding a GRC meeting rather than the AGM in October
- We are hoping the audit will be done in time to hold our AGM in November 2021, and the Board will be setting a date for the AGM at our October 12 Board meeting
- The second big internal issue has been the lack of staff capacity that resulted from the pandemic and losing the second manager position
- Currently the GSS has only one full-time employee, the Executive Director, and three part-time employees
- The Executive Director's workload has grown significantly due to the pandemic and the backlog of work from when we had no Executive Director in Fall 2020, so we have begun the process of hiring a second manager
- The second manager hiring process has been slower than anticipated in part because we have had to focus primarily on the financial and payroll issues