

*University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society*

## Graduate Representative Council

### MEETING MINUTES (ONLINE VIA ZOOM)

APRIL 19, 2022, 5-7 PM

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

<b>Anthropology:</b> Rae Dias (part)	<b>English:</b> Julie Funk	<b>Music:</b> Kayleigh Francis
<b>Biochemistry &amp; Microbiology:</b> Michael Allison	<b>Environmental Studies:</b> Lauren Burton	<b>Pacific &amp; Asian Studies:</b> Maeve Milligan (part)
<b>Chemistry:</b> Greg Gaube	<b>Geography:</b> Ishana Shukla	<b>Public Health and Social Policy:</b> Zackary Derrick
<b>Earth &amp; Ocean Sciences:</b> Moronke Harris	<b>Health Information Science:</b> Dee Wong	
	<b>Linguistics:</b> Matthew Somerville	

#### **GSS Executive Board (1 vote per elected Board member):**

<b>Chair:</b> Summer OKIBE	<b>Director of Student Affairs:</b> Nahid SAFARI
<b>Director of Finance:</b> Bobby BICKLEY	<b>Executive Director:</b> Kyla TURNER (non-voting)
<b>Director of Services:</b> Wyatt MADDOX	

#### **Guests:**

**Guest:** David Foster, Past Chair, Bylaw and Policy Committee  
**Guest:** Erin Donald, Senate Committee on Academic Standards, grad rep  
**Guest:** Lindsay Beal, Curriculum & Instruction

**Recorder: GSS Governance Coordinator:** Karen L. Potts

#### **Regrets:**

**History:** Dax Tate  
**Physics & Astronomy:** Jess Speedie  
**Public Administration:** Christopher Jones

#### **Absent Without Regrets:**

**Director of Communications:** Nicole KENT  
**Art History & Visual Studies:** Shruti Parthasarathy  
**Biology:** Sarah Lane  
**Civil Engineering:** Ariya Eini, David Serrano  
**Curriculum & Instruction:** Sara Fallahi, Tahmineh Farnoud (standing proxy: Oluwatosin Adeyemi)  
**Economics:** Matheson Gillis  
**Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies:** Rohit Jain  
**Electrical & Computer Engineering:** Amir Sepahi, Anushka Halder  
**Exercise Science, Physical & Health Education:** Emily Magel  
**French:** Alphonse Bode Abiodun  
**Greek & Roman Studies:** Alix Galumbeck  
**Law:** Carol Marinho-Ribeiro, Paige Thombs  
**Neuroscience:** Hannah Reid  
**Sociology:** Tyler Branston (standing proxy: Cole Freeman)  
**Visual Arts:** Colton Hash

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## CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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OKIBE called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm and invited everyone to consider their own personal land acknowledgement.

MADDOX provided the general statement of land acknowledgement.

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## STANDING ITEMS

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### 1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

*MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.*

*M/S SOMERVILLE/FUNK*

*Friendly Amendments: Stipend Review Report motion edited, and Committee resignations motion added.*

*Approved by CONSENT with the friendly amendments accepted.*

### 2. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER

FRANCIS volunteered.

### 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*MOTION: RESOLVED that the Minutes of the February 22, 2022 GRC meeting are approved as presented.*

*M/S FRANCIS/SOMERVILLE*

*Approved by CONSENT.*

### 4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

MILLIGAN reported that the Faculty of Humanities, Associate Dean Academic Search Committee has put forward a name for ratification.

### 5. REPORTS

#### A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

**GSS Membership:** As of April 8, 2022 there are 3097 GSS Members.

**GRC Membership:** GRC now consists of 29 academic units (out of 46 academic units eligible), and 5 Executive Board members.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 3 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 16. As of 5:10 pm, the meeting was not quorate.

#### B. CHAIR'S REMARKS

OKIBE introduced herself as the new GSS Chair for 2022-23 and expressed hope for working together for common goals. BICKLEY as the new Director of Finance expressed hope to building a strong Finance Committee. MADDOX, the new Director Services, expressed enthusiasm for building community and cohesion amongst graduate students. SAFARI, re-elected as Director of Student Affairs, spoke about hoping to build on the past year's advocacy work of the Student Affairs Committee and hopes for continuing to improve. KENT, re-elected as Director of Communications, was not present.

## C. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT

REF DOCS: [Executive Board Reports January to March 2022](#)

Councillors are required to read the Executive Board reports (on Connect) prior to the meeting.

*MOTION: BIRT the Executive Board reports for January are approved, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.*

*MOTION: BIFRT that the overview portion of the Director of Finance June 2021 – June 2022 monthly reports are redacted by the Stipend Review Committee.*

*M/S FRANCIS/ALLISON*

FRANCIS spoke to the motions on behalf of the Stipend Review Committee.

Motion was tabled due to lack of quorum.

## D. ACADEMIC UNIT & COUNCILLOR REPORTS – ROUND TABLE

Members had a chance to informally report on issues facing members in their departments and general issues pertaining to graduate students at UVic for the summer semester and the re-opening of on-campus studies.

In general, issues raised in the discussion included:

- Some department confusion about unit allocation for courses not meeting minimum units required to apply for grants and student loans.
- New grad students can be surprised by the requirement to stay enrolled over summer.
- Housing continues to be a struggle. It was noted as particularly difficult for Music students who need space to practice.
- Funding continues to be a major concern. English has decided not to accept any new graduate students this year in hopes of ensuring current students can be supported.
- Concerns that as UVic goes back to focusing on on-campus, the distance students will become invisible again for UVic, but also for access to participation in the GSS and student governance (it was noted that the HSD Faculty has at least 6 distance Masters programs and 1 distance Phd).
- As well, graduate students in professional programs who work on a different schedule are most often excluded from opportunities to participate and be engaged.
- GRC reps noted how difficult it has been to find ways to connect with distance members.
- DERRICK noted that Public Health has an issue a 450 hour practicum that is required, that is unpaid, at the same time as paying full time tuition fees.

Members wanting their full report noted in the minutes were asked to submit their report in writing.

## E. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

### STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Appeals – MADDOX reported that the Committee found a problem with members getting confused between the GSS plan and the UVSS undergraduate plan. The Committee will be making some recommendations to alleviate confusion.
- Bylaw & Policy – FOSTER, past Chair, reported that the Committee has worked on a number of new policies and revisions to be presented later on the agenda.

- Communications – No report.
- Events – MADDOX reported that they have hosted two successful video nights that were well attended. There will be an outdoor bring-your-own-picnic this Friday, April 22. MADDOX encouraged all GRC members to try to come out.
- Finance – No report.
- Stipend Review – DERRICK reported that there have been monthly meetings reviewing reports. Priority this year is reviewing Executive job descriptions and duties.
- Student Affairs – SAFARI reported that the MSP petition will be going to government in the next few days.

#### COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

*MOTION: BIRT the following members are excused from their respective committees, with thanks for their service:*

*Appeals: Mona Sawan*

*Bylaw and Policy: Tom Ferguson*

*Events: Wyatt Maddox*

*Finance: Gerard Avellaneda Domeme*

*Student Affairs: Echo Huang, Wyatt Maddox*

*MOTION: BIRT the following GRC Standing Committee members are ratified:*

*Appeals: Zachary DERRICK*

*Communications: Matthew SOMERVILLE*

*Finance: Maeve MILLIGAN*

*Student Affairs: Ishana SHUKLA*

Motion was tabled due to lack of quorum.

#### F. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – REPORTS AND VACANCIES

##### REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:

**Senate:** FOSTER. See Appendix A for the full text of Foster's report.

**Board of Governors:** FOSTER See Appendix A for the full text of Foster's report.

University Librarian Re-appointment Committee: FRANCIS reported that there will be an announcement soon.

**Senate Committee on Academic Standards:** DONALD reported that she will be graduating and leaving the Committee at the end of May. This is an important committee that influences the quality of the degrees provided by UVic provides. Currently concluding work to change requirements for sick notes. There is ongoing work on the Academic Integrity Policy. The Academic Accommodations Policy may be upcoming this year. The Committee has a good culture, is respectful of student opinions and for anyone interested in academia, this is a great experience.

#### COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

*MOTION: BIRT accept the resignations of Erin Donald from the Senate Committee on Academic Standards as of May 31, 2022, and Adair Ng from the Senate Committee on Libraries, as of April 30, 2022; with thanks for their service to the GSS and our members.*

*MOTION: BIRT graduate student representatives are elected to the following UVic committees:*

- *2022-23 Award for Excellence in Teaching for Experiential Learning*
- *2022-23 The Harry Hickman Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching and Educational Leadership and the Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching*
- *Wellness Education/Health Promotion Committee*
- *Senate Committee on Academic Standards (May 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)*
- *Senate Committee on Libraries (May 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)*

Motion was tabled due to lack of quorum.

However, as some of the committees require a grad rep prior to the next GRC meeting, members volunteered and will be ratified at the next Executive Board meeting. Volunteers are:

- BURTON volunteered for Experiential Learning
- SOMERVILLE volunteered for Harry Hickman
- FRANCIS volunteered for the Senate Committee on Academic Standards

It was asked if people could participate on UVic committees via Zoom. POTTS explained that anytime a UVic person requests a grad student rep, they are prompted that 1/3 of our members are distance students and they are asked if arrangements support a graduate student participate remotely.

## MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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TURNER explained that in the absence of quorum, discussion of the meeting new business items will proceed, but recommended an email vote on the COVID safety regulations, and that the motions to adopt the policy revisions will be tabled to the June GRC meeting.

### 1. COVID-19 SAFETY REGULATIONS FOR GSS EVENTS AND HALPERN CENTRE

REF DOC: [BC COVID-19 Restrictions](#)

Lead: Kyla TURNER, Executive Director

Purpose: for decision

*Motion: BIRT to rescind the July 20, 2021 motion:*

*“RESOLVED “in-person event” is defined as an organized event that involves Society members interacting in the same physical space and is not necessary for the continued functioning of the Society.*

*“FURTHER RESOLVED “in-person event” does not include in-person services offered to Society members on an individual basis.*

*“FURTHER RESOLVED “outdoor event” is defined as an in-person event that takes place in an open space without vertical walls or partitions and which may include an awning or canopy.*

*“FURTHER RESOLVED “indoor event” is defined as an in-person event that takes place in a space with one or more vertical walls or partitions.*

*“FURTHER RESOLVED all persons entering the Halpern Centre shall be required to wear non-medical face coverings*

*“FURTHER RESOLVED the Society may hold or sponsor outdoor events provided that social distancing is maintained outside of each participant’s chosen personal contacts.*

*"FURTHER RESOLVED the Society may hold or sponsor in-person indoor events provided that the requirements for indoor events specified by the BC Provincial Health Officer's order regarding gatherings and events dated July 7, 2021, until such time as this motion is revoked, and that all participants are required to wear non-medical face coverings*

*"FURTHER RESOLVED no meetings of Society members (including Executive Board meetings, GRC meetings, general meetings, committees and working groups) shall be held in-person.*

*"FURTHER RESOLVED Society Board members or volunteers may choose to attend and represent the Society at in-person events and meetings held by the University, however the Society does not endorse such events and meetings and will not accept liability for any damages caused by holding such events and meetings.*

*"FURTHER RESOLVED the Society recognizes that its jurisdiction is limited to the Province of B.C., however, Executive Board Members, Grad Council members and volunteers located outside the Province of B.C. are expected to adhere to the legislation and public health orders of the jurisdiction in which they are located."*

*BIFRT that the GSS will observe all in-force COVID-19 restrictions as set by the Public Health Officer of British Columbia.*

*BIFRT that the GSS shall post signage stating that symptomatic individuals will not be granted entry into Halpern Centre.*

*BIFRT that masks will be strongly encouraged within Halpern Centre and during any indoor GSS events or GSS-sponsored events until September 6, 2022 unless required by the Public Health Officer of British Columbia.*

TURNER presented background on the motion. TURNER explained that the Executive Board wanted to create a motion that was as permissive as possible, allowing staff to react to emergent safety protocols as needed. The motion allows for in-person and hybrid meetings.

FOSTER argued that the original motion should be upheld until the end of summer 2022. FOSTER disagreed that the original motion disallowed in person meetings or events. It was just specific about the standards, e.g. no food or drink. FOSTER argued that the main reason he is against the motion is the argument outlined by the BC Human Rights Commissioner in March 2022 that removing the mask mandate is an issue of diversity and inclusion. The Human Rights Commissioner argued that removing the mask mandate puts the onus on disabled and marginalized students to put more restrictions on themselves because the able-bodied have had their restrictions lifted. The Commissioner stated that a masks-optional policy further isolates the vulnerable and limits their access. <https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022.03.16-Letter-to-Bonnie-Henry-End-of-Mask-Mandate.pdf> FOSTER argued that the GSS having higher standards than UVic makes a positive statement about caring about inclusion and vulnerable people.

MADDOX argued that this motion was brought forward in consultation with GSS staff who would have to enforce restrictions that are not in place anywhere else on campus as GSS does not have a building security person. MADDOX also argued that the original motion references a public health order no longer in effect, and that the specificity of the original motion is also outdated.

BICKLEY suggested that for the current time, with the high rate of transmission in place, he supports FOSTER's opinion to continue with current practices, but supports in future, moving these decisions to the operational level so that the GSS can state up to date.

FRANCIS suggested that it would be good to have more discussion from more GRC reps.

TURNER asked for a straw poll to vote either in favour of taking this motion to an email vote, or, to vote no and table the motion to the next GRC meeting. From the poll, members were in favour of tabling the motion and having more discussion at the next GRC meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Members were not in favour of having an email vote.

Motion TABLED due to meeting not achieving quorum.

## 2. CONDUCT POLICY

REF DOC: [Conduct Policy BPC RECOMMENDED](#); [Interim Governance Manual](#)

FOSTER, former Bylaw and Policy Committee Chair, provided background to the new policy, developed and unanimously recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

*MOTION: BIRT the Conduct Policy is adopted, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee, and*

*BIFRT Policy 3 – Interim Code of Conduct Policy is rescinded, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

Motion TABLED due to meeting not achieving quorum.

## 3. IN-CAMERA POLICY

REF DOC: [In-Camera Policy BPC RECOMMENDED](#)

FOSTER, former Bylaw and Policy Committee Chair,

Purpose: for decision

*MOTION: BIRT the In-Camera Policy is approved, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

Motion TABLED due to meeting not achieving quorum.

## 4. GRC COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

REF DOC: [GRC Committee Terms of Reference Revisions BPC RECOMMENDED](#)

Lead: David FOSTER, former Bylaw and Policy Committee Chair

Purpose: for decision

*MOTION: BIRT the Terms of Reference of the Appeals Committee, Bylaw and Policy Committee, Events Committee, Finance Committee and Student Affairs Committee are amended, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

Motion TABLED due to meeting not achieving quorum.

## 5. ANNUAL PLAN DEFINITION

REF DOC: [Interim Governance Manual](#), pages 3 and 29

Lead: David FOSTER, former Bylaw and Policy Committee Chair,

*MOTION: WHEREAS the Interim Governance Manual contains a definition of “Annual Plan” that is outdated and conflicts with the definition approved by the Executive Board in the Annual Plan Policy adopted on January 18, 2022,*

*BIRT the definition of “Annual Plan” in the Definitions section of the Interim Governance Manual is struck, as recommended by the Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

Motion TABLED due to meeting not achieving quorum.

## CLOSING ITEMS

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IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS: [CHECK YOUR GRC CONNECT HOMEPAGE CALENDAR!](#)

Next GRC meetings: June 21, 2022 and July 26, 2022

Land acknowledgement for June 21<sup>st</sup>: Lauren BURTON

GRC training sessions: TBA

AGM: October 25, 2022

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR NEXT MEETING

All motions noted above as tabled.

ADJOURNMENT

The non-quorate GRC meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.

klp/

X

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Summer OKIBE  
GSS Chair 2022-23

X

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Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director

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## APPENDIX A: UVIC COMMITTEE GRAD REP REPORTS

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### Senate Report April 2022 – David Foster, Graduate Student Senator

- On March 10, 2022, the UVic administration chose to lift UVic's mask requirement the same day the provincial mask mandate lifted, without adequate consultation, in particular with faculty and staff with disabilities who are most affected
- A group of senators called a special meeting by petition in order to consider a motion recommending that the UVic President and Board of Governors reinstate the mask mandate until the end of the spring semester
- Unlike UVic, UBC decided to keep the mask mandate until the end of April
- The special Senate meeting was held on March 24, 2022, in a room that did not allow many participants to be socially distanced, and without a mask requirement – a questionable decision given that a number of senators had expressed concerns about the safety of non-socially distanced, non-masked indoor gatherings
- At the special meeting, senators voted 23 to 19 to recommend that the mask mandate be reinstated
- Faculty members have expressed significant concerns about the safety of classrooms as workplaces where students are crammed together without social distancing or masks
- On March 24, shortly before the special meeting, a UVic executive staff member sent an inappropriate email to all Senators ordering us not to discuss items on the Senate agenda outside of a Senate meeting
- The email interfered with the rights and privileges of elected Senators, who have the right to discuss any business before Senate with each other at any time, and further have the right to discuss any public matter before Senate with whomever they wish at any time via any medium
- At the April 1 Senate meeting, I raised a point of personal privilege to the Chair of Senate, Dr. Kevin Hall regarding this inappropriate email, but Dr. Hall has not acknowledged the issue
- I am submitting a motion to the May Senate meeting to censure Dr. Hall in his capacity as Chair of Senate for his role in infringing the rights of Senators, including his unreasonable refusal to allow an elected Convocation senator to attend Senate meetings remotely
- Some senators have been allowed to attend remotely due to personal health issues or being outside Canada, but one senator's request for remote attendance in order to protect medically vulnerable close contacts was denied
- Dr. Hall's decision is contrary to the *University Act* and relies on an unreasonably narrow interpretation of the *Senate Rules and Procedures*
- As a result of Dr. Hall's unfair actions, an elected Senator has not been allowed to attend the October, November, December, February, March regular and special, or April Senate meetings
- Dr. Hall has also not provided adequate reasons for his decision which set out his legal justification, or provided information on how the senator can challenge the decision, which amount to violations of procedural fairness
- A motion of censure is symbolic and would have no effect other than Senate distancing itself from Dr. Hall's conduct, however it is important for Senate to do this as Dr. Hall's conduct reflects badly on the University
- The May 6 Senate meeting is also expected to include the revised policy on students with disabilities and a revision to the Senate rules regarding remote attendance which could clarify the rules going forward, but may not reflect what students have requested

### **Board of Governors Report April 2022 – David Foster, Graduate Student Board Member**

- The Board of Governors met on March 28 and 29
- At the March 28 meeting, the Board voted not to accept the Senate recommendation to reinstate the mask requirement; this decision was made in-camera so I cannot provide further information beyond what was released by the University
- In general, however, my observation of the UVic administration indicates that they do not appear to value the lives of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions as much as returning to the appearance of normality, and do not take the genuine concerns of faculty members about workplace safety seriously
- On March 29, the Board passed the University's annual budget, which includes a 2% tuition increase for domestic students, 3.75% tuition increase for international undergraduate students but only 2% tuition increase for international graduate students, along with 5% increases to residence rent and meal plans
- 2022 is the final year of a three-year period where the University committed to maintaining the same rate of international tuition increase year to year (3.75% for undergraduate students and 2% for graduate students) so we may see significant international tuition increases next year
- I abstained on the budget vote, as I felt it was necessary for the University to pass a budget but had significant concerns about continuing to increase international tuition as well as the 5% residence rent increase
- Tenants in off-campus housing have their rent controlled by provincial legislation which only allows a 1.5% increase within a year under the same tenancy, but on-campus housing has no rent controls; with the lack of off-campus housing students do not have a lot of options