

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

(ONLINE VIA ZOOM) MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT

JULY 26, 2022, 5-7 PM

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

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Michael Allison

Biology: Sarah Lane

Chemistry: Greg Gaube

English: Madyson Huck (proxy for Julie Funk)

Environmental Studies: Lauren Burton

History: Dax Tate

Linguistics: Matthew Somerville

Music: Kayleigh Francis

Neuroscience: Hannah Reid

Pacific & Asian Studies: Maeve Milligan

Public Admin: Christopher Jones

Public Health and Social Policy: Zackary Derrick

Sociology: Tyler Branston

Check Burton

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

Director of Communications: Nicole KENT

Director of Finance: Bobby BICKLEY

Director of Services: Wyatt MADDIX

Director of Student Affairs: Nahid SAFARI

Executive Director: Kyla TURNER (non-voting)

Recorder: GSS Governance Coordinator: Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

Chair: Summer OKIBE

Greek & Roman Studies: Alix Galumbeck

Physics and Astronomy: Jess Speedie

Absence without notice:

Anthropology: Zonke Guddah

Art History & Visual Studies: Shruti Parthasarathy

Civil Engineering: Ariya Eini, David Serrano

Curriculum & Instruction: Sara Fallahi, Tahmineh Farnoud (standing proxy: Oluwatosin Adeyemi)

Earth & Ocean Sciences: Moronke Harris, Chrissy Schellenberg

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

Geography: Ishana Shukla

Health Information Science: Dee Wong

Law: Carol Marinho-Ribeiro, Paige Thombs

Visual Arts: Colton Hash

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CALL TO ORDER: LAST MEETING OF THE 2021-22 GRAD COUNCIL!

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

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

KENT provided a personal land acknowledgement.

STANDING ITEMS

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S REID/FRANCIS

APPROVED by Consent.

2. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER

SOMMERVILLE volunteered.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Minutes of the June 21, 2022 GRC meeting are approved as presented.

M/S SOMMERVILLE/REID

APPROVED by Consent.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

Noted:

GRC January 25 – hiring HR consultant has been concluded.

Follow up: BICKLEY and TURNER will follow up on the payment to JONES.

5. REPORTS

A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

GSS Membership: As of July 15, 2022 there are 2712 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 4 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 15. The meeting was declared as quorate.

B. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Thanks to outgoing GRC reps and committee rockstars!

As this was the final meeting of the 2022-23 GRC year, appreciation was noted for GRC reps who went 'above and beyond' their required duties. Some of the special mentions included:

- Stipend Review Chair - Alix Galumbeck. The SRC is only GRC standing committee chaired by a true volunteer – no stipend for the stipend review chair. (sent regrets for today)
- Lauren Burton and Ladan Kalani – both were elected late to GRC and have consistently been present and volunteered for several GRC and UVic committees.
- GRC committee participation – Maeve Milligan, Matthew Somerville, Zachary Derrick, Moronke Harris, Sarah Lane and Kayleigh Francis.
- Kayleigh Francis – more often than not, our timekeeper!
- Perfect GRC attendance! Michael Alison and Dee Dee Wong.
- Best at contributing important department reports: Greg Gaube
- Most liaison work between members and GSS: Chris Jones

- UVic committees: Tyler Branston, Paige Toombs, Lauren Burton, Matthew Somerville, Zonke Guddah, Shruti Parthasarathy, Maeve Milligan, Kayleigh Francis x 3 committees including a hiring committee!
- And Bobby Bickley and Wyatt Maddox were noted as outstanding GRC reps until they resigned to take Executive positions.

TURNER reported that the Executive Board has completed their Annual Plan for 2022-23, and reviewed the main highlights.

C. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

- Appeals – MADDUX reported that the Committee will be meeting to review recent appeals.
- Bylaw & Policy – no report.
- Communications – KENT reported that focus continues to be on social media with emphasis on engagement. Upcoming will be looking to streamline the GSS communication strategy.
- Events – MADDUX reported that the Committee is gearing up for September and Orientation events.
- Finance – BICKLEY reported that all is well for finances.
- Stipend Review – no report.
- Student Affairs – no report.

MADDUX assumed the chair at 5:30 pm.

D. ACADEMIC UNIT & COUNCILLOR REPORTS – ROUND TABLE

JONES provided a lengthy report about issues raised in Public Administration. See [Appendix A: REPORTS](#) for the full report. Issues were raised around issues of:

- Timetables and time management
- Grading requirements
- Lesson structure
- Class administration
- Academic and professional messaging

MADDUX indicated that the Executive would follow up on the issues raised by JONES.

Members who would like their update recorded in the official minutes are requested to email their reports to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion.

The meeting lost quorum at 6 pm.

KENT assumed the chair at 6:15 pm.

E. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

MOTION: BIRT the 2021-22 GRC reps are appointed to the GRC Standing Committees as follows: Bylaw and Policy: Ladan Kalani

MOTION: BIRT the following GSS members are excused from the 2021-22 Standing Committees accordingly: Bylaw and Policy: Stefanie Dorosz

Motions were tabled due to lack of quorum.

F. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – REPORTS AND VACANCIES 5:55

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:

Open Floor to hear any reports from graduate student reps on:

Senate: FRANCIS reported that the Senate Committee for Academic Standards is just organizing their meetings for the year.

UVic Award Committees: SOMERVILLE reported that the Harry Hickman award will be adjudicated this week.

UVic Search and Hiring Committees: MADDUX reported that the Assoc Dean of Social Sciences has made their decision and has chosen someone who should be a good advocate for graduate students.

Note: Reps are encouraged to send written reports to gssgov@uvic.ca to be included in the minutes.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

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

- *UVic Senate Committee on Libraries*

Nominations: Member elected:

Motion was tabled due to lack of quorum.

Members discussed whether Senate Committees allowed online participation. POTTS asked that any member who wanted the opportunity to participate should put their name forward and the GSS would request accommodation if the member could not attend in person.

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. GRC MEETING FORMAT 2022-23

Councillors had a general discussion regarding the format and working of the GRC. The general consensus favoured continuing with the online format.

POTTS clarified that department graduate secretaries and faculty administration are asked for help to reach and recruit GRC reps, and potentially to help organize elections in the absence of a department association. However, UVic staff have no official role or any authority in the selection of GRC reps. The GSS Grad Council is independent of UVic and graduate students in each department have the authority to elect their own representatives.

2. GRC SEATS 2022-23

REF DOC: [2022-23 GRC Academic Units](#)

Lead: TURNER

The 46 academic units which are eligible for GRC seats for 2022-23 were read into the minutes.

3. GSS FEES 2022-23

REF DOC: [GSS Fee List](#)

Lead: TURNER

The GSS Fees for 2022-23 were read into the minutes. Please note that fees with an asterisk * are fees that are tied to inflation (the BC CPI).

CLOSING ITEMS

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

- The 2021-22 GRC year ends on August 31st, 2022. GRC committees may be meeting in August.
- Next GRC meeting: September 27, 2022 will be the first meeting of the new GRC year 2022-23.
- AGM: October 25, 2022

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR NEXT MEETING

None.

ADJOURNMENT

KENT closed the meeting with thanking all the reps for their work this year, and wished those not continuing in the fall all the best.

MADDOX announced that all GRC reps who have attended three or more GRC meetings will be eligible for a free BBQ ticket in September.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the meeting is adjourned.

M/S REID/ALISON

APPROVED by Consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 pm.

klp/

X

Summer OKIBE
GSS Chair 2022-23

X

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX A: REPORTS

Public Administration – Christopher Jones – July 2022 Academic Unit Report

Thank you to the GRC for this opportunity to provide feedback from the members my academic unit.

Over the past year, it was often difficult to gather comments from my colleagues before GRC meetings as they had other priorities which overshadowed any immediate or intermediary concerns. However, as this semester rolled to an end, I have been approached by some individuals who wanted to contribute their concerns with the program and its administration. I have compiled and summarized their most salient comments below.

Please note that these are not direct complaints towards any single member of the administration – but also not lone complaints from any one individual. And – **most important** – that not everyone in the program agrees with every single point. However, where there was more than one, I felt obligated to present the comment with as much anonymity and with as little deviation from its original as possible.

Timetables and Time Management

- 1) **Classes are sometimes scheduled by instructors outside of the university timetable for instruction time** – or classes previously cancelled or placed on-line during instruction time are reinstated. This is a hinderance for those who have extraordinary time management obligations.
- 2) **Classes added during weeks within the timetable, but not on days or times listed within the syllabus** – creating an unfair disadvantage to those who cannot attend.
- 3) **Classes consistently going over scheduled time with no easy option to leave** without unknown repercussions. Granted, some classes and conversations go long – however, one shouldn't feel uneasy or chastised about having to leave.
- 4) **In-class assignments which must be completed prior to class** – or, in layman terms, an assignment that should be clearly outlined in the syllabus, prior.

Grading Requirements

- 5) **In-class assignments or requirements with little notice, grading or feedback** – This includes assignments where one must teach the class assigned readings rather than having them first interpreted to the class by professionals or the professors
- 6) **Assignment descriptions consisting of two sentences**, yet full page rubrics which are not provided prior or within the syllabus

- 7) **Class descriptions which are arbitrary, inconsistent, vague or overlap with other courses.** Some courses are overly focused on specific topics which, while considered part of the overall concept, fell short of the holistic and well-rounded education the course inferred.
- 8) **Participation grades (20-40%) well above standards** of most undergrad or graduate programs or 5-10%. And often with no rubric provided or alternative methods of assessments for those who learn differently

Lesson Structure

- 9) **Overuse of guest lecturers** – while an excellent tool in the learning process, it is not consistent with some expectations of an in-class program and causes confusion over course content
- 10) **In-class discussions which were unstructured and unrelated to the posted topic for the lesson** – and often encumbered with those seeking to contribute solely for the perceived requisite needed for maximum participation grades.
- 11) **Classes cancelled for reasons solely attributed to the professor should not require make-up assignments** for the missed content before the next one – specifically during non-class time and solely for the purpose of participation grades.

Class Administration

- 12) **No feedback on class progression prior to drop date** – or before the middle of the term
- 13) **Inconsistent use of the CMS (Brightspace)** – Often required reading was posted as a rabbit-hole of links or from sites which professors or professional may have access readily through their association, but students do not
- 14) **Readings, required or supplementary, which are unavailable without payment** or exposing personal information to a third-party
- 15) **Zero avenue to protest or mediate issues with group assignments** – or an alternative to group assignments for those with busy or differing schedules.

Academic and Professional Messaging

- 16) **Inconsistent requirements regarding the thesis – i.e., project- or research-based** – and the use of ‘clients’ or those chosen during the co-operative placement. This includes outdated information on the program application or in literature introducing the program.
- 17) **Consensus that professors believe that since their scholastic career was tough 20 years ago, students today should equally be run through the same motions.** This notion is outdated, inconsistent with public service and private business norms, ignores societal changes within that time and emotionally and mentally draining.
- 18) **High expectation from the on-campus cohort compared to the on-line alternative – which would be receiving quintessentially the credentials.** Those who have taken the time out of earning a living and collecting pensionable hours to be part of the on-campus class feel at a disadvantage to those with full employment who can obtain the same degree with less effort and at their leisure. The online course should be made available to all participants, regardless of employment, or have the same expectations.

I have instructed those with immediate or more pressing matters to address them through the proper channels – and I don’t believe anyone is seeking an immediate remedy to any of these concerns. I also believe that most students understand the difficulty any school would have in administering a course during a pandemic. And, further, that many wish to have an opportunity to hold an open dialogue with the administration regarding many of these issues.

However, I also felt that some of the comments raised fell outside the exceptions of a professional graduate program – especially in such volume and in such a short period of time – and that they should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Student Society so that future students may obtain the high-level of excellence and service from the University – and that which we all desire, demand and deserve.

APPENDIX B: GSS FEES FOR 2022-23

Breakdown of GSS Membership Fee:

(Effective May 1, 2022)

	Regular	Co-op
Operating*	\$52.23	\$26.12
Capital Fee*	\$10.66	\$5.33
Childcare fee	\$1.02	\$0.51
Anti-Violence Project	\$2.00	\$1.00
Ombudsperson	\$1.50	\$0.75
Constituency Groups	\$1.33	\$0.67
Clubs	\$0.50	\$0.25
WUSC (Student Refugee Program)	\$5.00	\$2.50
Campus food bank*	\$1.90	\$0.00
CFUV*	\$0.58	\$0.00
University 101*	\$0.56	\$0.00
Conference Travel fee*	\$4.84	\$2.42
Distance travel fee*	\$1.13	\$0.58
Student Advocate	\$1.00	\$0.50
Food and Beverage Fee	\$11.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$95.25	\$40.62