

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

(ONLINE VIA ZOOM) MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 29TH, 2022, 5-7 PM

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

Anthropology: Rachel Hooton

Art History and Visual Studies: Megan Austin

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Ladan Kalani (GSS Electoral Officer), Loc Ngo

Biology: Talen Rimmer

Business: Ethan Sun

Chemistry: Greg Gaube

Computer Science: Andrea Nguyen

Educational Psychology and Leadership

Studies: Weiyl Liu

Electrical and Computer Engineering: Amer Kumar

Environmental Studies: Lauren Burton

French: Cédric Trahan

Geography: Kali McDougall

Health Information Science: Dee Dee Wong, Evangeline Wagner

Linguistics: Matthew Somerville, Rosemary Webb

Nursing: Lorilee Scott

Physics and Astronomy: Samuel Fielder

Political Science: Katy Rosnau

Public Administration: Stephanie Dahling

Public Health & Social Policy: Zackary Derrick

Social Dimensions of Health: Olvie Li

Sociology: Tyler Branston

Theatre: Barbara Clerihue

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

Chair: Summer OKIBE

Director of Communications: VACANT

Director of Finance: Bobby BICKLEY

Director of Services: Wyatt MADDUX

Director of Student Affairs: Nahid SAFARI

Executive Director: Kyla TURNER (non-voting)

Invited Guests: Lane O'Hara Cooke, UVSS Director of Finance and Operations

Recorder: GSS Governance Coordinator: Karen L. Potts

Regrets:

CUPE 4163: Kaitlyn Diederichs

Curriculum and Instruction: Lindsay Beal

English: Lucie Kotěšovská

Greek and Roman Studies: Alix Galumbeck

Absent:

Civil Engineering: David Serrano Suarez, Prakriti Raizada

Earth & Ocean Sciences: Moronke Harris

Law: Kirsty Broadhead

Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: Kamal Narayana

Music: Sean Kiley

Pacific and Asian Studies: Ivan Garcimartin Carmona

Psychology: Cian Dabrowski

Writing: Hana Mason

CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM, with OKIBE in the chair.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DAHLING and LIU provided personal land acknowledgements.

STANDING ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: RESOLVED that the agenda is approved as presented.

M/S: Executive Board/SCOTT

APPROVED by Consent.

B. TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEERS

WEBB and FIELDER volunteered as timekeepers.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Minutes of the September 27, 2022 GRC meeting are approved as presented.

M/S CLERIHUE / NGUYEN

APPROVED by Consent.

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/PAST MEETINGS

LEAD: OKIBE

No business arising.

E. MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE

LEAD: TURNER

GSS Membership: As of September 20, 2022 there are 3161 GSS Members.

GRC Membership: GRC now consists of representatives from 33 academic units (out of 45 academic units eligible), 1 CUPE representative, and 4 Executive Board members.

Meeting Quorum: With 4 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 18, with 26 voting members present, the meeting was declared quorate.

F. CHAIR'S REMARKS

OKIBE commented on the positive energy of the last GRC meeting. OKIBE reported that the Executive is working on having someone come to the December GRC meeting to respond to the funding issues raised in the September GRC meeting.

G. EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT

LEAD: WAGNER

REF DOCS: [Executive Board Reports Folder](#)

Wagner presented on behalf of the SRC. There were no questions or discussion.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the Executive Board reports for April, May, June, July, and August 2022 are approved, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Board reports for September 2022 from Summer Okibe, Nahid Pourdolat Safari, Wyatt Maddox, and Bobby Bickley are approved, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Board reports for October 2022 from Nahid Pourdolat Safari, Wyatt Maddox, and Bobby Bickley are approved, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Board report for October 2022 from Summer Okibe are approved upon receipt, as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee.
AND FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Board reports for September and October 2022 from Nicole Kent are not approved for payment due to sustained conduct complaint as recommended by the Stipend Review Committee and the Conduct Committee.
M/S WAGNER, Stipend Review Committee Chair / SOMERVILLE
APPROVED by Consent.

H. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND INFORMATION SHARING

LEAD: OKIBE AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Councillors were encouraged to have their updates recorded in the official minutes by emailing their report to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion.

For this session, Zackary DERRICK, on behalf of the Bylaw and Policy Committee, asked members if their academic unit has a grad student association (formal or informal) and what are their academic unit's processes to elect GRC reps. This information was collected as part of a project with the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

I. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS

MOTION: RESOLVED that the following GSS members are excused from the 2022-23 Standing Committees accordingly:

Appeals: Cian Dabrowski

Finance: Heba Elgharbawy

Student Affairs: Courtenay Gauthier

M/S CLERIHUE/SOMERVILLE

APPROVED by Consent.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the 2022-23 GRC reps are appointed to the GRC Standing Committees as follows:

Bylaw and Policy: Katy Rosnau

Communications: Olvie Li

Events: Loc Ngo, Sean Kiley, Amer Kumar

Finance: Cian Dabrowski

Student Affairs: Kali McDougall, Kaitlyn Diederichs

M/S FIELDER/KUMAR

APPROVED by Consent.

MOTION: RESOLVED that the following GRC Councillors will be the Conduct Committee pool of potential committee members should the need for a Conduct Committee arise:

*Sarah Roberts
Lindsay Beal
Zackary Derrick
Evangeline Wagner
Weiyi Liu
Barbara Clerihue
M/S TRALAN/KUMAR
APPROVED by Consent.*

J. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES

LEAD: POTTS

As per GSS Bylaws, Grad Councillors are asked to sit on at least one UVic Committee to ensure graduate student interests are represented.

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

*Senate Committee: Learning and Teaching – Sarah ROBERTS
Digital Learning Committee – Lorilee SCOTT
EQHR policy advisory committee – Zackary DERRICK
Faculty of Science EDI Council – Lorissa CORRIE
EQHR Learning and Advisory Committee – Weiyi LIU
Accessibility Committee – Hannah BROWN
M/S RIMMER/LI
APPROVED by Consent.*

BREAK

[Lane O'Hara Cooke, UVSS Director of Finance and Operations, joined the meeting at 6:05 pm.]

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. CHAIR'S REMARKS – PART II – REFLECTING ON THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

OKIBE reflected on the issues raised during the first part of the meeting, and offered some thoughts on connecting the issues to current GSS work.

2. FOOD BANK FUNDING (SEE APPENDIX FOR FULL SLIDES PRESENTED)

Lead: BICKLEY and COOKE
For: Decision

BICKLEY provided an overview of the funding shortfall issue facing the Campus Food Bank. The Food Bank is managed by the UVSS, which is supplying an additional \$200,000 from their operating budget to keep services running. The GSS currently provides 2% of funding through member fees and our members utilize 38% of Food Bank Services. The GSS has posted budget surpluses the last two years due to COVID

service closures (we budgeted for events and in-person services assuming COVID would end sooner than it did). BICKLEY stated that the Executive feels strongly that this is a service that directly benefits GSS members, aligns with our constitution, and is the morally right service to direct some of our budget surplus towards.

COOKE spoke to the financial situation of the Food Bank and the affordability crisis in Victoria in general. COOKE stated that the UVSS can not sustain making up the shortfall indefinitely. COOKE spoke to graduate students being over 30% of the users, and continuing studies students also being high users, but the primary funders are undergraduates. COOKE argued that the University has to be challenged to take this up as their issue, but that immediate help is needed now.

BICKLEY presented on the four main strategies that the GSS will engage in.

1. Direct funding as represented by the GRC motion tonight. And direct funding through a motion for an additional \$40,000 to be allocated at a Special General Meeting on December 6.
2. A referenda to increase direct member fees to the Food Bank.
3. A joint working group with UVSS to lobby UVic administration.
4. Connections with other community resources to help fund the food bank.

Motion: RESOLVED to immediately allocate \$10,000 from the GSS Operating Fund to the Food Bank to keep services operating during a funding shortfall.

M/S: Executive Board/SOMERVILLE

Discussion:

GAUBE asked what the plan is to cover the \$200,000 short fall? COOKE reported that the UVSS has a relatively healthy operating fund and is currently covering the shortfall. However, in the long term, this is not sustainable. UVSS will also be meeting with UVic administration in early December to put pressure on UVic to do something about this issue. The UVSS is prepared to run a very public campaign to get UVic to address this issue. BICKLEY noted the collective purchasing power of graduate student fees. GAUBE shared his concern that the current funding options presented is just poor students trying to feed poor students. GAUBE noted that in his experience this type of funding, once asked for, will continued to be asked for year over year without any real sustainable options.

CARRIED.

Abstention noted: FIELDER

[Lane O'Hara Cooke, UVSS Director of Finance and Operations, left the meeting at 6:25 pm.]

2. APPOINTMENT TO FILL THE VACANT POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Lead: GSS Electoral Officer: Ladan KALANI

Reference: GSS Bylaw XI and Executive Board Vacancy Appointment Policy

For: Decision

OKIBE relinquished the chair to KALANI, GSS Electoral Officer.

KALANI reported that a call for nominations, to fill the Director of Communications vacancy for the remainder of the 2022-23 term, was circulated to all GSS members on November 14th, 2022. No nominations were received.

In a second call for nominations, Greg GAUBE was self-nominated.

In a third call for nominations, Zackary DERRICK was self-nominated.

GAUBE and DERRICK each spoke for 1 minute to the members present.

KALANI closed nominations and asked for a ballot to be prepared.

With 23 votes cast, KALANI declared GAUBE as the Director of Communications for the remainder of the 2022-23 Executive Board term.

KALANI thanked both GAUBE and DERRICK for volunteering to serve the GSS on the Executive Board.

KALANI returned the chair of the meeting to OKIBE.

3. BOARD REPORT ON CONDUCT COMPLAINT (SEE APPENDIX B)

TURNER explained that as part of the resolution to a sustained grievance, it was requested that the letter of apology be read into the GRC minutes.

TURNER read the letter of apology to Melissa Wotkyns, which in its entirety is found in Appendix B.

CLOSING ITEMS

A. REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES:

Note: Reps are encouraged to submit short reports to gssgov@uvic.ca for inclusion in the minutes.

DERRICK reported that the STUA committee is not happening this semester but it might return next semester.

DERRICK also reported that the HSD Faculty Council has submitted their new Constitution which will be approved at Senate this month.

B. GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Appeals: MADDOX reported that the Appeals Committee is recommending going to referendum to remove the automatic opt in of distance education students to the health and dental plan.
- Bylaw & Policy: OKIBE reported that the committee is very active with all members taking on individual projects.
- Communications: MADDOX. Committee reviewed letters to municipal mayors and council asking for support in areas of housing and mental health.
- Events: MADDOX reported on the many events underway.
- Finance: BICKLEY reported some growing pains in organizing this committee but it will become more active in the coming here.
- Student Affairs: SAFARI no report.
- Stipend Review: WAGNER reported on the reading of reading of reports.

C. REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

- GAUBE promoted the upcoming STEM social.
- SOMERVILLE promoted the Tamil learning event.

D. NOTICES OF MOTION FOR NEXT MEETING

- BRANSTON – Faculty of Social Science Curriculum Review Committee
- BEAL – Climate Activism

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

Special General Meeting: December 6th, 2022

Next GRC Meeting: December 13th, 2022.

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of December 1st, 2022.
- Agenda to be posted: December 6th, 2022

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: The last day for the GSS Office and Grad House to be open in 2022 is Friday, December 16th. The GSS Office re-open on Tuesday, January 3rd. The Grad House re-opens the following week.

F. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: RESOLVED that the meeting is adjourned.
M/S GAUBE/SOMERVILLE
APPROVED by Consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

klp/

X

Summer OKIBE
GSS Chair 2022-23

X

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX A: FOOD BANK SHORTFALL PRESENTATION SLIDES

FOOD BANK FUNDING SHORTFALL - INTRO

LEAD: BICKLEY AND COOKE

The Campus Food Bank is in a significant funding shortfall. Without immediate action, they may need to reduce services when people need it the most.

UVSS D. Finance Lane will provide us with a brief overview of the state of finances and current use of services for the Food Bank next. However, the Food Bank expects budget shortfalls to increase next year and we need to look at additional funding opportunities.

The GSS has posted budget surpluses the last two years due to COVID service closures (we budgeted for events and in-person services assuming COVID would end sooner than it did). We feel strongly that this is a service that directly benefits GSS members, aligns with our constitution, and is the morally right service to direct some of our budget surplus towards.

6:10 PM

Trajectory of the Food Bank

- This year we are running a \$200k deficit with our food bank, with the funds coming from our operating fund
- Need has grown exponentially as the cost of living has risen
- User breakdown: 38.7% are grad students, 34.4% are continuing studies/cert/etc, 24.1% are undergrad
- Looking to collaborate with UVic, GSS, and Continuing Studies to ensure we are providing high quality support to students in need
- Bottom line: the status quo is not sustainable



UVSS x GSS: Next Steps

- We are seeking a united front when lobbying UVic for funds
- Wanting to discuss the possibility of the GSS contributing more \$ to the Food Bank and Free Store

The Breakdown

		% of fees	% of reg users
Currently:	UVSS students \$2.25 per FT.	\$94,000	94.6%
	GSS students \$1.90 per	\$ 2,003	2.0%
	Continuing Studies \$2.25 per	\$ 3,333	3.4%

FOOD BANK FUNDING SHORTFALL — WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO ABOUT THIS?

LEAD: BICKLEY AND COOKE

UVSS and GSS are working on a number of pathways forward on funding the Food Bank.

1. Direct funding from UVSS/GSS: GRC can approve up to \$10,000 in immediate funds to the Food Bank. We know demand will increase for food security over the holidays, so we'd like to provide immediate support as we are able under our bylaws.

The GSS Executive Board has called a Special General Meeting December 6 to supply the Food Bank with emergency funding of \$40,000 (on top of \$10K from GRC).

The GRC Student Affairs and Finance Committees are reviewing a referendum question to increase the Food Bank fee for GSS members (to reach at least parity with undergrads, or, even better, a fee amount that reflects current use.)

UVSS is prepared to cover the funding shortfall for this year ONLY after all other avenues are exhausted.

UVSS is prepared to take the Food Bank fee to referendum, but feels that alternative sustainable funding sources should also be explored.

6:10 PM

FOOD BANK FUNDING SHORTFALL — WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO ABOUT THIS?

LEAD: BICKLEY AND COOKE

2. Advocacy to UVic: UVSS and GSS are working on a joint advocacy campaign to UVic to supply a substantial, on-going donation to the Food Bank to address food insecurity, poverty, and cost of living for all UVic students.

UVic is promoting the Food Bank as a key recipient of Giving Tuesday fundraising (today!)

3. External funding sources: We know UVic is in a funding shortfall themselves this year and cash donations may not meet need. We are asking them to support the Food Bank by providing grant writing and fundraising manpower. We are also preparing grant applications where staff capacity allows internally. (GSS ED drafted \$20K of grant applications so far)

4. Partnerships: We have been in touch with other local food banks, as well as food rescue programs like Second Harvest to create partnerships between other organizations addressing food security and the Campus Food Bank and Free Store.

6:10 PM

APPENDIX B: BOARD APOLOGY LETTER TO GSS STAFF

November 4, 2022

Melissa Wotkyns, Office/Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Re: Grievance submitted October 14, 2022

Prepared by Summer Okibe, Chair

Dear Ms. Wotkyns,

Thank you for submitting the grievance dated October 14, 2022. The Board appreciates the difficulties that can arise for staff in grieving board behaviours and wishes to express their gratitude for the trust you have placed in us and the Personnel Committee in allowing us to review the communications that took place between you and Nicole Kent. We would like to issue an apology on behalf of the board for the added stress that this situation has caused, and commit to specific actions to prevent a similar situation from occurring in the future.

As you may be aware, Nicole Kent offered her voluntary resignation from the Board on October 24, 2022. As such, the Personnel Committee proceeded without Nicole's involvement for the investigation of this grievance. However, we want you to know that in reviewing her email communications with you, we found her tone and demeanour to you to be unacceptable. We sincerely apologize for Nicole's treatment of you relating to the creation of the handbook, the administration of the Communications Committee, and the reports made against you to your supervisor. We will re-commit ourselves to creating a safe and respectful workplace for all GSS staff members.

To this end, the Board will review the terms of their training policy to ensure that all board members receive training on respectful workplace communications within 60 days of the start of their term of office. They will be presented with the Conduct Policy for an in-depth review and receive a formal contract to sign acknowledging that they are individually responsible for following GSS policies and interacting with staff in a manner that befits their office.

In light of Nicole's resignation, we were unable to proceed with the struck item from your grievance, namely Nicole's termination from the board.

Thank you again for the trust you've shown in us. We look forward to building a more respectful and fruitful relationship with you over the remainder of our term of office. Additionally, we would like to offer our sincere thanks for all your work on the Handbook this year.

Sincerely,

Summer Okibe, Chair 2022-23

Cc: Grievance File

Nicole Kent Personnel File

Melissa Wotkyns

Stipend Review Committee