

Graduate Representative Council

(HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: GSS BOARD ROOMS OR ZOOM

NOVEMBER 28, 2023, 5-7 PM

Executive Board Present (1 vote per member):

Chair: Wyatt Maddox

Director of Finance: Samuel Fielder

Director of Student Affairs: Lindsay Beal

Executive Director (non-voting): Kyla Turner

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

Anthropology: Rachel Hooton	Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies:	Law:	Public Health and Social Policy:
Art History: Sarah Roberts	Electrical and Computer Engineering:	Linguistics: Rosemary Webb	Social Dimensions of Health:
Biochemistry and Microbiology:	Environmental Studies: Lauren Burton & Diana Bertuol Garcia	Mathematics and Statistics:	Social Work:
Biology: Maggie Lawton & Dominique Maucieri	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed:	Mechanical Engineering: & Diogo Bravo	Sociology: Jasmine Padam
Business:	French:	Music: Olivia Charette	Social Work:
Chemistry: & Harvey MacKenzie	Geography:	Neuroscience:	Theatre:
Child and Youth Care:	Germanic and Slavic Studies:	Nursing:	Visual Arts:
Civil Engineering: Monika Mikhail	Greek and Roman Studies: Ben Watts-Wooldridge	Pacific and Asian Studies: Delaney Johnson	Writing:
Curriculum and Instruction: Nabila Kazmi	Health Information Science:	Philosophy:	CUPE:
Earth and Ocean Science: Stacey Edmonson	History:	Physics and Astronomy: Jade Fischer	Other Programs:
Economics:	Indigenous Education:	Psychology: Tara Cooper	Interdisciplinary Studies:

Recorder: Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator

Invited Guests: Jim Dunsdon, Associate V-P Student Affairs

Regrets Received: Director of Services: Mitch Nascimento; Jonathan Qualter, Katie Jamson, Interim Director of Services: Maggie Lawton, Vice Chair/Director of Communications: Greg Gaube

Absent without regrets: Jessica Ziakin Cook, Sushant Suresh, Nick Roberts, Aleksandra Waliszewska, Sanaz Haopeng Ren, Abigail Romano, Ivan Garcimartin Carmona, Ajabshir Rudra Pratap Singh, Cian Dabrowski, Maziyar Khadivi, Katarina Sawchuk, Iman Fadaei

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:02pm by MADDUX.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillors are asked to take a turn to provide a personal, meaningful statement of land acknowledgement.

Today's personal land acknowledgement will be provided by SARAH ROBERTS.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: to approve the agenda with the tabling on statement approval.

M/S: Executive Board/JOHNSON

CARRIED

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER

Today's timekeeper was: Rosemary WEBB

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE

GSS Membership: As of September 20, 2023, the GSS has 3156 members.

Meeting Quorum: With 3 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 12.

Meeting Guests: Any non-voting reps or guests? Please identify yourself so we can welcome you!

Welcome to new GRC reps!

REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

A. CHAIR'S REMARKS

MADDUX updated GRC on the goings on of the Executive Board. Highlights include the Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW) in October, robust events scheduled. MADDUX also reported on the Operational Relations meetings thus far this team, particularly having fast phone chargers and boosted wifi in the bus loop to improve access to the new Umo electronic bus fare collection. No updates on the requests we've made on increasing crosswalk availability and waste removal/trash can availability around the bus stops.

Lastly, MADDUX reported on the UVIC-GSS Exec-to-Exec meeting, which noted that the graduate dorm project is hopefully to be funded in the 2024-25 cycle, turning the Ian Stewart complex into housing inclusive of amenities like a grocery store.

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

- Appeals: FIELDER has heard all appeals submitted and is hopeful that appeals will now slow down. We've also increased our committee volunteerism and turnout. FIELDER gives thanks to the new members!
- Bylaw & Policy: MADDUX noted that BPC is reviewing bylaw changes recommended by the Executive Director, as well as reviewing the BPC policy development workflow and process.

- Communications: Sarah ROBERTS reported on GAUBE's behalf. Comms Comm met to review swag purchases (either for free distribution or sales), review socials and bulletins, make more buttons
- Events: MADDUX reported on this committee's behalf: upcoming events include an End of Term party Dec 1, guided painting, holiday card making, etc.
- Finance: FIELDER will be meeting with Fin Com this week to set a schedule for board and staff budget consultations.
- Student Affairs: BEAL is currently working on two significant projects: creating a more lactation friendly campus and the climate crisis. For the former, a law professor has assigned policy development on lactation spaces as a class project, so the SAC is supervising and consulting with that class. The climate action team will be starting more actively in January 2024.
- Stipend Review: FISCHER stipend review committee met and reviewed all board reports.
- Electoral Officer: BURTON reported on the September Interim Director of Services election.

B. GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS

MOTION: RESOLVED the 2023-24 GRC reps are appointed to the GRC Standing Committees as follows:

Bylaw and Policy: Ladan Kalani, Zibakhanim Alibalayeva

M/S: WEBB/FISCHER

CARRIED

C. OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS

LEAD: MADDUX AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

JOHNSON reported on a department meeting and noted that the graduate handbook did not include the provision of auditing classes, as this program requires additional languages and grad students are encouraged to audit language classes. This has been corrected. ROBERTS noted that her department recommended students take additional online classes above and beyond program requirements. The additional classes are often undergrad or continuing studies classes.

Recommendation: Bring auditing courses into the Graduate Supervision Policy through the forthcoming policy review process.

For STEM, two reps in separate departments noted inconsistencies in how donor awards are distributed and interact with their other UVic funding. Some students have UVic-specific funding clawed back when receiving donor awards and others do not. MADDUX reported on the issues that have been addressed between FGS and the Province of BC for MITACS funding in the same vein. FGS has policies about exactly which funds can result in a funding clawback. MADDUX advises impacted students to report the policy breaches to the Faculty of Grad Studies.

Recommendation: Include existing UVic policies in the Graduate Supervision Policy through the forthcoming policy review process.

JOHNSON reported on successes for her department grant project. TURNER shouted out the Department Grant program as there are amply funds remaining.

BERTUOL-GARCIA asked after meeting procedures after Roberts Rules was removed from our bylaws. TURNER noted that financial decision should still receive a formal motion for our auditors. TURNER and MADDOX noted that we need to maintain a democratic decision making process. BEAL recommended round table style discussions.

Decision: The January GRC will set new meeting structures for GRC for the rest of term.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. INTRO TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Lead: Dunsdon (in meeting from 5:55pm to 6:35pm)

Reference:

For: Discussion

DUNSDON provided an overview of the Student Affairs portfolio, which includes admissions, registration, Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), International Centre for Students, residences, food services, etc.

Student Affairs has five key priorities for this year including: Rebuilding Enrolment; Academic Success; Affordability; Equity, Access and Inclusion; and Health and Wellness. Each of these priority areas will have working groups to consult with students and members.

ROBERTS noted that registration with CAL within her department has increased massively. Based on demand, ROBERTS asked after increasing CAL resources. DUNSDON noted that accessibly learning is one of his top three priorities right now. Due to changes in K-12 schooling to create more accessible learning environments, the number of students with a disability graduating high school has grown significantly. Right now, students with disabilities represent 15-17% of students (up from about 6% 15 years ago). Within the K-12 schooling system, that number is closer to 25%, so DUNSDON does not expect CAL to stabilize or decrease in the foreseeable future. Other metrics noted include: the number of requests for accommodated exams doubled in the last academic year, the number one disability reported at CAL is anxiety, etc. Priorities for resolutions include further provisioning of care providers at the Student Wellness Centre and increasing universal design at all levels of course design. ROBERTS noted improvements in services at the SWC but asked for increases for counselling.

COOPER asked after the Steps Forward program for accessible K-12 learning. DUNSDON noted that this program has slightly fallen off his desk lately, but the University Registrar will have that info. DUNSDON will have the Registrar forward information to TURNER for future GRC meetings.

FIELDER asked about the affordability website that will have links to cost-of-living focused on- and off-campus resources. DUNSDON provided an overview of the expansion of that website. Additionally he reported on fundraising efforts to support both on-campus resources and community partners.

DUNSDON reported on on-campus housing, including the new dorm buildings which are now fully open. UVic has a funding application for a new 500 bed studio-style apartment going into the Province in 2025.

Jim Forbes, Senior Director of Campus Engagement, has also been connecting with new developments to try and bookmark newly opening rentals for UVic students. TURNER noted that a dozen grad student-only suites were made available for September 2023 and the GSS played a role in placing members there.

CHARETTE noted the inadequacy of space in current undergrad housing that grad students are being placed in. There was a lack of apartment style housing options that pushed students into more pod-style dorms that come with increased costs like mandatory dining plans. BERTUOL-GARCIA asked after family-housing as the waitlist is excessive. DUNSDON noted that expanding family housing would likely mean demolishing existing family housing buildings in order to reallocate the land and building up. TURNER noted that previous boards have decided that our position would be to recommend upon the opening of a new grad dorm, single students and couples without kids be asked to relocate to the graduate dorm to free up multiple-bedroom townhouse for families with kids.

ROBERTS asked after rental and tenancy rights services on campus. DUNSDON noted supports which are available on campus. FISCHER asked after promoting better understanding of tenancy rights. MADDOX recommend the Law Centre and the downtown free law clinic for advising on tenancy rights.

WEBB asked about pet-friendly housing. DUNSDON will flag this for Residences. Family housing does currently allow service and emotional support animals.

CHARETTE asked about the availability of walk-in care at the SWC. DUNSDON noted that as the new Faculty of Health opens, there will be opportunities to engage medical trainees to providing care to students.

TASK: TURNER to recommend the RentSmart program to Jim Forbes.

2. INTRO TO PEER SUPPORT

Lead: TURNER

Reference:

For: Discussion

TURNER provided an overview of the new Work Study Peer Support program. Grad Reps are encouraged to refer students with questions and concerns around supervision, funding, wellness, etc. to our Peer Support Workers. Emma and Bhagyashri are on-site roughly 9-11, Mon-Wed, and Friday. Bhagyashri is very active at Wednesday Coffees.

3. STATEMENT APPROVAL: SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR GSS MEMBERS

Tabled.

STANDING ITEMS

D. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the September 26, 2023 GRC meeting as presented [with minor corrections as provided].

M/S: ROBERTS/BERTUOL-GARCIA

CARRIED

E. EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT

LEAD: FISCHER

REF DOCS: Executive Board Reports Folder

Councillors are required to read the Executive Board reports prior to the meeting.

*MOTION: to approve the Executive Board reports from July and August;
To approve the Executive Board reports from September, October for MADDOX, BEAL,
GAUBE, and FIELDER;
To approve the Executive Board reports from September, October for LAWTON upon
receipt of report;
M/S: Stipend Review Committee/BERTUOL-GARCIA
CARRIED*

B. REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES

LEAD: MADDOX

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

- Board of Governors:
- Senate:
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council: ROBERTS noted that FGS Council is moving to volunteers over full elections.
- UVic Advisory Committees:
- UVic Award Committees:
- UVic Search and Hiring Committees: ROBERTS was on the Associate Dean for Fine Arts hiring committee. No hire was made and an interim person is in that role for the next year.
- UVic Faculty Committees:

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

F. GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES – VACANCIES

LEAD: TANVEER

Grad Councillors are asked to sit on at least one UVic Committee to ensure graduate student interests are represented. There are currently 7 vacancies to be filled. For information on each committee please see the GSS webpage: <https://gss.uvic.ca/about-gss/get-involved/committees/grad-representation-at-uvic/>

MOTION: to elect the following graduate student representatives to UVic committees:

*Committee: Awards and Recognition Committee
Member: Olivia CHARETTE*

*Committee: Committee on Equity and Diversity
Member: Monika MIKHAIL*

Committee: Convocation Committee

Member: Lauren BURTON

Committee: Gillian Sherwin Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching

Member: Olivia CHARETTE

Committee: Award for Inclusive and Innovative Course Design

Member: Diana BERTUOL-GARCIA

Committee: REACH AWARDS Andy Farquharson Committee

Member: Sam FIELDER

Committee: Appointment Committee: Associate Dean - FGS

Member: Wyatt MADDOX

C. REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION

LEAD: MADDOX

Opportunity for any GRC member participating in a group or issue to request support or participation from other graduate students. Bring information about rallies, events, good information and resource links and be ready to post in the CHAT!

WEBB called out for representatives from the French, Germanic and Slavic Studies, etc. departments for advocacy around the new faculty structuring forthcoming.

ROBERTS shouted out a bake sale of Dec 4!

D. NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

LEAD: MADDOX

E. IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: MADDOX

Next Meeting: GSS Annual General Meeting! March 19, 2024

- Agenda to be posted: March 5, 2024

Next GRC Meeting: December 12, 2023

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of November 28, 2023
- Agenda to be posted: December 5, 2023

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: The GSS will be closed for Winter Break.

F. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 6:49pm.
M/S: MADDOX/FISCHER
CARRIED

X

Wyatt MADDOX
GSS Chair 2023-24

X

Kyla Truner
GSS Executive Director