

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board (HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Zoom Link: <https://uvic.zoom.us/j/2244264481>

EXECUTIVE INVITED:

Wyatt MADDUX, Chair;
Samuel FIELDER, Director of Finance;
Rosemary WEBB, Director of Internal/University Relations;
Jitendra PALAPARTY, Director of External Relations;
Maggie LAWTON, Director of Student Life;
Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting);

GUEST: Megan Vlahiotis, SWC Inclusion and Wellness Coordinator

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 9:16 by MADDUX.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territorial acknowledgement offered by LAWTON. LAWTON reported on a talk she went to on working in Indigenous communities in doing ecological research while engaging community and respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: FIELDER/WEBB

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. SWC INCLUSION AND WELLNESS COORDINATOR MEET AND GREET

Lead: VLAHIOTIS

For: Discussion

VLAHIOTIS provided an introduction to her new position at the Student Wellness Centre, which includes oversight of inclusive, affordable and adaptive recreation at CARSA, student engagement at the Student Wellness Centre, particularly around SWC workshops, groups, etc., and at the Multifaith Centre she is prioritizing safety after several security incidents. VLAHIOTIS has seen a high degree of student frustration around CARSA access in her four weeks on campus so far.

MADDOX discussed our advocacy and student concerns around CARSA and ATRS fees. He asked after VLAHIOTIS's capacity to address student frustration. VLAHIOTIS noted that the "active space" (previously the stretching room) will be made available for students for free.

MADDOX recommended free yoga in the Multifaith be returned after the loss of the previous instructor. VLAHIOTIS noted that there is a \$100/term membership for yoga at CARSA and she's working with SSD to build in a yoga program for accessible athletics. She's specifically looking for a yoga instructor who is representative of an inclusive yoga model.

TURNER shouted out the "GSS Goes To" events to support SWC workshops and the Wellness Day during GSAW including a self-care workshop hosted by Wendy Lum (counsellor at SWC). LAWTON also asked to have recommendations for which workshops VLAHIOTIS would like to see more grad students attend.

VLAHIOTIS noted that increasing both digital and physical accessibility for AIR and the inclusion website. She also noted that they are re-launching the accessible climbing schedule and is looking into women's only spaces to accommodate more students with religious needs for gender-specific spaces. VLAHIOTIS noted that she is also bringing other inclusive programmers around campus together. She also noted that her position is an externally funded, one-year contract funded by a single donor.

2. GRC AGENDA APPROVAL AND AGENDA SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Lead: MADDOX/TURNER

REF DOC: GRC agenda and Agenda item submission template
For: Decision

MADDOX asked FIELDER to chair the meeting and welcome GRC reps. MADDOX will pre-record a welcome message for reps.

3. FOOD BANK UPDATE

Lead: TURNER
REF DOCS:
For: Discussion

TURNER provided a verbal update for the UVSS Food Bank. In short, they are experiencing ongoing funding shortfalls as need for services vastly outpaces the amount of revenue generated by student fees. This funding shortfall totals ~\$200,000/year, and total expenses per their audited financial statements indicates that they are spending out about three times as much as they bring in by student fees. Other campus food banks, such as UBC, are undergoing changes this term to deal with unprecedented demand and stagnated funding.

As of September, they will be implementing the following changes to ensure that people accessing the food bank are currently registered UVic students or family members:

1. They will check student registration upon pick up. I will provide them a list of currently register grad student V#s weekly to facilitate this.
2. Food bank users are required to register their dependents each semester in order to be eligible to pick up for families. Previously, opting into a family hamper was on the honours system.
3. Food bank users must register who is able to pick up on their behalf and these folks will need to bring ID thereafter. Again, previously anyone could pick up on any student's behalf.

4. Food bank staff will check whether someone is registered for a single or family hamper before the student may pick their hamper items.
5. Alternative proteins will be used to reduce costs (i.e. less meat, more vegetarian proteins)

TURNER will continue to work with UVSS management on grant applications for addition funding. However, the grant applications she previously drafted were not submitted by UVSS management who needed to provide their organization's financial information as part of the application. While means-testing is unpopular due to the barrier to service it creates, TURNER has strongly urged UVSS to consider implementing it.

TURNER asked MADDOX to connect the lead of the Food Bank he volunteers for with the UVSS for a consultation. TURNER also recommended a board-to-board meeting with the UVSS.

Discussion items would include: fee referendum, managing committee for food bank with GSS seat, implement means-testing, donation bins across campus, etc.

TASK: TURNER to reach out to the UVSS to invite their board to a GSS board meeting to discuss the food bank.

STANDING ITEMS PART 2

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: to approve the minutes from the August 27, 2024 Executive Board Meeting as presented.

M/S: WEBB/LAWTON

CARRIED

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Lead: TURNER

Note: To ensure motion log is updated, ensure completed items are reported in the minutes.

Items assigned to board members that Kyla thinks are complete or abandoned will be listed below and highlighted in yellow. If there's an item you were assigned below highlighted in yellow, please confirm if the task was completed, revoked, or abandoned!

Tasks Completed/Decisions fully acted upon:

Aug 27 TASK: TURNER to post the Annual Plan to the GSS website.

FIELDER, WEBB, PALAPARTY and LAWTON to pack 50 tote bags for GRC reps to receive at the September GRC meetings including event posters, bookmarks, buttons, stickers, and other swag.

TASK: LAWTON to assist TURNER in planning the We Survived September board-staff party. TURNER to circulate an rsvp and request for dietary restrictions.

Tasks revoked or abandoned:

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

No committee appointments made.

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Item 1: SSHRC funding

Motion: to receive the correspondence.
M/S: WEBB/MADDOX
CARRIED

H. AGENDA PLANNING, OR MEETING DEBRIEF

Reference: [Meeting Debrief Template](#)

1. Meeting debrief
2. Meeting agenda planning

I. LOBBYING REPORTS

Reports due at the first meeting of every month.

J. ANNUAL PLAN CHECK-IN

CLOSING ITEMS

EXECUTIVE INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATES/QUESTIONS

Chair: MADDOX went to FGS Executive Council yesterday. Update for Jitendra: PNP new regulations will be implemented in November (MADDOX to check if that's 2024 or 2025).

The English language proficiency requirements have been updated so that students who self-report that their primary language is English will not require proficiency testing. They've expanded the number of English proficiency tests accepted in applications and changed the exempted country list for English proficiency testing.

Director of Finance: FIELDER has been highly active in orientations and events, including 8 orientations across three days. He's been active in events, including the Ice Cream Social and the Pancake Breakfast.

Director of Internal/University Relations: WEBB has been getting onboarding and orientation meetings for Senate Committees. WEBB will be meeting with Kevin Hall re: accessibility. They also have posterred all of campus for the voter registration drive at the SUB on September 10 and 12. They asked for board support in posterred campus for BC election advertising.

Director of External Relations: PALAPARTY no report.

Director of Student Life: LAWTON noted that the Ice Cream social went well. She and Petri met with Alumni in the summer to discuss options for collaborative events. She recently purchased more yarn for knitting circle. FIELDER clarified the use of the Board Fund Request form.

Executive Director: TURNER to ask Jitendra for another re-cap of what she's learned about accessing GAC with the SWC.

TURNER checked in on student fundraising for a student who experienced a house fire.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

****Task Reminder:** Please be sure your meetings and events are up to date on OUTLOOK CALENDAR**

Next Executive Meetings: September 24, 2024

Next GRC Meeting: September 24, 2024

AGM: October 22, 2024

Office, Staff Scheduling:

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: to adjourn the meeting.

M/S:

CARRIED/FAILED

X

Wyatt MADDUX
GSS Chair 2024-25

X

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX D – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Hello Kyla,

The Tri-Agencies (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR) scrambled over the 2 months (June & July) after the federal budget increase to student research funding was announced (May 31st) to address the individual funding adjustments for continuing award holders (those who activated their funding prior to September 1, 2024). As you can imagine this was no simple task. In addition they were being inundated with inquiries from award recipients who activated their funding for May 1st who wanted to change their funding start date from May to September. It was, to be honest, a tangled, messy situation since the Canadian government announcement was made, for both Tri-Agency and university officials.

Scholarships Officers at universities across Canada received mixed messages from the 3 agencies as to the timing of these notices going out to students. Initially they said late-July and then we heard it would be sometime in the fall. Only SSHRC managed to get their notices out to students on July 31st and August 1st. Even if they had copied us on each of those notices (which they did not) many of my colleagues (including myself) were on summer holiday for the first half of August.

Please be advised that each notice from SSHRC to these students communicated the following...

Award specific considerations:

- Payments (*from SSHRC to Canadian universities for this award increases*) will begin in late September 2024; once payments begin (*to the universities*), it will take approximately 12 weeks for all payments to be made.
- If you are paid by your institution, they are responsible for determining the payment schedule for your award and will inform you of when the increase has been applied to your account.

Within a week from returning from my holiday time off, I learned that SSHRC award holders received their notifications so I sent out an email requesting they forward to me a copy of their individual notice, explaining that **"Due to the timing of this request, please note that your September payment will not reflect the increase (as it has already been requisitioned); however, the top-up for that payment will be added to your updated October instalment."**

Obviously that statement is what has prompted your member to raise a concern with you. However, please also note/consider that this student (an all to whom this applies) will still receive a payment for September but it will be issued at the pre-increase rate (similar to the sum they received For August, July, June, etc. SSHRC communicated that the increase would not be instantaneous and for those paid by their academic institution (which this member is), the university (UVic) is responsible for determining the payment schedule. As it is, the my office will be making the individual payment adjustments and issues payment increases prior to receiving the global payments for these increases from SSHRC.

I just hope you weren't misled into thinking this member (or any other) would be without any payment at all for September 1st. That is not the case. If this member budgeted themselves for a larger instalment in time for September 1st, that was an error on their part.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or require more information that I have just provided.

Kind regards,
Kathy

Kathy McCarthy

Scholarships Officer | Faculty of Graduate Studies
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Territorial Acknowledgement. *I acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.*

From: Paige Thombs <paigethombs@uvic.ca>

Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 2:40 PM

To: GSS Office <gssoffice@uvic.ca>

Subject: Fw: RE: SSHRC funding increase - document request & timing

Hello!

You might be aware that SSHRC funding has been increased for all MA and PhD students effecting this September. I thought GSS might like to know that UVic has somehow messed up and is now telling students

that they will not get their increase until October (see email from FGS below). This is unacceptable. While I am in the fortunate position of having a wife that makes a good income, many students really rely on external funding to pay for living expenses and tuition. Students should not have to suffer because of UVic's ineptitude (which, incidentally, they are blaming on SSHRC).

Please let me know if GSS needs any other information about this.

Paige Thombs

PhD Candidate, Faculty of Law

Associate Fellow, Centre for Studies in Religion in Society (<https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs>)
paigethombs@uvic.ca

"Anyone who lives within their means suffers from a lack of imagination."

~Oscar Wilde

From: Kathy McCarthy - Scholarships Officer <fgsaward@uvic.ca>

Sent: August 26, 2024 11:01 AM

To: Paige Thombs <paigethombs@uvic.ca>

Subject: RE: SSHRC funding increase - document request & timing

Hello Paige, [SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship END DATE: Aug. 2025]

As you may already know, the Tri-agency CGSD/CGSM values have increased, effective September 01, 2024, for both entering and continuing students. SSHRC is apparently the only agency that has communicated with award holders directly but have not copied UVic FGS on that communication. As such, I'll need you to forward to me a pdf of the updated and personalized award documentation you received. Once I've received your award conversion details I will be able to make the necessary adjustments to your funding in our system.

Due to the timing of this request, please note that your September payment will not reflect the increase (as it has already been requisitioned); however, the top-up for that payment will be added to your updated October instalment.

Kind regards,
Kathy

Kathy McCarthy

Scholarships Officer | Faculty of Graduate Studies

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