

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 29, 2024, 5-7 PM

Executive Board Invited (1 vote per member):**Chair:** Wyatt Maddox**Director of Internal/University Relations:****Director of Finance:** Samuel Fielder**Director of Student Life:** Maggie Lawton**Director of External Relations:** Jitendra Palaparty**Executive Director (non-voting):** Kyla Turner**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

Anthropology: Semyon Drozdetckii	Electrical & Computer Engineering: Victor Marrugat Arnal & Mahmoud Chick Zaouali	School of Indigenous Governance: Ali Malhi	Public Administration: Jeremy Perkins & Marry Ann Sing
Art History and Visual Studies: Sarah Roberts	English: Kerri Li	Languages, Linguistics, and Cultures: Jacqueline Rutherford	Public Health & Social Policy:
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Gillian Leach / Liam Mihalynuk	Environmental Studies: Lauren Burton	Law: Katarina Sawchuk	Social Dimensions of Health: Luiza Costa & Kathryn Stone
Biology: Muskan Karmani	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed: Isaac Barss & Maryam Sheikhi	Mathematics and Statistics: Khai Quigley	Social Work:
Business: Jenna Mahlmann	French:	Mechanical Engineering: Maziyar Khadivi & Bernardo Leite	Sociology: Neve Sugars-Keen & Jasmine Padam
Chemistry: Jesse Delmage & Phillip Jurek	Geography: Adam Regier & Hazim Ismail	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: Dhwani Sura	Theatre:
Child & Youth Care:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Music: Talietha Sangha	Visual Arts:
Civil Engineering: Samira (SAMI) Sarkardei	Greek and Roman Studies: Luke Montgomery	Nursing:	Writing:
Computer Science:	Health Information Science: Marian Kaine & Ghita Hajjami	Pacific and Asian Studies: Bryce Bartsch & Delaney Johnson	CUPE:
Curriculum & Instruction: Iram Zahra & Samim Nikbakht	Hispanic & Italian Studies:	Philosophy: Yukio Jamieson-Burns	Other Programs:
Earth & Ocean Science: Stacy Edmonsond & Nadiya Shore	History: Joan Kelly	Physics and Astronomy: Olivia Moluchi & Nathan Clements	

Economics:	Indigenous Education:	Political Science: Michael Chutskoff	
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: Yasmeen Barakat	Indigenous Governance:	Psychology: Nazanin Babaei	

Recorder: Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator

Invited Guests: Jennifer White, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS); Devi Mucina, Associate Dean Indigenous, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Regrets Received: Rosemary Webb, Kyla Turner, Samira Sarkardei

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm by MADDUX.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5:01 PM

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

Today's personal land acknowledgement will be provided by MADDUX.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: Executive Board/JOHNSON

CARRIED

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: ROBERTS.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

GSS Membership: As of October 3, 2024 the GSS has 3099 members.

Meeting Quorum: With 1 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 19.

Welcome to new GRC reps:

REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:13

MADDUX will update GRC on the goings on of the Executive Board.

MADDUX mentioned the restructuring of the board facilitated the Chair of the society having sufficient time to meet with and manage all board members, keep up with the goings on of the Society and participate in events and other member engagement opportunities. MADDUX added that Grad Student Appreciation Week and Excellence in Graduate Research Symposium last week went great, and the staff and volunteers have done an incredible job.

MADDUX said that the board had a pause on advocacy to the Provincial government due to the election on October 19, but the board is looking forward to resuming provincial level advocacy.

MADDOX said that there are changes happening in the way audit is conducted to reduce the cost of administration to the GSS and smoothing the audit process.

MADDOX said that the society aims to invite as many graduate students to the society as possible and make it a space for everyone.

GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS 5:18

- **Advocacy and Campaigns: PALAPARTY**
ARNAL mentioned that the committee is working on the lactation friendly locations to be more accessible on campus. Furthermore, the status of the international graduate student and the change of policies from IRCC recently have impacted a lot of international graduate students and the committee is looking to options to find some ways to ease the stress on the graduate students. Students who are enrolled with CAL have different timeline to complete and the committee would like to know what UVic will do for reporting those students to the IRCC.
ARNAL said that we are advocating for students that have accessibility issues and cannot participate in UVic athletic services. The Advocacy for Inclusion Recreation (AIR) team and the committee are advocating for improvements to accessible recreation opportunities across campus.
- **Appeals: FIELDER**
FIELDER – This is year we have a consolidated Appeals, Finance and Stipend Review Committees which are now under Checks and Balances. In terms of appeals, our goal were to hear any appeal and go undergo training for the committee members.
- **Bylaw & Policy: MADDOX**
MADDOX mentioned that the committee is working on core membership fee and inviting the chair of finance committee to recommend changes for the definition of core membership fee. Further MADDOX said we are working to change bylaws to allow the Society to apply for external grant funding.
Lastly, the law rep is currently drafting recommendations for amending our non-partisanship bylaw to allow the GSS to support specific policies/platforms, while not allowing individual members to use the GSS to promote their own political position.
- **Events: LAWTON**
- **SHORE–** Mentioned that in the last few weeks, we have had events like book swap, pumpkin carving and for upcoming events we have hunting minigolf and craft week in December.
LAWTON said last week was GSAW and the EGRS was a great success, and a lot of planning and preparation was done ahead of time to make the event as smooth as possible.
- **Finance: FIELDER –** mentioned that finance committee is discussing the preliminary budget. Furthermore, they'll discuss fund reconstructing in November and December.
- **Stipend Review: JAMIESON-BURNS – SURA -** all the reports have been approved.
- **Electoral Officer: QUALTER –** Not present.

GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:28

Are there any reps who need to change their GRC committee? Please speak up now!

MOTION: to appoint 2024-25 GRC reps to the GRC Standing Committees as follows:

Events: Lauren Burton

M/S: LAWTON/ROBERTS

CARRIED

OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:35

LEAD: MADDUX

ROBERTS – appreciated and thanked for the GSS department grant approval.

ROBERTS also asked how many departments have study/work spaces for graduate students.

LAWTON - Biology department doesn't have enough study spaces and few desk spaces

KEEN - EOS – lunchroom is available and each labs gave individual spaces but not all are accessible for graduate students

NERO – there some spaces available for the students.

CHUTSKOFF Political Science – PHD students have their own room and two Ma rooms.

FIELDER – everyone has their desk and a lot of spaces available.

ARNAL – ECE students have office space but do not have graduate shared room and the shared room is faculty wide used.

JUREK – chem available spaces are variable

BURTON - Environmental student – spaces are available, and all students have table spaces up to lab supervisor to distribute.

MEHLMANN – Business has a lounge accessible for students

MADDUX said that it's excellent to take on advocating on that the graduate students must have fridge and microwave in their departments as it's a game changer for graduate students they spend a lot of time on campus.

Stacy discussed that there was an incident last year as we are not employee of UVic and hence WorkSafe BC does not cover.

MADDUX said that the type of RA matters here as some RA have workspace under unionization But some RA do not have coverage for workspace.

Members discussed disproportionately high fees for health and dental fees. Some others point during the negotiation the mid year opt-out and in should have been allowed.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:55 PM

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. WELCOME TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES! 6:00

Lead: Jennifer White, Associate Dean FGS and Devi Mucina, Associate Dean Indigenous FGS
For: Discussion

WHITE and MUCINA to provide a welcome and an overview of the FGS functions and reporting structure

White provided an overview of overall FGS structure.

MUCINA mentioned that Associate Dean Indigenous came into existence from decolonizing university of Victoria's vision. MUCINA further describe the work done at FGS.

2. WHAT'S GOING ON WITH FUNDING WITH JENNIFER WHITE AND DEVI MUCINA 6:15

Lead: WHITE and MUCINA

Questions:

ARNAL – asked that the funding shown in the presentation is it only for graduate students?

MUCINA replied yes only to graduate students.

ROBERTS asked if the TA ship funding goes to all graduate students because some year there are undergraduate students who are TAs as well. MUCINA said that each faculty has set allocated funding for TA and depends on the individual needs of the faculty.

ROBERTS mentioned that graph year is from 2021-22 and since then the federal government has changed its opinion on the cap on international student and the data is outdated. MUCINA replied by saying as the current data has been received by their institution and since the elections hasn't settled with province and the federal government has set number allocated number of international students the data has been submitted but will be updated.

Chutskoff ask MUCINA about his role as Associate Dean Indigenous what does his job entails?

MUCINA replied that most of his job revolves around making and working with policies to streamline and smooth out of the process for Indigenous students for example Indigenous exams that align with Indigenous values.

ZAHARA asked that since the government has introduced a lot of difficult for international students and especially PHD students in BC do not get enough funding compare Ontario? ZAHARA further added that generally there are a lot talking regarding equity and fairness but not much less of action is being done.

MUCINA mentioned that the point raised about international students that he has been in contact with international centre of students. MUCINA added that he has received a lot of attention to this matter, but MUCINA said since he just started his position, and he is open to hear opinions, but he hasn't been able to hear any concrete ideas other than just bring BC government to the table for funding negotiation and the BC government is just not having post secondary funding in one of their top priorities. White acknowledged the experience by ZAHARA and FGS is working on a holistic approach in assisting students with such experiences.

3. FGS GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE EQUITY REVIEW 6:30

Lead: MADDOX/TURNER

Reference: UVic Equity Action Plan

For: Discussion

UVic launched its Equity Action Plan, which provides UVic with strategic and specific directions to advance equity, diversity and inclusion, and to create the conditions in which everyone feels a sense of belonging. One of the many specific actions was to "conduct an equity review of UVic graduate student experience" which Robin Hicks, Dean of FGS, has been tasked with leading.

One key element of Dr. Hicks' information-gathering work is to seek input from offices and people on campus who engage with graduate students. We want to hear about your interactions with graduate students and to hear your feedback on equity-based challenges or opportunities.

STANDING ITEMS 6:40 PM

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:40

MOTION: BIRT the Minutes of the September 24 GRC meeting are approved as presented
M/S: CHUTKOFF/ROBERTS
Carried

EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT – 6:42

LEAD: JAMIESON-BURNS

REF DOCS: Executive Board Reports Folder

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

MOTION: to approve the September Board reports as presented.
M/S:
CARRIED

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES 6:45

LEAD: MADDOX

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

- Previously appointed committees:

Committee	Appointment Date	Rep Name
Appointment Committee for the Dean of Science	Sept 2024	Liam Mihalynuk
Faculty of Science EDI Council	Sept 2024	Stacy Edmonsond

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

REPORTS:

Appointment committee for the Dean of Science – Liam Mihalynuk

We have struck the dean of science committee, and over the last two meetings, we have been finalizing the criteria for the position. The criteria have now been finalized, and we will be having a public presentation on Thursday, November 14th. I am not aware yet of the exact location where this presentation will be held, but I do know that it will be broadcast live, and will be recorded

GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES (APPENDIX B) 6:50

LEAD: TANVEER

Reps are asked to sit on a UVic committee(s) to ensure grad student interests are represented.

MOTION: to elect graduate student representatives to the following UVic committees:
Committee: Faculty of Graduate Studies Council – Faculty of Human and Social Development or Division of Medical Sciences.

Member: no one interested

Committee: Child Care Advisory Committee

Member: Iram Zahara and Luiza Costa

Committee: Appointment Committee for the Associate Vice-President Research

Member: Gillian Leach

M/S: ROBERT/LAWTON

CARRIED

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: MADDIX

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!

NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: MADDIX

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: MADDIX

Next Meeting: GSS Annual General Meeting! October 22, 2024

- Agenda to be posted: October 10, 2024

Next GRC Meeting: November 26, 2024

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of November 12, 2024
- Agenda to be posted: November 19, 2024

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: The GSS will be closed November 11-15 for Reading Break.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: BIRT the meeting is adjourned.

M/S: LAYTON/ROBERTS

CARRIED

X

Wyatt MADDOX
GSS Chair 2024-25

X

Kyla TURNER
GSS Executive Director