

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

(HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 19, 2024

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

EXECUTIVE INVITED:

Wyatt MADDOX, 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: UVSS Board & Management: Dale Robertson, General Manager; Laila Casado, HR and Administrative Services Manager; Izzy Easton, D. Campaigns and Community Relations; Khushi Wadhwa, D. Finance and Operations; Bunni Williams, D. Outreach and University Relations; Hemal Sharma, D. Student Affairs;

REGRETS: Sarah Buchanan, UVSS D. Events; Harshita Sankar, UVSS D. International Student Relations

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 9:14 by MADDOX.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territorial acknowledgement offered by WEBB.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: WEBB/FIELDER

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. CAMPUS FOOD BANK FUND AND SUSTAINABILITY

Lead: MADDOX/UVSS

For: Discussion

The items that the GSS Board would like to discuss in particular include:

1. The appetite for a joint fee referendum in Spring, including both aligning our fee amounts and tying the Food Bank fee to CPI to ensure longer term sustainability;

2. Funding/food donation planning and drives around campus and creating sustainable long-term donation sites;
3. Creating a joint oversight committee of the Food Bank which would include representatives from the GSS and Continuing Studies so that the Food Bank can respond quickly to changing demands in consultation with all funding and user parties;
4. Means-testing for Food Bank access

Questions submitted to the UVSS on October 8 included:

1. What was the breakdown of services users for the prior fiscal year by (self-reported status as):
 - a. Family/single
 - b. International student/domestic
 - c. Grad/undergrad
2. What was the breakdown of fees received from UVSS, GSS, and Continuing Studies for the prior fiscal year? How much was received in donations?
3. What was a breakdown of expenses for the prior fiscal year (e.g. how much in wages, how much for support single student hampers vs family hampers, etc.)
4. What changes has the UVSS seen since implementing the measures previously discussed (current students only, proof of dependent to access family-sized hampers, pick up must be conducted by the student or pre-established authorized person)?
5. What information can the UVSS provide on service user demographics from September/October 2024 once ID checking was put in place?
6. How will post-docs and hired researchers be treated going forward (i.e. will they be restricted from access? Will a fee be implemented for these groups through payroll)?
7. What can you tell us about your sourcing for food? Wholesale? Food distributors?
8. What will happen with the continual deficits (i.e. is this a debt that will need to be repaid to Operating or were the deficits covered by a donation from Operating)?
9. What role does the ED play in the running of the Food Bank (e.g. applying for charitable status to assist with grant funding) and what's the status of that hiring process?
10. Who will be the main manager managing the Food Bank going forward?

WADHWA provided written answers to these questions on November 18, see Appendix D. She also provided a brief overview of the Food Bank services and usage.

Regarding a joint referendum WADHWA noted that CPI increases were challenging to pass and ROBERTS noted that quorum was challenging to achieve. WILLIAMS asked if it would be only the GSS raising fees. TURNER stated that the GSS food bank fee does increase by CPI and the GSS fees will meet or surpass the UVSS food bank fees in approximately two years.

FIELDER asked after the student fees per user type. LAWTON noted that Continuing Studies per the answers provided were using 30% of Food Bank services and providing 30% of funding.

CASADO explained the drop in Fridays skewed the data and that ending drop-in Fridays were an important cost control measure. CASADO also noted that the user identity verification will yield better data. CASADO offered to provide the current raw data.

Regarding additional funding options, WADHWA stated that they have submitted two of the three grant applications that TURNER wrote. WADHWA also noted that UVSS has applied to UVic for continued guaranteed funding. CASADO echoed the pressure that the UVSS is putting pressure on UVic for funding. CASADO also noted that the UVSS is able to effectively utilize UVic's charitable status for grant applications.

MADDOX steered the conversation to community organizations, such as the Gordon Head Community Association, to seek donations. MADDOX noted that the GSS has a solid connection with Gordon Head CA, but given our size we can't seek out supports from all local community associations.

TURNER asked if she can send a connection email to United Way Vancouver South Island. MADDOX also shared his connection with the Red Cedar Café and offered to make a connection. There was more support for these connections.

MADDOX asked after a joint working group to oversee and support the longevity of the Food Bank. WADHWA was very supportive.

WADHWA noted that means testing would not be supported. CASADO clarified that the push back to their current restrictions on use was quite severe. PALAPARTY asked after a softer means testing (self-declared means only). WILLIAMS responded that the barrier was too high for the UVSS's appetite and the strong push was to secure additional funding.

Joint working group membership: PALAPARTY, WILLIAMS, WADHWA, CASADO, FIELDER, TURNER.

2. GRC AGENDA APPROVAL

Lead: MADDOX

REF DOCs: GRC Agenda (see also correspondence for context on item 3)

For: Decision

Motion: to approve the November 26 GRC agenda.

M/S: WEBB/LAWTON

CARRIED

STANDING ITEMS PART 2

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2024 Executive Board Meeting as presented.

M/S: LAWTON/WEBB

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:

August 27: All board members to edit and create a version of the verbal report committee guiding questions for the October GRC meeting.

October 22: TASKS: Board members to meet at 4pm to set up for the AGM.

TASK: TURNER to invite Libraries to the November 5 board meeting.

Tasks revoked or abandoned:

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

No appointments made.

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (APPENDIX D)

Item 1: Giving Tuesday

Item 2: Here2Talk Survey (email intro in appendix d, survey on teams) – they want one reply from the GSS

Motion: to receive the correspondence.

M/S: FIELDER/LAWTON

CARRIED

TASK: TURNER to respond to the Here2Talk survey.

TASK: LAWTON to respond to the Giving Tuesday email.

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 provided an update from FGS Executive Council.

Director of Finance: FIELDER updated on StudentCare concerns. TURNER provided the financials to StudentCare and FIELDER noted that we will provide a formal report to GRC. FIELDER also noted that TURNER's annual performance review is forthcoming. FIELDER and LAWTON are meeting with management about our financial structures. Lastly, FIELDER and TURNER will meet with the Health and Dental Coordinator regarding Appeals Committee.

Director of Internal/University Relations: WEBB is getting back up to speed after their leave. They have requested notes and briefings as needed. WEBB and PALAPARTY have created a workflow for the Advocacy and Campaigns committee. One item that has been suggested to A&C is the connection to community recreation centre in light of the recreation facilities closures. FGS Council met regarding professional doctorates that are more industry focused. The proposal to have a professional doctorate is now going to the UVic Senate.

Director of External Relations: PALAPARTY consulted with Saanich through the Gordon Head Community Association regarding bus lanes on McKenzie. At the SSD special general meeting,

PALAPARTY was elected as the graduate student representative. PALAPARTY has met with the Sexualized Violence Prevention Policy Review group and will meet with GSSBC next week.

Director of Student Life: LAWTON is working with Wendy from SWC to promote and create new wellness events. She is planning both a drag show and pancake breakfast for January.

Executive Director: TURNER is budgeting and preparing for collective bargaining.

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: December 3, 2024

Next GRC Meeting: November 26, 2024

AGM: March 25, 2025

Office, Staff Scheduling:

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 10:45.

M/S: LAWTON/WEBB

CARRIED

X

Wyatt MADDOX
GSS Chair 2024-25

X

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX D – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Item 1: Giving Tuesday

From: Rachel Drummond - Alumni Events & Programs Coordinator <alumcoor2@uvic.ca>

Sent: November 14, 2024 9:56 AM

To: Neil Barney - GSS Operations and Services Manager <gssops@uvic.ca>

Cc: Madeleine Stinson <madeleinstinson@uvic.ca>; Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>; Cortney Baldwin - Annual Giving Officer <givingofficer@uvic.ca>

Subject: RE: Be part of UVic's Giving Tuesday - Partnership Opportunities!

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your email, and I hope you're feeling better now!

It's fantastic to hear that you're interested in collaborating for Giving Tuesday! With the deadline fast approaching, we're aiming to have everything finalized by **November 22nd** to ensure we can get all materials printed and distributed in time.

Given the tight timelines, our focus for this year would be providing tent cards for the Grad House to place on tables throughout the restaurant. To move forward, we just need to know how many tables you have set up, so we can provide the appropriate number of tent cards.

If there are additional ways the GSS and Grad House can collaborate this year, and if it's feasible between now and November 22nd, I'd be happy to discuss those options further. However, we'd be thrilled to use the tent cards as a starting point, and I'm sure we can build on this partnership even more in future years!

To that end, I've copied in Cortney Baldwin, our lead on this project, so you're both connected and can touch base directly for any further details or coordination.

If you have any other ideas or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're looking forward to working together to make this Giving Tuesday a success!

Best regards,
Rachel

From: Neil Barney - GSS Operations and Services Manager <gssops@uvic.ca>

Sent: November 13, 2024 1:02 PM

To: Rachel Drummond - Alumni Events & Programs Coordinator <alumcoor2@uvic.ca>

Cc: Madeleine Stinson <madeleinstein@uvic.ca>; Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>

Subject: RE: Be part of UVic's Giving Tuesday - Partnership Opportunities!

Hi Rachel,

Thank you so much for reaching out! Sorry about my slow reply – I ended up being out sick for a week at the end of October and have been scrambling to catch up since.

I am going to review your partnership package over the next week or so. I might also want to loop in someone from our Board as community building fits into their portfolio.

All that to say, I will probably want to participate in some way but need to go through things first. I just didn't want to leave your email unanswered. Is there a deadline by which it is best for us to have things figured out? I just don't want to leave anyone scrambling.

Best,
Neil

From: Rachel Drummond - Alumni Events & Programs Coordinator <alumcoor2@uvic.ca>

Sent: November 7, 2024 2:51 PM

To: Neil Barney - GSS Operations and Services Manager <gssops@uvic.ca>; Grad House Restaurant <gradhouse@uvic.ca>

Subject: Be part of UVic's Giving Tuesday - Partnership Opportunities!

Hi Neil and the Grad House team,

I hope you're doing well and enjoying the fall season! My name is Rachel, and I'm working with the UVic Giving Tuesday Engagement Committee this year. From my experience working with the Alumni team, I know we've enjoyed great collaborations with the Grad House and the GSS in the past, and I'm excited to share an opportunity to continue that partnership by inviting you to participate in UVic's Giving Tuesday on December 3rd.

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving, and at UVic, it's a meaningful celebration of community, philanthropy, and support. This year, we're expecting engagement from a wide range of our community members—including alumni, students, faculty, and staff—making it a wonderful opportunity to highlight your support for UVic and the broader community.

We'd love for the Grad House to get involved in UVic's Giving Tuesday in ways that work best for you. Some ideas include:

- Placing UVic Giving Tuesday promotional materials (tent cards) on your restaurant tables leading up to and on Giving Tuesday.
- Donating in-kind items, such as gift cards, discount coupons, or swag, to be included in student prize packs.

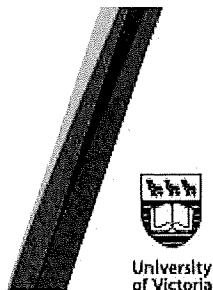
We're also open to any other ideas you might have to help raise awareness or engage your guests in this special celebration of giving.

I've attached a partnership package with more details for your review, and I'd love to discuss how we can work together to make this year's Giving Tuesday a success.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Thanks so much,
Rachel

P.S. If you'd like to see how UVic's Giving Tuesday went last year, here's the [link to our recap!](#)



Rachel Drummond (she/her)
Signature Events and Programs Coordinator
Alumni Relations
University of Victoria
[250 721-6012](tel:2507216012)
alumni.uvic.ca

We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songheess and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Item 2: Here2Talk Survey

From: Bondoreff, Andrei PSFS:EX <Andrei.Bondoreff@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: November 13, 2024 11:56 AM

To: Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>

Subject: Soliciting Feedback on Here2Talk Mental Health and Wellness for students

You don't often get email from andrei.bondoreff@gov.bc.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Student Societies,

We hope this email finds you well.

This is an invitation from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS) to provide input on Here2Talk, a free 24-7 mental health counselling and referral service that offers options to reach out by phone or online chat through the Here2Talk app or website, and provides students with confidential and immediate support, vital information, as well as referrals to helpful services available on their campus or in their communities.

We have drafted a short questionnaire to solicit feedback regarding Here2Talk, from student societies at post-secondary institutions across BC. This is an opportunity to provide advice and recommendations on what has worked well and what can be improved so that Here2Talk can be as effective as possible in meeting the mental health and wellness needs of students moving forward. Your responses will be analyzed and anonymously incorporated into the Ministry's engagement with service providers and will help shape its future operational model.

We ask that you provide any feedback by December 6th. If you have any questions or concerns about this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact me directly either by phone or email.

We look forward to your feedback and thank you for your participation.

Best regards,



Andrei Bondoreff

Senior Policy Analyst

Strategic Policy & Initiatives Branch

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

☎ 778-698-9868

✉ Andrei.Bondoreff@gov.bc.ca

Item 3: Supporting documents for GRC agenda item #3

Good morning Victor,

I'm just looping Wyatt into this chat as well as Chair for the GRC.

I've put the work safety/unionization item on the GRC agenda that the board will approve for circulation next week. I'm also happy to share previous GSS work on this matter. In the last few years, we have primarily deferred to CUPE 4163 as a labour union with considerably more resources on understanding employment law (particularly case law) than the GSS maintains. However, the issue of RA pay and workplace safety did receive a formal legal opinion from a GSS lawyer about a decade ago and an updated opinion in 2021. Please find attached all relevant documentation from the GSS.

The timeline of events for what I'm sharing is:

1. Throughout 2012, two RAs come to the GSS for support in receiving pay for their work. Workplace safety is mentioned in my records, but does not appear to be a focus for the GSS (see document "GSS Goals for meeting...")
2. Throughout 2013, the GSS met with UVic about this matter, and ultimately sought legal counsel to draft a letter to UVic querying the university's position that they are not the legal employer of RAs (see documents 2013-09-30 RA briefing... and Jeanie Lanine memo...)
3. In 2014 and again in 2017, the GSS met with UVic and were basically told "grad students who are experiencing issues with their RA employment should go first to FGS for support, and then the FGS can loop in UVic HR in an advisory role" (see 2014-01-07 RA briefing to FGS..., 2017-03-29 RA policy meeting, and 2017-05-25 Dean Capson memo)
4. In 2021, we asked Jeanie Lanine to update her legal opinion from 2013. There were no substantive updates but she did note that having an RA go directly to WorkSafe BC to request a determination of employer would be "helpful but not determinative" in a case to the Labour Relations Board asking for the university to be recognized as the employer of RAs.

Where this situation has stood since 2017 for the GSS is that the University *generously (/s)* offered us the opportunity to take on the duties of a labour union in informing employees of their employment rights and advocating for their employment rights, despite the fact that we have no formal relationship with these people AS employees, and, more significantly, no means to identify these employees. (Seriously, on the one hand per the 2012-2017 notes, UVic both argued that the GSS has no standing in a discussion about RA employment as have no role in employment relations with the university and also shunted off responsibility for advising RAs on their employment rights to the GSS. Maddening.) We've been partnering with CUPE 4163 ever since to try and get the RAs unionized, but after 3-4 card drives, CUPE 4163 has not yet been able to get the matter to the Labour Relations Board (in no small part because UVic will not release information on how many grant funded research assistants are at UVic, let alone how many of them are grad students ever since they caught wind of us trying to unionize RAs.) So, we would be DELIGHTED for any kind of update from Organize UVic as it seems to me like a formal unionization might be the last door open for resolving the systemic issues around RA work at UVic.

That said, I do also want to highlight that, per a UVic memo to the University president, there has been written acknowledgement that RAs are covered under UVic workplace insurance. Per the 2017-05-25 memo from then Dean of FGS, "It is important to note that anyone currently working as a GFRA, including graduate students, is covered on the UVic WorkSafe BC insurance policy for Health and Safety considerations." This aligns with WorkSafe BC's policies and definitions of worker, which very clearly states "'worker" includes the following:

- (a) a person who has entered into or works under a contract of service or apprenticeship, whether the contract is written or oral, express or implied, and whether by way of manual labour or otherwise;
- (b) a person who
 - (i) is a learner who is not under a contract of service or apprenticeship, and
 - (ii) becomes subject to the hazards of an industry within the scope of the compensation provisions for the purpose of undergoing training or probationary work specified by the employer as a preliminary to employment;"

I'm looking forward to any updates you can provide us! If there are any documents you'd like the GRC reps to read in advance to keep the conversation moving forward at a good pace, could you have those to me by the 19th when Irfy will send out the agenda?

Wyatt and Irfy, anything I've missed or anything you'd like to add?

Cheers,

Kyla Turner (she/they)

Executive Director, University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Room 102, Halpern Centre for Graduate Students

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GSS front desk: 250-472-4543

<http://gss.uvic.ca>

Keep in touch by signing up for our bulletin here: <https://gss.uvic.ca/gss-bulletin/>

From: Víctor <victormarrugat@gmail.com>

Sent: November 8, 2024 4:20 PM

To: Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>; GSS Governance <gssgov@uvic.ca>

Subject: New point for next GRC meeting agenda

You don't often get email from victormarrugat@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Kyla and Irfan,

I hope this email finds you well. I'd like to propose a new point for the next GRC meeting. In the last meeting there were quite a few questions raised regarding the protections we have while doing research on and off campus, so I would like to research and try to clarify those points. I will try to contact Work safe BC and other UVic people to get some info about our current situation. At the same time, I think we will have more info about the UBC RA unionization drive, so we will know more about what is considered an "RA" and what kind of research work is "unionizable" in BC. I was thinking of pitching a short presentation, however, I expect people to raise more questions. Then would it be possible to allocate 20 minutes for that?

Please let me know if I need to follow more steps for this matter, or if I need to put someone else in the loop.

Thank you in advance!

Victor

UVSS Correspondence regarding the Food Bank

1. What was the breakdown of services users for the prior fiscal year by (self-reported status as):

1. Family/single
2. International student/domestic
3. Grad/undergrad

A grid provided did not copy well to this document.

*the self-reported numbers do not accurately reflect the Food Bank usage.

2. What was the breakdown of fees received from UVSS, GSS, and Continuing Studies for the prior fiscal year? How much was received in donations?

- UVSS- We receive \$2.25 full time students and \$1.12 part time -per sem per student

- UVSS: \$88,422, GSS: \$11,723 and Continuing Studies: \$46,395

3. What was a breakdown of expenses for the prior fiscal year (e.g. how much in wages, how much for support single student hampers vs family hampers, etc.)

attach year end financials

4. What changes has the UVSS seen since implementing the measures previously discussed (current students only, proof of dependent to access family-sized hampers, pick up must be conducted by the student or pre-established authorized person)?

- Conscious of foodbank
- Currently registered students only
- No drop ins
- Asking for V-number verification
- Pre-approved authorized pick up person (to be done once at the start of semester)
- Documentation to pick up for family- proof of dependents (to be done once at the start of semester)

5. What information can the UVSS provide on service user demographics from September/October 2024 once ID checking was put in place?

We don't have compiled info given staff capacity.

6. How will post-docs and hired researchers be treated going forward (i.e. will they be restricted from access? Will a fee be implemented for these groups through payroll)?

Any staff members will be restricted- including post-docs and hired researchers. No fee has been implemented for staff members.

7. What can you tell us about your sourcing for food? Wholesale? Food distributors?

We are dependent on CCG for some produce donations, buy from Gordon Food Services, Thrifty's, Fairway and Rootcellar- depending on price & delivery availability. Recently been meeting with the Mustard Seed to look at potential opportunities.

8. What will happen with the continual deficits (i.e. is this a debt that will need to be repaid to Operating or were the deficits covered by a donation from Operating)?

They were considered a donation but consistent deficits will lead us to reduce access or think about reduced service & hours and maybe if need be temporary closures (which we ofc don't want to do but given financial sustainability of the foodbank we cannot continue operating at this pace).

9. What role does the ED play in the running of the Food Bank (e.g. applying for charitable status to assist with grant funding) and what's the status of that hiring process?

The personnel committee is in-charge for the ED hiring process and will make sure to do what is best for the organization, thank you for your concern. The foodbank is and will be handled by the HRASM.

And UVSS does not have a charitable status. We use UVic's account, charity number when need be.

10. Who will be the main manager managing the Food Bank going forward?

Laila (HRASM) has been the point of contact for the Food Bank for a while and will be the same going forward.

