

## University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

## Graduate Representative Council

## MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 25, 2025, 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: <b>Semyon Drozdetsckii</b>	Electrical & Computer Engineering: <b>Victor Marrugat Arnal &amp; Mahmoud Chick Zaouali</b>	Interdisciplinary Studies:	Public Health & Social Policy:
Art History and Visual Studies: <b>Sarah Roberts</b>	English: <b>Kerri Li</b>	Law: <b>Katarina Sawchuk</b>	Social Dimensions of Health: <b>Luiza Costa &amp; Kathryn Stone</b>
Biochemistry & Microbiology: <b>Gillian Leach / Liam Mihalynuk</b>	Environmental Studies: <b>Lauren Burton</b>	Mathematics and Statistics: <b>Khai Quigley</b>	Social Work:
Biology: <b>Muskan Karmani</b>	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed: <b>Isaac Barss &amp; Maryam Sheikhi</b>	Mechanical Engineering: <b>Maziyar Khadivi &amp; Bernardo Leite</b>	Sociology: <b>Neve Sugars-Keen &amp; Jasmine Padam</b>
Business: <b>Jenna Mahlmann</b>	French: <b>Jacqueline Rutherford</b>	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: <b>Dhwani Sura</b>	Theatre:
Chemistry: <b>Jesse Delmage &amp; Phillip Jurek</b>	Geography: <b>Adam Regier &amp; Hazim Ismail</b>	Music: <b>Talietha Sangha</b>	Visual Arts:
Child & Youth Care:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Nursing:	Writing:
Civil Engineering: <b>Samira (Sami) Sarkardei</b>	Greek and Roman Studies: <b>Luke Montgomery</b>	Pacific and Asian Studies: <b>Bryce Bartsch &amp; Delaney Johnson</b>	CUPE:
Computer Science: <b>Jingyi Lu (Lucas)</b>	Health Information Science: <b>Marian Kaine &amp; Ghita Hajjami</b>	Philosophy: <b>Yukio Jamieson-Burns</b>	Other Programs:
Curriculum & Instruction: <b>Iram Zahra &amp; Samim Nikbakht</b>	Hispanic & Italian Studies:	Physics and Astronomy: <b>Olivia Moluchi &amp; Nathan Clements</b>	
Earth & Ocean Science: <b>Stacy Edmonson &amp; Nadiya Shore</b>	History: <b>Joan Kelly</b>	Political Science: <b>Michael Chutskoff</b>	
Economics:	Indigenous Education:	Psychology: <b>Nazanin Babaei</b>	
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: <b>Yasmeen Barakat</b>	Indigenous Governance: <b>Ali Malhi</b>	Public Administration: <b>Jeremy Perkins &amp; Marry Ann Sing</b>	

**Recorder:** Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator**Invited Guests:** Samantha Ogrodnik, Graduate Career Educator; Karen Munro, and Courtney Lundrigan, UVic

Libraries; Hannah Brown, candidate for Director Internal/University Relations; Bryn Lonsborough, candidate for Director of Student Life; Asma Noureen, candidate for Director of Student Life;

**Regrets Received:** Katarina Sawchuk, Law;

**Absent without regrets:**

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:02pm 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 BURTON.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:03

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/SHORE*

*CARRIED*

### TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:05

Today's timekeeper was: RUTHERFORD

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:07

**GSS Membership:** As of January 21, 2025 the GSS has 3053 members.

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

**Welcome to new GRC reps:**

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## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

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### CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:10

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

MADDUX noted that the board has been working on elections and referendum prep. Three of our board members this year are returning to the board next year (their positions are uncontested in the election). Another board member is signed up to campaign for the referendum.

The board has also been preparing for the Semi-Annual General Meeting on March 25, 2025. The board will present bylaw amendments (see New Business Item 3 below), the 2025-26 budget, and reports from all GRC committees.

The board is also preparing for turn over. Sam and Wyatt will be training Maggie and Rosemary for their new Finance and Chair positions respectively. Maggie and Rosemary will be both receiving training and providing training to their successors in the Student Life and Internal/University Relations positions.

The Board received an update re: McKinnon pool shortly before the announcement was made public: the pool will cost \$5.1million to maintain functionality for 3-5 years. Therefore, no opportunity to keep the pool open is being explored.

The Board also received an update around graduate funding. The BC Graduate Scholarship (which provides 42 total scholarships to UVic) has increased their funding per grant marginally.

Lastly, MADDUX reported on the work that Rosemary WEBB is undertaking for advocacy to UVic regarding the implementation of their new academic accommodation policy. UVic's new policy relies heavily on universal design in learning and universal extended time for assessments in an effort to eliminate the need for "simple" accommodations at an undergrad level. At a grad level, the responsibility to negotiate accommodations was moved to the student and their supervisor. These changes limit the role of CAL and push workloads onto faculty who are not accommodation specialists.

MADDUX also advised members to file their taxes with UFile for free through the Canadian Federation of Students. TURNER reminded members that the GSS is not a CFS member organization.

TURNER gave a brief introduction to the returning board members: Jitendra PALAPARTY who returns to her External Relations position, Maggie LAWTON who will move into the Finance role, and Rosemary WEBB who will move into the Chair. Additionally, Hannah BROWN, Asma NOUREEN, and Bryn LONSBROUGH introduced themselves as candidates for the board. Iram ZAHRA provided her statement after the other guest speakers. Sarah ROBERTS declined the speaking opportunity.

#### GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS 5:15

- **Advocacy and Campaigns:** WEBB reported that A&C discussed creating an FAQ on how to use/access Healthcare at UVic and extended benefits to be posted on the GSS website. Additionally, Yasmeen has proposed and already run the first queer BIPOC social. Updates on Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR) include that Monday nights are climb nights, Yoga with SSD got great feedback, a self-defence program has been proposed with the Native Students Union, and Every Body Wiggle (open, accessible dance classes) are looking to rebrand and increase advertising.
- **Appeals:** FIELDER reported that no appeals were filed for review in February.
- **Bylaw & Policy:** MADDUX reported that BPC reviewed and approved revised Financial Policies, alongside Finance Committee. These policies will now go to the Board for approval and then become part of the GSS policy manual. The revision to bylaw 15 (non-partisanship) is still ongoing.
- **Events:** LAWTON reported that Events Committee has planned all March events. There will be two ticketed events: Mug painting and a trip to the Bug Zoo. Tickets available in the front office. The end of term party has been scheduled for March 28. For February events, despite losing their first pub (Grad House – due to a water heater breakdown), the Valentines pub crawl went very well!
- **Finance:** FIELDER reported that the Finance Com. reviewed and approved revised Financial Policies, including a Budget Policy, and Terms of Reference for all GSS funds/bank accounts.
- **Stipend Review:** TURNER reported that SRC reviewed all submitted board reports. One report was not received, which is noted in the board stipend motion below. The SRC also reviewed the board stipend rates for 2025-26 that will be approved at the Semi-Annual General Meeting next month.
- **Electoral Officer:** QUALTER reported that nominations closed for the board yesterday, February 24 at 4pm. Three seats are uncontested: Chair, filled by Rosemary Webb; External Relations, filled by Jitendra Palaparty; and Finance, filled by Maggie Lawton. These seats will be ratified at the SAGM on March 25. The position of Director of Student Life received two

nominees: Bryn Lonsborough and Asma Noureen. The position of Director of Internal/University Relations received three nominees: Sarah Roberts, Iram Zahra, and Hannah Brown. QUALTER reminded members that the Meet the Candidates event would take place tomorrow, February 26 in Side Project 9-10am. They also reminded members to vote March 5-7 on Simply Voting for both the Director of Internal/University Relations and Director of Student Life and the Health and Dental referendum.

#### GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:25

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

*No committee changes.*

#### OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:30

LEAD: MADDOX

SLLC had their first department event since the four departments were combined and it went well. KARMANI noted that CUPE 4163 recently advertised their hardship fund. CUPE 4163 also started collective bargaining.

SHORE noted that biology and SEOS are appointment a co-chair on climate change.

BROWN reported that the Presidential Appointment Committee has updated their criteria and President Hall is re-applying. You can find out more and how to give feedback on the University Secretary Website.

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### MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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#### 1. LIBRARY CONSULTATION 5:40

Lead: MUNRO, LUNDRIGAN

For: Discussion

Karen Munro and Courtney Lundrigan will bring updates on library services and programs, and will ask a couple of quick questions to get reps' input.

MUNRO and LUNDRIGAN provided an overview of the following services: two library locations (Priestly Law Library and McPherson Library); Tek Booths; Grad Student Writing space; Thesis Writing Intensive; Research Librarians by subject matter; Digital Scholarship Commons; rental equipment; bike lockers, etc. They also solicited feedback on a current student survey.

MUNRO asked after thesis formatting as it relates to the Thesis Writing Intensive. GARO has recently ended their formatting assistance for theses, so there will be an increased need for formatting help and technologies from the Library. Several GRC reps mentioned specific tech and tools that are high demand and pay-for-service that they'd like the Library to offer. MUNRO referred students to the Digital Scholarship Commons as well for tech and tools support.

Thesis Writing Intensive will occur June 3-5, 2025.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –6:00 PM

## 2. CAREER EDUCATOR INTRODUCTION 6:05

Lead: Ogrodnik

For: Discussion

Samantha OGRODNIK has a 1 year term position to offer career education services to grad students. Please, ask her questions, refer soon-to-be-grads to her, tell your friends!

OGRODNIK provided an overview of her role and requested feedback on how best to reach graduate students in need of career advising, including the format and frequency of campus engagements, format of online supports, appointment booking systems, etc.

OGRODNIK noted that her services are for both academic and non-academic jobs and across all disciplines. She can provide assistance with resumes, CV, cover letters, interview practices (including scholarship interviews and co-op interviews). She can provide one-on-one in-person or online appointments, forthcoming workshops on CVs vs resumes, academic vs non-academic job hunting, etc. You can find Sam in the GSS board room on Mondays 10-12 for drop-in support.

OGRODNIK also asked for GRC reps to fill out her survey that has been circulated via GSS bulletin and Instagram. BROWN asked if the workshops will be recorded and available online.

## 3. BYLAW AMENDMENTS 6:20

Lead: MADDUX

For: Decision

MADDUX presented on bylaw amendments to bylaws 4.4 (Referenda), 14.3 (Membership Fees) and 14.4 (Funds of the Society). These changes are administrative and record ongoing practice for which fees increase by the Consumer Price Index annually (14.3) and requiring any future fee referendum to include whether the fee increases by CPI or not (4.4). Additionally, they allow for the GSS to seek additional public donations and government/non-governmental agency grants (14.4). These changes will be voted on at the Semi-Annual General Meeting on March 25, 2025.

*Motion: to approve the amendments to bylaw 4.4 (referenda), 14.3 (membership fees), and 14.4 (funds of the society) as drafted by Bylaw and Policy Committee.*

*M/S: Bylaw and Policy Committee/BURTON*

*CARRIED*

## 4. SSD FUNDING 6:35

Lead: Muskan KARMANI, Biology rep

For: Discussion

Per the January 28, 2025 GRC meeting, KARMANI requested time to speak to the need for further funding for the Society for Students with a Disability. KARMANI had to leave early due to an appointment and therefore this section of the agenda will be postponed until April.

## STANDING ITEMS 6:40 PM

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:40

*MOTION: RESOLVED the Minutes of the December 17, 2024 GRC meeting are approved as presented.*

*M/S: ROBERTS/LEITE*

*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 January reports for Wyatt Maddox, Sam Fielder, Rosemary Webb, and Maggie Lawton;*

*Further to deny the January report for Jitendra Palaparty due to lack of submission. Stipend Review Committee will review Jitendra Palaparty in their March meeting upon receipt.*

*M/S: Stipend Review Committee / LEITE*

*CARRIED*

## REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES 6:45

LEAD: MADDOX

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

- Board of Governors:
- Senate:
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council: WEBB noted the FGS Council is heavily advertising the 3 Minute Thesis, which is coming up in March. Robin HICKS would like to see more non-STEM presentations. Tricia Best for ICS gave international graduate enrolment updates which will also be presented to the GSS board in March.
- Previously appointed committees:
- President Appointment Committee: MADDOX and BROWN noted that there will be a forthcoming survey for students about the President position and duties that they are requesting GRC reps share widely.
- FGS AD Search Committee: ZAHRA noted that they have reviewed interview protocols and should select a candidate in 4 more meetings.

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
Childcare Advisory Committee	Oct 2024	Iram Zahara and Luiza Costa
Appointment Committee – AVP Research	Oct 2024	Maggie Lawton

Society for Students with a Disability Graduate Student Representative	Nov 2024	Jitendra Palaparty
Appointment Committee for the President and Vice-Chancellor	Dec 2024	Wyatt Maddox
Appointment Committee Associate Dean, FGS	Jan 2025	Iram Zahra
Residence Dining Advisory Committee	Jan 2025	Jitendra Palaparty

Reps are encouraged to submit short written reports to [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) for inclusion in the minutes.

#### 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 ratify and or elect graduate student representatives to the following UVic Committee: Search Committee for Associate Dean of Research, Faculty of Science  
Member: Sam Fielder*

*Committee: Working Group on Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism  
Member: Iram Zahra*

*M/S: BURTON/LEITE  
CARRIED/FAILED*

#### REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: MADDUX

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!

SHORE asked for pointers for bringing students together for social coffee hours. Folks recommended offering snacks, tying the time to a class or other meeting many students attend, and actively partnering students with others with similar research interests.

#### NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: MADDUX

April 22 – Presentation from the UVic Affordability Working Group and Residence Dining Advisory Committee re: cost of living and cost of food on campus.

#### IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: MADDUX

Next General Meeting: GSS Semi-Annual General Meeting March 25, 2025

- Agenda to be posted: March 11, 2025

Next GRC Meeting: April 22, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of April 8, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: April 15, 2025

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: BIRT the meeting is adjourned at 6:55.

M/S: MADDOX/ROBERTS

CARRIED

X 

Wyatt MADDOX  
GSS Chair 2024-25

X 

Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director

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#### APPENDIX D: UVIC GEC REPORTS

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January 13, 2025

##### FGS Deans – announcements

- Digital progress reporting tool
  - Functional
  - In beta testing with several units
  - Likely rollout by September

##### Indigenous Language Revitalization Programs – Passed

- Too many courses, impacting completion rates
- To make certificate more desirable, streamlining
- Combine two courses into one to reduce overlap, improve timing, and improve completion timelines

##### Master of Arts in Germanic and Slavic Studies, Holocaust Stream – Passed

- Reduced units to come in line with other MA programs in the faculty
- Practicum required to optional
- Limit scope of thesis to 6.0 units

PhD in Economics – passed

- Reduce from 9 courses to 2-4 (as determined by committee)
- Most coursework is redundant to students (having been covered in MA)
- Refocus towards research by streamlining route to candidacy
- Remove comprehensive exams, primarily proposal defense

Master of Business Administration in Sustainable Innovation – passed

- Reduce from two program offerings to one based on declining enrollment in (daytime)
- Changing admission language to focus on professional students
- Reduce unit requirements for focus on capstone

Master in Management

- New concentrations
- Increase in total units
- Optional work term
- Admission requirements replaced with non-credit prep course if needed
- Multiple entry points (hybrid delivery)

Master of Engineering Biomedical Systems – passed

- Bring in line with other MENG programs – passed
- Switching out course for team-based capstone project
- Removes individual oral examination
- Avoid mini-thesis

Master of Applied Data Science – passed

- Change to allow students who are not currently eligible for acceptance, but may require minor upgrading
- Minor language change in-committee

Closing information:

- Immigration looking at length of program – Rachel Strandquist (GARO)
- Change required program length to be 16 months for spousal work permits, 12 month with optional *does* meet requirements

