

*University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society*

## Graduate Representative Council

## MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: GSS BOARD ROOMS OR ZOOM: [LINK](#)

APRIL 22, 2025, 5-7 PM

**Executive Board Invited (1 vote per member):****Chair:** Rosemary Webb**Director of Internal/University Relations:** Sarah Roberts**Director of Finance:** Maggie Lawton**Director of Student Life:** Asma Noureen**Director of External Relations:****Executive Director (non-voting):** Kyla Turner**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

Anthropology: <b>Semyon Drozdetskii</b>	Electrical & Computer Engineering: <b>Victor Marrugat Arnal</b>	Interdisciplinary Studies:	Public Health & Social Policy:
Art History and Visual Studies:	English:	Law:	Social Dimensions of Health:
Biochemistry & Microbiology:	Environmental Studies:	Mathematics and Statistics:	Social Work:
Biology:	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed:	Mechanical Engineering: <b>Maziyar Khadivi &amp; Bernardo Leite</b>	Sociology: <b>Neve Sugars-Keen &amp; Jasmine Padam</b>
Business:	French: <b>Jacqueline Rutherford</b>	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience:	Theatre:
Chemistry: <b>Jesse Delmage &amp; Phillip Jurek</b>	Geography:	Music:	Visual Arts:
Child & Youth Care:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Nursing:	Writing:
Civil Engineering:	Greek and Roman Studies: <b>Luke Montgomery</b>	Pacific and Asian Studies: <b>Bryce Bartsch &amp; Delaney Johnson</b>	CUPE:
Computer Science:	Health Information Science:	Philosophy: <b>Yukio Jamieson-Burns</b>	Other Programs:
Curriculum & Instruction:	Hispanic & Italian Studies:	Physics and Astronomy:	
Earth & Ocean Science:	History:	Political Science:	
Economics:	Indigenous Education:	Psychology:	
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies:	Indigenous Governance:	Public Administration:	

**Recorder:** Kyla Turner, Executive Director**Invited Guests:** **Jim Forbes**, Senior Director Campus Engagement and **John Thompson**, Director of Food Services**Regrets Received:** Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator; Jitendra Palaparty, Director of External Relations; Jenna Mahlmann, Business; Gillian Leach, Biochemistry; Nadiya Shore, Earth and Ocean Science; Muskan Karmani, Biology;**Absent without regrets:** Liam Mihalynuk; Yasmeen Barakat; Ali Malhi; Jeremy Perkins & Marry Ann Sing; Iram Zahra & Samim Nikbakht; Mahmoud Chick Zaouali; Stacy Edmonson; Joan Kelly; Olivia Moluchi & Nathan Clements; Michael Chutskoff; Nazanin Babaei; Dhvani Sura; Talietha Sangha; Marian Kaine & Ghita Hajjami; Khai Quigley; Katarina Sawchuk; Lauren Burton;

Kerri Li; Isaac Barss & Maryam Sheikhi; Luiza Costa & Kathryn Stone; Samira (Sami) Sarkardei; Adam Regier & Hazim Ismail

---

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

---

### CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:01 pm by WEBB.

### 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 WEBB. They provided several signs in ASL for "Indigenous" and "settler" to share knowledge.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/RUTHERFORD*

*CARRIED*

### TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: LEITE.

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

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

**Meeting Quorum:** With 5 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 17. The meeting was not quorate, however information sharing and advocacy campaign planning.

**Welcome to new GRC reps:**

---

## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

---

### CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:13

Introductions to the 2025-26 GSS Executive Board!

WEBB, PALAPARTY, LAWTON, ROBERTS, AND NOUREEN introduced themselves to the GRC. WEBB, LAWTON and PALAPARTY are, of course, returning board members, and ROBERTS is a long-standing GRC rep, so GRC is already familiar with the majority of the board.

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

- **Advocacy and Campaigns:** ROBERTS reported on the work of the committee, including ongoing work on supporting TAs in accommodating students, the AIRS program, the Victoria Crystal Pool referendum, and monitoring IRCC changes.
- **Appeals:** LAWTON reported that the Appeals Committee heard one appeal this month.
- **Bylaw & Policy:** WEBB reported that they met with Irfan TANVEER, Bernardo LEITE, and Kyla TURNER, however the April BPC meeting was not quorate. They discussed summer plans for cleaning up the governance manual and GRC seat allocation for Fall 2025.
- **Events:** NOUREEN reports that Events Committee met last week and have started planning May events and confirming April volunteers.

- Finance: LAWTON reported that Finance Committee discussed possible plans for investing some of the GSS's contingency funds into GICs. They will further discuss this matter in May.
- Stipend Review: TURNER reported that SRC had a quorate meeting to review March board reports, consider top-ups for the 2024-25 board, and set payment amounts for the 2024-25 Electoral Officer.
- Electoral Officer: no report.

#### GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:28

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

No committee changes were made.

#### OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:30

LEAD: WEBB

Victor gave an update from CUPE 4163: they are preparing their bargaining committees and major contract revisions through the forthcoming collective bargaining. Victor MARRUGAT ARNAL also updated on the work of Organize UVic. Neve SUGARS-KEEN also flagged that bargaining as a major priority for this year. She asked all TAs to fill out their priority surveys.

Bernardo LEITE updated that Mech Eng, along with Maziyar, has been working on a mental health and wellbeing survey for graduate students within the Mechanical Engineering department. They are consulting with the Student Wellness Centre and the Assistant Dean of Engineering on developing this survey. LEITE asked for further supports on creating reliable, secure, private survey data. Jacqui RUTHERFORD has done human research and can provide some resources to Bernardo.

Several members brought up different department level reviews of graduate student experiences and academics that are underway.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:50 PM

#### MEETING NEW BUSINESS

---

##### 1. PRESENTATION FROM THE CAMPUS AFFORDABILITY WORKING GROUP 5:55

Lead: FORBES and THOMPSON

For: Discussion

FORBES and THOMPSON provided an overview of the work of the campus affordability working group, specifically around reviewing and creating low-cost food option lists, providing budgeting tools, listing food-security programs on campus, and providing a list of employment seeking websites for UVic students.

FORBES (he/him) and THOMPSON (he/him) gave introductions to their roles across campus. FORBES has been given purview over the affordability strategies at UVic and across the Student Affairs portfolios he oversees (i.e. childcare, bookstore, residence, food services). THOMPSON is the lead for campus food services.

FORBES first area of focus was course materials (which have reduced in cost due to digitization), but now his areas of concern are inflation for food and housing costs. In the Food Services Customer Survey 2025, 19-24% (186 of 774 in 2024 or 101 of 527 in 2025) of respondents identified as experiencing food insecurity. FORBES noted that that means roughly 5000 UVic students are facing food insecurity. For Food Bank use, 8% of students in 2024 and 2025 have used the food bank. To address food insecurity, UVic has partnered with the UVSS for their hot lunch program to distribute 100 litres of hot soup each month, which effectively doubled the hot lunch program. UVic has also partnered with Fairways Market this year to bring \$68K of Fairways giftcards for food insecure students. Additionally, UVic has created a food security program that distributes \$50 flex funds to OneCards – 103 students received \$15,000 in 2024, and 712 applicants received \$36,000 in grocery cards or OneCard flex funds in 2025. They've also expanded this program to \$1000/student/term. They have also created lists of low-cost meals, \$5-7 per meal, for food services across campus. They are looking to bring in \$10 Value Meals for Fall 2025 to include sides (e.g. includes side vegetables or carbs) in the menu program. FORBES also noted that 18% of total Campus Food Services sales were Value Menu items. FORBES also mentioned that Stocktober is in its 10<sup>th</sup>+ year, which is a annual October donation drive to the UVSS Food Bank.

Within Childcare, Living Edge (a non-profit that rescues foodstuffs that would otherwise go to waste) provides fruits and vegetables for families and children. Childcare is also expanding and has created 37 new spaces in the Queenswood Campus in the last two years. All UVic childcare spaces are \$10/day daycare slots.

All Student Affairs portfolios (food services, bookstore, CARSA, Starbucks) have priority hiring for students to address the need for on-campus, unionized, work.

Affordability is also bringing in donors to the university to support any and all of the above noted programs, as well as scholarships, bursaries, and awards.

FORBES mentioned his next area of priority is to seek more, relevant (i.e. food, high-value to students) businesses to partner with to seek further OneCard discounts around town. External housing partners have also reached out to FORBES and the GSS to advertise available lower-cost rentals to students.

ROBERTS asked, regarding the affordability website, to have resource lists shared with other student support services, such as ICS, Global Community, the UVSS Constituency Groups. ROBERTS also noted that graduate students would have an easier time with 12 month leases if more affordable rentals approach UVic seeking tenants.

RUTHERFORD had praise for the budgeting section of the Affordability website, and asked for more ways to share. TURNER to provide info for the GSS handbook and the biweekly bulletin.

RUTHERFORD and WEBB also raised the issue of the GSTIOP fee, which is \$50 for an income-offset tuition program. FORBES recommended bringing this to Operational Relations.

## 2. UVIC DORM UPDATES 6:20

Lead: WEBB

For: Discussion

The Board has met with UVic regarding their next planned dorm, which will include grad housing, in Parking Lot 5. Board to update GRC on what has been happening recently.

UVic provided an overview of the next dorm project to the Board on April 15, which included that the graduate student tower to be built in Parking Lot 5 is set to have its final review by the Province this summer. The Province's key priorities have been expanding total beds. There will not be funding available for working space for non-residents of this dorm. UVic wants to consult further with the GSS on the programing, application process, etc. in creating a graduate student residence community as plans move forward.

The GSS Board has already asked to ensure that the new dorm include:

- Minimum of 30 accessible units, of which 5 will be accessible for mobility aids/transfer tools and care personnel. This will be met as UVic plans one accessible suite per floor, with 8 floors total planned. Building codes, which UVic will exceed, also set minimums for sound proofing, light availability, etc.
- To minimize community kitchen space (as this need is sufficiently met within existing Residence buildings) and focus on maximizing working space
- To restrict laundry to the ground floor to prevent noise/air pollution transfer
- Sound-proof study carrels which non-residents may access. UVic has already said that funding for this kind of amenity is not available for this project.

## 3. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION POLICY AND UNION ADVOCACY LETTER 6:25

Lead: WEBB

Reference: Faculty Association Advocacy Letter, Kyla's draft accommodation planning template

For: Discussion

UVic recently implemented a new academic accommodation policy. It requires that graduate supervisors (or graduate advisors for programs without a direct academic supervisor) to negotiate and plan accommodations for graduate students directly with the graduate student. The Faculty Association have issued an advocacy letter outlining the labour concerns with this system. The GSS is looking to run a parallel but separate campaign focusing on graduate student concerns and proposed resolutions. The Faculty of Graduate Studies has indicated that they are in support of creating sample accommodation plans and case studies to support this planning process. CAL will still be able to consult with students and faculty.

What position(s) do GRC feel the GSS should take on this matter? Are we in favour of the Faculty Association letter? Are we in favour of working with FGS on case studies and templates for accommodation planning? Where do we want to take a different approach?

## STANDING ITEMS 6:40 PM

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

*MOTION: BIRT the Minutes of the February 25, 2025 GRC meeting are approved as presented [OR approved with minor corrections as provided].*  
*Meeting not quorate. Minutes to be approved in May.*

## 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 March board reports as presented;*  
*To pay Jono Qualter \$500 for their service as Electoral Officer 2024-25;*  
*To pay Wyatt Maddox a top-up of \$900 for his services as Chair 2024-25;*  
*To pay Sam Fielder a top-up of \$300 for his services as Director of Finance 2024-25.*  
*M/S: Stipend Review Committee/*  
*Meeting not quorate. Stipends to be approved in May.*

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

LEAD: WEBB

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

- Board of Governors:
- Senate:
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council:
- 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 Edmonson
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
Search Committee for Associate Dean of Research, Faculty of Science	Feb 2025	Sam Fielder
Working Group on Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism	Feb 2025	Iram Zahra

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

ROBERTS's hiring committee Associate Dean Fine Arts has put forward a candidate.

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 committees:

Committee: Search Committee to appoint the Executive Director, Co-operative Education Program and Career Services.

Member: No member places

No committee appointments made.

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: WEBB

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: WEBB

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: WEBB

Next General Meeting: GSS Annual General Meeting October 28, 2025

- Agenda to be posted: October 14, 2025

Next GRC Meeting: May 27, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of May 12, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: May 20, 2025

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: BIRT the meeting is adjourned.

M/S: WEBB/LAWTON

CARRIED

X 

---

Rosemary WEBB  
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

---

Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director