

## University of ARNALia Graduate Students' Society

## Graduate Representative Council

## MEETING MINUTES

MAY 27, 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:** Jitendra Palaparty**Executive Director (non-voting):** TURNER Kyla**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

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

**Recorder:** Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator**Invited Guests:** None**Regrets Received:**

Fereshteh Hassani  
Iram Zahra / Shamim Nikbakht  
Isaac Barss/Maryam Sheikhi  
Joan Kelly  
Dhwani Sura

Talietha Sangha  
Bryce Bartsch / Delaney Johnson  
Olivia Moluchi / Nathan Clements  
Jeremy Perkins / Mary Ann Sing

**Absent without regrets:**

Muskan Karmani  
Jenna Mehlmann  
Jingyi Lu (Lucas)  
Stacey Edmonson  
Nadiya Shore

Adam Regier / Hazim Ismail  
Marian Kaine / Ghita Hajjami  
Khai Quigley  
Nazanin Babaei  
Luiza Costa / Kythryn Stone

---

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

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 ROBERTS.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/ Drozdetskii*

*CARRIED*

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: Rutherford.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

**GSS Membership:** As of May 27, 2025 the GSS has 2525 members.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 9 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 12.

**Welcome to new GRC reps: Fereshteh Hassani – Civil Engineering**

---

## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:13

**WEBB provided an update on the activities of the Board.**

- The Board has begun engaging in strategic planning and professional development.
- The Board is planning to meet up with the new UVSS Board.
- Discussions have started regarding plans and organizations for Graduation Appreciation Week.

- UVic Student Affairs is undertaking strategic planning, and the Board will receive updates shortly.
- A report from the FGS Executive Equity Review Working Group, along with the results of the recent survey, will be available next week.

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

- Advocacy and Campaigns: PALAPARTY stated that Advocacy and Campaigns brought forward the AIR program consultation that is in new business. The issues with international students registered with CAL for part-time studies with full-time status is still before the registrar. A&C is currently reviewing a draft accommodation planning document for the GSS to present to FGS to assist faculty and students in negotiating accommodations, as per the new UVic academic accommodation policy.  
ROBERTS further added that there is a free space on the second floor of Carsa that can be used drop in by anyone.
- Appeals: LAWTON reported that Appeals heard and adjudicated all submitted appeals.  
Reviewed 1 appeal.
- Bylaw & Policy: WEBB stated that BPC has sent pronoun revisions and a complete non-partisanship bylaw to the board for final review. The bylaw 15 amendments will appear on the AGM agenda in October. BPC is also revving the GSS governance manual
- Events: NOUREEN is working on finalizing plans for a Eid potluck celebration and Events Committee has planned June events. Noureen said that the committee pride market and currently intaking vendor info. Noureen also mentioned about orientation planning with petri and further progress will be made during the summer and will have more info in the next GRC. TURNER asked if students would like to participate for the pride market.  
NOUREEN said there has been 12 spots used up and maximum spots we can accommodate are 16.
- Finance: LAWTON reported that Finance Committee reviewed a proposal for Spring 2026 referenda on the Constituency Group, World University Services Canada, and Student Advocate fees that make up part of the GSS fee.
- Stipend Review: JAMIESON-BURNS noted that SRC reviewed the new board's reports for April and found no issues.
- Electoral Officer: DROZDETCKII no report.

#### OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:30

LEAD: WEBB

RUTHERFORD provided an update on the French and Francophone Studies department, noting that it is currently undergoing a climate review, with a third-party conducting interview with faculty and students.

RUTHERFORD also mentioned hearing additional concerns regarding unprofessional behavior by some professors.

TURNER shared that she recently met with the Ombudsperson, who noted that they haven't seen many cases lately. TURNER emphasized that now is a great time for students to reach out to the Ombudsperson if needed. TURNER also mentioned that she is developing a Supervisory Engagement Tool and plans to host a related workshop during Graduate Appreciation Week.

RUTHERFORD informed the GRC about the ongoing book club at the GSS and encouraged students to participate.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:50 PM

---

## MEETING NEW BUSINESS

---

### 1. GSS DEPARTMENT GRANT PROCEDURES 6:00

Lead: WEBB

Reference: 2025-26 GSS Department Grant Application

For: Discussion

Overview of the results of the 2024-25 grant program, review the 2025-26 application form.

TANVEER and TURNER reported on the historic use of the Department Grant fund. In 2021-22, while still under pandemic restrictions, the GSS awarded \$1800 of \$9000 (20%). In 2022-23, we awarded \$11,484 of \$12,250 (94%). In 2023-24, we increased the total budget to \$17,500 based on the high rates of use but saw a decrease to \$10,350 (59%) awarded funds. In 2024-25, we awarded 100% of the \$12,000 budget. Success stories include the conferences for AGES and Biochemistry and Microbiology, and social events for Physics and Astronomy.

The total 2025-26 budget for Department Grants is \$11,000 (due to the amount of staff labour required to award 100% of 2024-25 funds). GRC reps are reminded that one of their duties is to manage their department's fund applications and budget for the year.

ARNAL inquired whether the Board is considering changes to the departmental grant budget and disbursement process for the 2026–2027 academic year.

WEBB responded that the Board has decided to maintain the current rules and budget, as they are working well.

ARNAL noted that if the overall departmental grant budget were to be reduced, the maximum funding per department may also need to be lowered to ensure equitable distribution across departments.

TURNER added that the current top-up mechanism is in place to allow remaining funds in the budget to be spent effectively.

### 2. AIR'S PARTICIPATION GRANT! 6:10

Lead: ROBERTS

Reference:

For: Discussion

UVic's Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR) has a grant to add accessible and inclusive recreation events to campus. They are seeking student feedback or suggestions for targeted events for accessible recreation (for example, the Native Student Union is thinking of a traditional canoeing trip. Pride is thinking of drag dance classes.) UVic has suggested adapted climbing session for grad students. Are you interested in climbing or would you like to suggest another event?

WEBB expressed enthusiasm for the idea of climbing events, noting that different students are drawn to different types of activities. She added that AIR is aiming to encourage participation by offering a variety of events.

MIHALYNUK asked whether there is sufficient funding to support multiple events rather than just a single one.

ROBERTS responded that AIR is planning to host one event from each advocacy group.

WEBB inquired whether there is a deadline for submitting feedback.

ROBERTS stated that there is a tentative meeting scheduled for the end of May and asked GRC members to reach out to her with ideas and feedback to share.

BURTON mentioned that many students in her department have expressed interest in hiking events but noted that a lack of access to vehicles is a barrier.

TURNER added that while GSS has previously rented buses for such events, it proved inefficient. As a result, students are now encouraged to self-organize transportation to make events more efficient and smoother.

WEBB further asked whether accessible equipment would be available for students with accessibility needs.

---

## STANDING ITEMS 6:25 PM

---

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:25

*MOTION: BIRT the Minutes of the February 25, and April 22, 2025, GRC meeting are approved as presented [OR approved with minor corrections as provided].*

*M/S LEITE/DROZDECKII*

*Carried*

### EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT – 6:30

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.*

*To approve the April board reports as presented*

*M/S: Stipend Review Committee/BURTON*

*CARRIED*

## REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES 6:35

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
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 Associate Dean, FGS	Jan 2025	Iram Zahra
Residence Dining Advisory Committee	Jan 2025	Jitendra Palaparty
Working Group on Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism	Feb 2025	Iram Zahra

**Iram Zahra**

## 1. Childcare Advisory Committee:

There have been two meetings of this committee so far, and I was able to attend one. The key points discussed included updates to the childcare facility and the challenges related to student placement. A significant concern raised was that not all applicants could be accommodated due to limited capacity.

## 2. Appointment Committee – Associate Dean, FGS:

This was an insightful and enriching experience for me. I actively participated in all four meetings of the committee. We followed a thorough process that included reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and finalizing the selection of the new Associate Dean. It was a valuable opportunity to observe and contribute to the academic hiring process at UVic.

**Stacey Edmonson**

The results of the EDI Climate Survey have been shared with each department. This includes both the survey results and a high-level summary prepared by the EDI Council. Each department's EDI Committee is working to develop actionable plans to address issues revealed by the survey results. Currently, the EDI Council is working to revise the Faculty Charter of Values, which outlines the EDI-related values that should be upheld by all members of the Faculty of Science. These revisions are aimed at clarifying values vs. policy and providing direct links between stated values and independent UVic policies and action plans.

**Sarah Roberts**

1. Board of Governors (Open Session – May 27th):

The Faculty of Health is now operational and will be awarding degrees at convocation for applicable programs. They are admitting students for 2025.

UVic's 2024/25 financial audit was approved, they reported a modest surplus. Decisions regarding reinvestment of these funds will be made over the coming months, aligned with UVic's long-term goals/priorities. e.g. technology, renewable energy etc.

2. UVic Budget Townhall:

UVic presented a balanced budget for 2025/26, despite trends in international student enrollment. No university-wide faculty or staff cuts are anticipated due to the operating budget; however, departments still manage contract appointments (e.g., for TAs and sessional instructors) so this doesn't guarantee renewals. While balanced, the budget does not guarantee the reinstatement of services cut in previous years. Funding allocations are reviewed on a rolling basis. CAL (Centre for Accessible Learning) funding was discussed, particularly the increasing demand for accommodations related to mental health and ADHD diagnoses. The university acknowledged this trend and have no plans to cut funding to CAL but are working on new strategies to meet these needs.

3. Upcoming Townhall – June 18<sup>th</sup>

A consultation town hall will be held in the SUB Upper Lounge regarding the Ian Stewart Complex redevelopment. Plans include housing for faculty, staff, and community members (this is separate from the provincial graduate dorm bid)

4. Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS):

There was discussion around potential changes to the MSc/MA/PhD external examiner process. Currently, examiners submit reports to the supervisor, who decides what to share with the student. A proposed change would have examiner reports shared directly with students, with examiners informed of this in advance.

Pros: Increased transparency; students better prepared for questions during the exam, less likely to be blindsided by negative examiner feedback.

Cons: If feedback is harsh or critical, it could negatively impact student confidence. The examiner would need clear instruction so they give feedback with knowledge student will see it. No decision has been made, and further discussion is expected when FGS reconvenes in 2025/26.

**Jitendra Palaparty**

Restaurant Advisory Committee:

Students have raised concerns about the quality of food not matching the prices being charged. The committee is proposing changes for Fall 2025, including the introduction of a chain-style food outlet and an expanded menu. Students also expressed that there are currently too many vegan options and would like to see more meat and poultry offerings. The Executive Chef noted that imitation meat products are often more expensive than actual meat. Additionally, PALAPARTY shared that a ramen station will be introduced at Mystic Market.

**Luiza Costa**

Childcare Advisory Committee:

I attended a Childcare Advisory Committee meeting back in December 2024. They used to meet regularly before the Covid, but it was interrupted, and this was the first one since 2020. The committee plans on meeting every 3 months. The members include staff, parents, admin, undergrad and grad students.

The main topic was the waitlists, that are currently long, and it was suggested that admin and staff investigate the possibility of offering part-time care as a way of supporting more families and be more tailored to their needs.

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) 6:40**

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: PALAPARTY*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Academic Standards*

*Member: MIHALYNUK*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Appeals*

*Member: LAWTON*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Awards*

*Member: ARNAL*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Continuing Studies*

*Member: ROBERTS*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching*

*Member: DROZDETCKII*

*Committee: Senate Committee on Libraries*

*Member: LEITE*

*M/S: BURTON/ DROZDETCKII*

*CARRIED*

**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: June 24, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of June 12, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: June 17, 2025

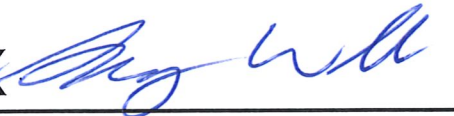
Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: BIRT the meeting is adjourned.

M/S: DELMAGE/ARNAL

CARRIED

X 

Rosemary WEBB  
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla TURNER  
GSS Executive Director



## APPENDIX B: COMMITTEES

---

**From:** Kathy MacDonald - Administrative Assistant and Senate Coordinator <usec2@uvic.ca>  
**Sent:** May 9, 2025 11:55 AM  
**To:** Rosemary Webb - GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; TURNER Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>  
**Cc:** Kathy MacDonald - Administrative Assistant and Senate Coordinator <usec2@uvic.ca>  
**Subject:** 2025/2026 Senate Committee membership - GSS representatives

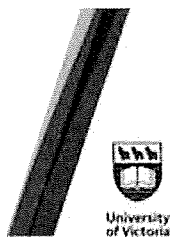
Rosemary and TURNER,

Attached is a memo from Ada Saab, Associate University Secretary, regarding the vacancies on Senate Committees for GSS representation beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. The term of these appointments is July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Attendance at meetings is very important. For most of the Senate Committees, meetings for the year will be canvassed for, and finalized in July. Having said that, as the Senate Committee on Awards meets regularly, including over the summer, and as such the dates for the summer are still to be determined. Students selected to serve on this committee should be available in the summer to attend meetings. Once they have been passed onto me, I will let you know.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Kathy



**Kathy MacDonald, BBA**  
Senate Coordinator

Office of the University Secretary  
University of ARNALia  
PO Box 1700 STN CSC  
ARNALia, BC V8W 2Y2

T 250-721-8102

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

---

## APPENDIX C: CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

---

### GRC AGENDA ITEM – SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

**From:** (Your name, and any other names who presenting the item; and **contact email/phone**)

**Academic Unit/Committee:** (If applicable)

**Date Submitted:**

**Submitted to:** (Name of Council, Committee, General Meeting)

**Meeting Date:**

**How much time on the agenda are you requesting:** \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

**Item:** (short title) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **For Information Only**

\_\_\_\_\_ **For Discussion Only**

\_\_\_\_\_ **For Decision**

**About the Issue:** (Please provide a 1-2 sentence summary)

---

**If Item is for Decision/Action, Please Propose a Motion:**

*Motion: Resolved that* \_\_\_\_\_  
*and*

*Further resolved that* \_\_\_\_\_.

**If there is pertinent information for this item please provide a url or hyperlink to documents uploaded to the GRC Connect:**

Url: \_\_\_\_\_

Teams Hyperlink: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note GRC agendas are required to be posted 7 days in advance. Please submit your item 14 days in advance so it can be reviewed and included by the Executive Board.**

**Please contact [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) if you would like any help with your submission.**