

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

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

JUNE 24, 2025, 5-7 PM

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

Anthropology: Semyon Drozdetsckii	Electrical & Computer Engineering: Victor 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 and Francophone Studies: 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:	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: Kyla Turner, Executive Director**Invited Guests:** None.

Regrets Received: Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator; Director of Finance: Maggie Lawton; Philosophy, Yukio Jamieson-Burns; Curriculum & Instruction: Iram Zahra; French and Francophone Studies: Jacqueline Rutherford; Sociology: Neve Sugars-Keen; Public Administration: Jeremy Perkins; Physics and Astronomy: Olivia Moluchi

Absent without regrets: Samim Nikbakht, Stacy Edmonson & Nadiya Shore, Mahmoud Chick Zaouali, Kerri Li, Isaac Barss & Maryam Sheikhi, Hazim Ismail, Marian Kaine & Ghita Hajjami, Joan Kelly, Katarina Sawchuk, Khai Quigley, Talietha Sangha, Bryce Bartsch & Delaney Johnson, Nathan Clements, Nazanin Babaei, Marry Ann Sing, Luiza Costa & Kathryn Stone

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 5:01 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 ROBERTS.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: Executive Board/BURTON

CARRIED

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: HASSANI

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

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

Meeting Quorum: With 7 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 13.

Welcome to new GRC reps:

REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:13

WEBB to update on the goings on of the Board.

WEBB reported that the Board is still working on Annual Planning, which will be presented to GRC in the Fall. The Board also had their first meeting with UVic executive, where they discussed harm reduction work on campus in the last year, government relations and joint advocacy work to the Provincial and Federal governments, and got an update on the UVic budget. The board also had naloxone training, including information on the toxic drug crisis and harm reduction efforts on campus, jointly with the UVSS board.

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

- **Advocacy and Campaigns:** MARRAGUT ARNAL noted that A&C is working on circulating free/low-cost recreation events and activities at CARSA via GSS communications channels; recommending a hike out of town for the ParticipACTION Grant that CARSA has;

investigating whether there will be a Crystal Pool replacement committee; investigating what information TAs get access to from CAL and what training is available for providing accessibly education through LTSI.

- Appeals: LAWTON noted that Appeals Committee heard and adjudicated one appeal.
- Bylaw & Policy: WEBB reported that BPC has been working on bylaw amendments, which we will send to the AGM tonight, as well as a clean-up of our governance/policy manual. They have also reviewed a new primer for the Electoral Officer developed by TANVEER.
- Events: NOUREEN reported on the success of the Pride Maker Market last week and the Eid potluck. She invited people to get tickets for the bird feeder workshop tomorrow. In July, the Events Committee is planning on hosting another BYO book club and paint and planting event due to the success for the first events of these types. Also coming up in July are music bingo, a patio crawl, beach sports/games day, and a movie night.
- Finance: LAWTON noted that Finance Committee had a slower meeting: the annual audit is underway and being overseen by staff. We are awaiting information from the Constituency Groups to assist the Finance Committee in planning a Spring 2026 fee referendum.
- Stipend Review: JAMIESON-BURNS reported SRC reviewed and approved all May board reports.
- 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 made.

OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:30

LEAD: WEBB

BURTON reported that TA concerns around division of duties for accommodating students, the gap in support after the TAC program ended, their responsibilities around AI detection, etc. ROBERTS stated that the TAC program was cut two years ago due to UVic budget cuts. Better TA orientations and information sharing about these existing resources are not well known and understood around campus. TURNER noted that we can seek more information to circulate to our members.

MARRAGUT ARNAL asked after appointment committees for faculty level Deans.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES – 5:55 PM

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. GRC SEAT LIST FOR 2025-26 6:00

Lead: TURNER/WEBB

Reference: 2025-26 UVic Depts Eligible for GRC.xlsx

For: Discussion

In September, GRC will have the ability to create additional seats on GRC for graduate level programs. TURNER recommends creating seats for French and Greek and Roman Studies, as these former departments (now part of SLLC) are highly active in GRC. The other departments within SLLC (Hispanic and Italian Studies and Germanic and Slavic Studies) have not placed a rep of GRC since at least 2020. Are there other programs not included on this list that the 2024-25 GRC recommends the 2025-26 GRC create seats for?

No recommendations, however Greek and Roman Studies needs to be added to the list as it is not part of the School of Languages, Literature and Culture (SLLC).

2. BYLAW AMENDMENTS 6:10

Lead: WEBB

Reference: Language (pronoun) changes, and the non-partisanship bylaw (bylaw XV)

For: Approval

Bylaw 4.9b – pronouns update

Current language:

4.9 Voting and Ballots:

b. Referenda ballots shall contain the question to be decided and provision for the member to record his/her vote.

Proposed language:

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b. Referenda ballots shall contain the question to be decided and provision for the member to record their vote.

Bylaw 14.b.ii – pronouns update

Current language:

14.2 Auditor and Audited Statements:

b. The auditor:

i. Has a right of access at all times to all documents and records of the Society;
and

ii. May require from the Executive Board, members, and staff of the Society such information and explanations as are necessary to enable him/her to report as required by the Societies Act, SBC 2015, c. 18.

Proposed language:

ii. May require from the Executive Board, members, and staff of the Society such information and explanations as are necessary to enable them to report as required by the Societies Act, SBC 2015, c. 18.

Bylaw 15 – non-partisanship

Proposed language:

15.1 Non-Partisan Status

The Society is a non-partisan organization. For the purpose of this Bylaw, *non-partisan* means that the Society operates independently of any political party or candidate and does not endorse, support, or oppose political parties or candidates. The Society may work with elected officials, regardless of political affiliation, to bring the needs and interests of graduate students to the forefront of both elected representatives' and the public's attention.

15.2 Political Nature of the Society

Non-partisanship is not equivalent to being apolitical. The work of the Society is inherently political, as it involves advocating for the interests, rights, and welfare of its members to governmental bodies, elected officials, and other decision-making authorities. Decisions made by governments at all levels directly impact the lives of graduate students, necessitating active and informed advocacy.

15.3 Lobbying and Political Engagement

Pursuant to the *British Columbia Lobbyists Transparency Act*, all elected members of the Society's Executive Board are required to register as lobbyists with the provincial government. As political actors representing an inherently political organization, the Society and its Executive Board agree to abide by the following principles:

15.3.1 Policy-Driven Advocacy

The Society and its Executive Board shall assess, advocate for, and advance public policies based solely on the merits of the policies and their alignment with the interests and welfare of the Society's members, without endorsement of or consideration of any political party affiliation or connection to any candidate for public office.

15.3.2 Good Faith Engagement

The Society and its Executive Board shall advocate, in good faith, for its members and their interests to all relevant political parties and candidates at all levels of government, without partisan bias or preference.

15.3.3 Member Education

The Society and its Executive Board shall educate its members on public policies, laws, and other political matters impacting them to the best of their ability in an impartial, accessible, and factual manner, without promoting or opposing any political party, partisan organization, or candidate for public office. The Society may register provincially or federally as a third-party sponsor.

15.3.4 Democratic Participation

The Society and its Executive Board shall promote and facilitate graduate student engagement in the democratic process, including spreading awareness of voting rights and encouraging active participation in municipal, provincial, and federal elections, without political bias or favour towards any political party or candidate.

15.3.5 Prohibition on Endorsements

Elected members of the Society's Executive Board must not, as representatives of the Society, endorse, publicly support or oppose any political party, candidate for public office, or partisan organization.

15.3.6 Prohibition on Candidacy

No elected member of the Society's Executive Board shall seek nomination for, or become a candidate in, any municipal, provincial, or federal election during their term of office with the Society.

15.3.7 Platform Access and Engagement

While the Society may engage with political parties, candidates, or representatives from different levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal) where it serves the interests of its members, non-partisanship does not oblige the Society to offer equal platform or access to all political parties, candidates, or representatives. The Society retains the discretion to determine the appropriateness, relevance, and alignment of such engagements with its advocacy priorities and the welfare of its members. The Society is not required to provide equal opportunity or access for every political party or candidate.

15.3.8 Prohibition on Political Funding

The Society shall not accept, either directly or indirectly, any financial contributions, goods, services, sponsorships, or other forms of material support, including in-kind contributions, from any political party, candidate for public office, or related organization. For the purpose of this Bylaw, *indirectly* includes all potential indirect contributions, such as through third parties.

MOTION: to approve the amendments to Bylaws 4.9b, 14.b.ii, and 15 as presented for consideration at the October 2025 AGM.

M/S: BPC/BURTON

DISCUSSION:

MARRAGUT ARNAL asked what would change if we passed these. TURNER said the revised non-partisanship bylaw allows for everyone to understand what activities are allowed and which are disallowed for GRC and the board.

CARRIED

3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FOR ORIENTATION EVENTS 6:20

Lead: NOUREEN

Reference: Events Schedule for September

For: Discussion

NOUREEN asked for volunteers for events on:

- Aug 28 games night,
- Aug 29 orientation,
- Sept 4 ice cream social,
- Sept 10 pancake breakfast and crafty night,
- Sept 12 drag trivia night,
- Sept 18 welcome back bbq,
- Sept 26 beach day

Those interested should email Asma at gsslife@uvic.ca!

STANDING ITEMS 6:25 PM**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:30**

MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the May 27, 2025 GRC meeting as presented.

M/S: MARRAGUT ARNAL/LEITE
CARRIED

EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT – 6:35

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 May Executive Board reports as presented.

M/S: Stipend Review Committee/LEITE

CARRIED

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES 6:40

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

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

ROBERTS reported on the UVic academic accommodation policy and the advocacy letter from the Faculty Association, GSS, and other campus unions. There is a working group working on follow up with a shorten list of requests and petitions to pressure UVic to reverse course on some aspects of the new academic accommodation policy. Issues include OREM taking over providing space for accommodated exams (rather than CAL), TA supports for providing accessible education to their students, grad accommodations, etc.

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: Appointment Committee – Dean, Humanities
Member: Rosemary WEBB

Committee: Appointment Committee – Dean, Social Sciences
Member: Lauren BURTON – subject to scheduling

M/S: LEITE/DROZDECKII
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!

TURNER consulted on the next gen security uniforms.

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: July 22, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of July 10, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: July 17, 2025

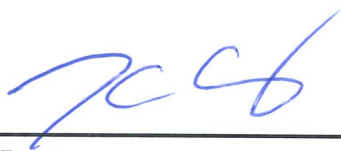
Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: RESOLVED the meeting is adjourned at 6:35.

M/S: BURTON/MARRAGUT ARNAL
CARRIED

X



Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

X



Rosemary Webb
GSS Chair 2025-26