

*University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society*  
**Graduate Representative Council**

**MEETING MINUTES**

OCTOBER 21, 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 Noreen

**Director of External Relations:**

**Executive Director (non-voting):** Kyla Turner

**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

Anthropology: Semyon Drozdetski Zenus Francis	Electrical & Computer Engineering: Victor Marrugat Arnald, Latifa Yusuf	Interdisciplinary Studies:	Public Health & Social Policy:
Art History and Visual Studies: Melody Ray	English: Emma Dove	Law: Chidimma Ike	Social Dimensions of Health: Marcela Zamudio, Maren Akyurek
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Liam Mihalynuk, Sophie Curic	Environmental Studies:	Mathematics and Statistics:	Social Work:
Biology: Sydney Houston, Manuel Centeno Duque	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed:	Mechanical Engineering: Bernardo Leite, Ama Ouchen	Sociology:
Business: Ross Harray	French and Francophone Studies:	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: Frances Armas	Theatre:
Chemistry: Amelie Cazelaïs	Geography: Wyatt Maddox	Music: Josie Hill	Visual Arts: Kylie Fineday
Child & Youth Care:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Nursing:	Writing:
Civil Engineering:	Greek and Roman Studies:	Pacific and Asian Studies: Curran Chapman, Ruyan Wang	CUPE:
Computer Science: Chloë Farr	Health Information Science: Astrid Han	Philosophy:	Other Programs:
Curriculum & Instruction: Shina Khan	Hispanic & Italian Studies:	Physics and Astronomy: Maggie Berube & Laura Dufort-Gagnon	Social Work: Clara Troje & Veronika Safina
Earth & Ocean Science: Nadiya Shore, Lekima Yakuden	History: Tess McNaughton	Political Science: Max Backhaus	Sociology: Jasmine Padam
Economics:	Indigenous Education:	Psychology: Jessica Li	Theatre:
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies: Annie Wu,	Indigenous Governance:	Public Administration: Andrea Sadowski	Visual Arts:

**Recorder:** Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator

**Invited Guests:** Robin Hicks, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS); Joseph Salem, Associate Dean, FGS

**Regrets Received:** Amelie Cazalais, Ama Ouchen, Jasmine Padman, Jitendra Palaparty

**Absent without regrets:**

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:01pm 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 Victor Marrugat Arnald.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/SHORE*

*CARRIED*

### TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: Chloe Farr.

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

**GSS Membership:** As of September 23, 2025, the GSS has 3025 members.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 3 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 15. The meeting was quorate with 23 voting members present.

**Welcome to new GRC reps:** Everyone!

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## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

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### INTRODUCTIONS! 5:15

Who are you? Name, department, year, and/or what brings you to GRC?

[Minutes were not taken for introductions as GRC rep's names and departments are listed in the attendance section.]

Many reps noted that they were the only person in their department who expressed interest in running for GRC, which is something student governance hears a lot. Others addressed feeling isolated in their programs, or disconnected from campus life compared to undergrad, or to address specific issues in their departments. There was a real need for connection across departments within our reps as well. Victor did win a competitive election to be here. Go Victor! Lauren Burton is likely our longest serving GRC rep in the meeting, starting her fifth year on GRC.

Welcome, everyone, to GRC! We are so happy to have you. We hope we can meet many of the needs identified for why you all joined our team.

### CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:35

WEBB updated GRC on the goings on of the Board. In the last month, the board has been active with:

- Celebrating the UVic Student Housing expansion news! Including UVic's first graduate dorm building
- Finalizing Grad Student Appreciation Week (and Excellence in Graduate Research Symposium) plans (thank you, Asma & Sarah!)
- AGM preparations and reviewing work still required in the Annual Plan
- Initiating Kyla's annual performance review
- Attempting to boost/stabilize morale during Grad House chaos
  - Thank you all for your patience!

#### GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS 5:40

- Advocacy and Campaigns: ROBERTS noted that A&C met October 9, with a brief review of ongoing campaigns and a discussion about taking up a campaign on transit this year. Due to attendance, ROBERTS also reported that further training will be rescheduled to November.
- Appeals: LAWTON reported Appeals Committee has completed training and heard all appeals submitted.
- Bylaw & Policy: WEBB held BPC on October 20. They reviewed the BPC workflow, provided examples of how said workflow is used, and assigned Jasmine and Josie to investigate the cap on GRC co-reps for the first BPC bylaw amendment project. In addition, all BPC members will review an information briefing note on a constitutional change for November.
- Events: NOUREEN welcome the new team to Events Committee October 1. They secured volunteers for October events, including Pumpkin Carving, BIPOC Conversation on Microaggressions, Autumn Craft Night, and Trivia. November events kick off with Grad Student Appreciation Week, so there was also volunteer recruitment for that.
- Finance: LAWTON reported that Checks and Balances completed training on finances and had a brief audit overview on October 10.
- Stipend Review: LEITE reported that SRC met to review the July-September board reports on October 16. SRC has provided feedback to the board on edits required to the board reports. The motion for approval is on this agenda.
- Electoral Officer: DROZDETCKII no election activities scheduled in the last month.

#### GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:45

We'll place all GRC reps elected after September 24 on GRC committees tonight. If anyone wishes to change committees, please raise your hand.

*MOTION: to appoint 2025-26 GRC reps to the GRC Standing Committees as follows:  
Advocacy and Campaign: Max Backhaus, Astrid Han*

*Events: Hannah Henry*

*M/S: FARR/DUFORT-GAGNON  
CARRIED*

#### OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:50

LEAD: WEBB

A member who has been part of the pilot for the new online Annual Supervisory Committee Report advised students to double check their grades as these will be auto-populated from their transcripts and there could be errors.

A member asked about getting food for events in light of the UVic policy to that catering go through Degrees Coffee. Other members gave advice such as that the GSS board room is exempt from the UVic policy, that meetings off campus are not restricted to where they can get food, and what types of food are best received by grad students. FARR clarified that your aggregate employment hours at UVic are capped at 35 hours per week.

Another member brought up that graduate students should carefully review their admission letters for the financial requirements UVic must meet in terms of their pay. A member asked about the policy around graduate funding. TURNER noted that information about funding can be found in the department's graduate handbook. Additionally, Robin Hicks, FGS Dean will be arriving soon and he will be presenting on funding soon.

A member asked for follow up on the department graduate handbooks as some are out of date. This is a known issue for FGS and the Graduate Supervision Policy review process is intended to initiate edits for these handbooks. LEITE also advised folks to review the Graduate Academic Calendar.

Jessica from Psychology reports that there is an open writing group and space on a regular basis with light snacks provided, which is very well attended.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES – 5:55 PM

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## MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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### 1. WELCOME TO FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES! 6:00

Lead: HICKS

For: Discussion

Robin Hicks, Dean of the FGS, provided a welcome and an overview of the FGS functions and reporting structure. He noted that FGS oversees all graduate studies, and works in conjunction with students' home departments, as well as the Graduate Admissions and Records Office (GARO), to oversee all administrative and academic aspects of graduate degrees. While most faculties are conglomerations of departments with similar research areas (e.g. Biology, Chemistry fall under the Faculty of Science), the Faculty of Graduate Studies is the conglomeration of all graduate level studies.

The academic requirements for your program are set by your home department, who are the experts within your own field. FGS ensures that the overall quality of the programs meet the requirements for a Masters or PhD degree.

GARO is primarily an administrative office that oversees, as the name suggests, admissions as well as student records like transcripts, thesis archiving, etc.

FGS has a small staff of scholarships and awards officers who oversee FGS funding and grant applications. The Associate Deans of FGS can meet with graduate students to provide confidential

support and policy explanations for resolving issues with their degree. In the student's home department, their Graduate Advisor or Graduate Secretary can provide similar support.

HICKS gave further information on current FGS projects including:

- the FGS Equity Review, which is in the implementation phase
- Graduate Supervision Policy review – ongoing
- Taking steps to address completion time
- Supports for accommodation planning for graduate students conducting research

## 2. ANNUAL SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS 6:20

Lead: SALEM

For: Discussion

Joe Salem, Interim Associate Dean of the FGS, gave an overview of the revised and newly electronic Annual Committee Reports for all grad students.

Students in a thesis/dissertation-based degrees (and some project based degrees) must form a supervisory committee including a lead supervisor, and other supervisory committee members. Per UVic's Graduate Supervision Policy, the supervisory committee must meet annually with the student and provide them with feedback and a progress report. FGS has rolled out a standardized and electronic version of the Annual Committee Reports to assist graduate students and supervisors in completing this important work.

SALEM noted the sections of the report, which can include ethics reviews, conferences, publications or other materials, etc. This is both a record of progress as well as a goal setting tool and there are fields for work forthcoming and planned coursework, presentations, co-ops, etc. as appropriate.

SALEM also noted that these processes are student initiated, which gives more control to graduate students. HICKS stated that the online annual reports system is in beta and has not been rolled out across campus. He asked for GRC reps to advocate to the grad secretaries, advisors, and faculty in their departments to adopt the new online system. FGS feels that this system would be an improvement for grad students, but advocacy is needed primarily to faculty and staff at this point.

## 3. OUT OF TOWN CONFERENCE POLICY UPDATE 6:30

Lead: WEBB

Reference: Policy 30: Out of Town Conference Attendance Policy

Discussion:

Current Language:

GSS delegates sent to out-of-town conferences where food is provided will be given a per diem of \$20 in advance of departure.

GSS delegates sent to out-of-town conferences where food is not provided will be issued a per diem of \$40.

Justification for change:

The amount per diem is not sufficient for 2025.

Recommended amount of ~\$35 when food is provided, ~\$70 when food isn't.

## Supporting research:

The BC public service provides meal per diems between \$60 and \$ 66.75 per day for its employees with \$33.50 available for half days.

## Draft of proposed language change:

GSS delegates sent to out-of-town conferences where food is provided will be given a per diem of \$35 in advance of departure.

GSS delegates sent to out-of-town conferences where food is not provided will be issued a per diem of \$70 in advance of departure.

*MOTION: The Bylaw and Policy Committee recommends that the Graduate Representative Council approve the amendment to Policy 30 as presented.*

*M/S: FARR/DROZDETCKII*  
*Carried*

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## STANDING ITEMS 6:35 PM

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## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:35

*MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the September 23, GRC meeting as presented [OR approved with minor corrections as provided].*

*M/S: CHAPMAN/WU*  
*CARRIED*

## EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT – 6:40

LEAD: LEITE

REF DOCS: 2025-26 Board Reports

Councillors are required to read the Executive Board reports prior to the meeting.

*MOTION: to approve the August board reports as presented.*

*To approve the Chair, Director of Student Life, Director of Finance, and Director of Internal Relations' September board reports, as presented.*

*M/S: Stipend Review Committee / MIHALYNUK*  
*CARRIED*

## 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:
  - Successful launch of Kula Academy on September 15th
  - Kula Academy is world's first library-based institute of advanced studies (per UVic)
  - Several cooperation agreements were reached between the Library and other universities (e.g., University of Leeds)

- Plans to increase grad students' spaces in the library
- The plan consists of renovating and increasing spaces for grad students;  
Location: 3rd floor of McPherson Library;
- Timeline: no specific timeline, but they guaranteed it won't happen this year 🙄 and they are targeting it for within the "next few years, hopefully".
- Workshops and info sessions on GenAI tools for research  
Grad students can enroll in workshops and read guides on GenAI tools
- As grad reps, I believe (not sure) we can reach out to the Librarians to provide specific talks and workshops to our department students
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council:
- Previously appointed committees:

Committee	Appointment Date	Rep Name
Senate Committee on Libraries		Bernardo Leite

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 serve on one or more UVic committee(s) to ensure grad student interests are represented.

***MOTION:** to elect graduate student representatives to the following UVic committees:*

*Committee: 2025 REACH Teaching Awards Committee*

*Member: Curran Chapman*

*Committee: FGS Dean Re-Appointment Committee*

*Members: Ross Harrhy and Maggie Lawton*

*M/S: MADDOX/BACKHAUS*

*CARRIED*

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

LEAD: WEBB

Summary Feedback from EPLS Graduate Students and Department

LEAD: Annie

By **Annie Wu** GRC representative of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies (EPLS) department

#### Summary of students' feedback as proposed agenda:

- Clear and explicit expectations and requirements of master and doctoral programs provided through continuous communication by university, department, and supervisor.

- Supervisor, departmental, faculty, and institutional support for students who are going through unexpected life crises during graduate programs with a more proactive approach, rather than a reactive approach.
- Expand funding opportunities for students who are not in research-based programs but have more community engagement experiences

### **Feedback based on four EPLS graduate students**

1. Top rated concerns regarding their graduate programs
  - a. Academic and Research Experience (e.g., academic workload, research opportunities, access to writing/publishing mentorship, and clarity of program expectations)
  - b. Funding and Financial Stability (e.g., access to travel funds, graduate funding opportunities, and sufficiency of stipend)
  - c. Mental Health during Graduate Programs (e.g., feelings of isolation, access to mental health services, stress level, available well-being resources)
2. Example comments from three participants:
  - a. "I developed a serious health crisis that lead to a disability, and two members of my immediate family passed away in the last two years. During this time, I didn't realize that my time limit for my PhD was nearing an end, and that I should have applied for a medical leave to offset this. Having a clear understanding of what the rules and expectations are and how to navigate them, before I was in the crisis, would have been helpful. When I was attending doctor's appointments, in and out of hospital, and planning funerals, these things were the last thing on my mind. Now I am left to apply for extensions each semester until I am done. Having a crisis exemption that can be applied to time limits retroactively, for example, would also be helpful, as the individual may not be able to deal with the administrative load (or even be thinking of it) during the crisis."
  - b. "I would like more opportunities to develop my research skills through mentorship with professors. I would like more funding for FoE graduate students in general. I would like some information on what 'teaching opportunities' entails. How does it impact our funding? What is the pay scale like? Is it unionized? What are the expectations of a doctoral student teaching Uni classes..."
  - c. "Need accountability for our supervisors. Also need common knowledge of what is expected from a Masters and what that looks like (ie examples + clear steps for the process) at the moment that is up to the supervisor so it changes the workload and expectations."
3. Exact comment provided by our department graduate advisor responding to one of the comment students provided in the survey:

"The example cited is exactly the situation of a student in Leadership who we just helped, thanks to FGS, get a retroactive compassionate leave which he needed, even though he appeared to have abandoned his program, left the country, and did not communicate with anyone until he returned 18 months later."



NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: WEBB

November GRC NOTICE OF AGENDA ITEM: INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS ELECTION

Jitendra is on leave effective October 16 – the board has the authority to appoint a replacement for one month and is exercising that authority here due to lack of capacity for onboarding in the short term. GRC has authority to appoint a replacement for another three months.

November GRC agenda item: Annie's report from this agenda

November GRC agenda item: Wyatt's update on the FGS Supervision Policy Review

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: WEBB

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

- Agenda to be posted: October 14, 2025

Next GRC Meeting: November 25, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of November 9, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: November 18, 2025

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting.

M/S: FARR/MADDOX

CARRIED

X 

Rosemary WEBB  
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director

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APPENDIX B: POLICY AMENDMENT

**GSS Bylaw and Policy Committee  
Project Tracking Document**

Type: ☐ Bylaw ☒ Policy ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: 2025-26 Governance Manual – Policy 30 “Attendance of out-of-town conferences”

Date of project start: June 2025

Project lead: Jeremy Perkins

Action: ☒ Amend ☐ Repeal

Current Language:

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Justification for change:

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Supporting research (Jeremy Perkins):

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Draft of proposed language change:

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GSS delegates sent to out-of-town conferences where food is not provided will be issued a per diem of \$70 in advance of departure.

Finalized language:

Approved by:

☒ Bylaw and Policy Committee

Date: July 14, 2025

☒ Executive Board

Date: Oct 6, 2025

☐ Graduate Representative Council

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Link to updated document: \_\_\_\_\_