

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Graduate Representative Council

NOVEMBER 25, 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):** Kyla Turner**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

Anthropology: Semyon Drozdetsckii 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, Hannah Henry	Law: Chidimma Ike	Social Dimensions of Health: Marcela Zamudio, Maren Akyurek
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Liam Mihalynuk, Sophie Culos	Environmental Studies: Lauren Burton	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 HARRY	French and Francophone Studies:	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: Frances Armas	Theatre:
Chemistry: Amelie Cazalais	Geography: Wyatt Maddox	Music: Josie Hill	Visual Arts: Kylie Fineday
Child & Youth Care:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Nursing:	Writing:
Civil Engineering:	Greek and Roman Studies: Grace Niehaus	Pacific and Asian Studies: Curran Chapman, Ruyan Wang	CUPE: Cam Thiessen
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**Regrets Received:** Asam Noureen and Amelie Cazalais

Absent without regrets: Ross Harry, Shina Khan, Tess McNaughton, Josie Hill, Clara Troje and Veronika Safina

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 BURTON.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: Executive Board/ MADDUX

CARRIED

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: DUFORT-GAGNON.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

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

Meeting Quorum: With 2 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 17.

Welcome to new GRC reps: Everyone!

REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:15

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

FGS moving forward with defining the research assistantships and will come with know down effects in FGS policies. Still in earlier stages and will updates when further steps are taken.

Board have successfully completed Executive director's annual performance review.

Operational relations updates involved on continuous support on dorm expansion, international student support and discussed about UVic buildings and labs temperature as it can potentially impact live test subject especially during the heat wave during summer.

GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS 5:20

- Advocacy and Campaigns: HAN

The committee is currently working on supplementary subsidies for health care and further advocating for MSP and other benefits to be included in bulletins. They are also advocating for increased student use of public transit. Additional discussion focused on verification of enrollment for CAL-registered students and delays in processing travel grants.

- Appeals: LAWTON

Four appeals reviewed

- Bylaw & Policy: WEBB
The committee is working on expanding the GSS constitution and is also considering the current limit of two representatives, as well as reviewing what the related limitations might be.
- Events: BURTON
EGRS and the end-of-term party are scheduled for November. There is not much planned for December besides the sugar-cookie event and the winter craft market. The committee is also looking ahead to the new year and is open to adding more events.'
- Finance: LAWTON
Fee referendum for constituency groups.
- Stipend Review: LEITE
Revised board reports from September to November.
- Electoral Officer: DROZDECKII
Irfan and Rosemary will meet to finalize the campaign materials and nomination form, as well as the dates for the campaigning period, nomination period, and the election. They will also review the rules for constituency groups regarding campaign conduct.

GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:30

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: THIESSEN and CULOS.

Checks and Balances (Appeals, Finance, Stipend Review): NIEHAUS

M/S: BURTON/LEITE

CARRIED

OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:35

LEAD: WEBB

MARRUGAT mentioned that students in his department celebrated their Grad Student Social and acknowledged that the GSS departmental grant made it possible.

LEITE mentioned that there is a feedback session in their seminar series, and many students have already provided input.

CHAPMAN noted that students in Pacific and Asian Studies are not satisfied with the department and raised this concern. CHAPMAN asked TUNER about Robin Hicks' assistance with the system in place for student and department-related issues.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:55 PM

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES SUPERVISION POLICY REVIEW 6:00

Lead: WEBB

Reference:

For: Discussion

The GSS Board will be consulting on the FGS Supervision Policy Review this week. The FGS Supervision Policy includes the rights and responsibilities of all supervision committee members (including students), grad advisors, departments, and FGS deans; accessibility and assistance; dissolution of the supervisory relations.

Where do GRC reps see the need for clarification or new policies? FGS has expressed a desire to increase language around accessibility and accommodation planning; funding; and better enforcing the requirement for departments to produce department handbooks. Department handbooks should include degree requirements, recommended timelines, funding, etc.

MADDOX updated the council that a survey has been sent to faculty, and another survey is in its final stages to be sent to students. There is ongoing consultation with graduate secretaries.

He also discussed the Supervisor Agreement Form, which will serve as a type of contract between the student and the supervisor. MADDOX reviewed the contents that will be included in the form, noting that all items will align with the Graduate Supervision Policy.

Additionally, MADDOX mentioned the Formative Feedback Form, clarifying that it is non-disciplinary, completed term-to-term, not filed with the department, and intended as a guiding document.

He added that the student survey will be released soon, and both MADDOX and Cian Dabrowski will be reviewing the documents.

MARRUGAT asked whether the supervisor is responsible for writing and sending the agreement to the student. MADDOX replied that the agreement will be filed with the department and must be completed before the student begins their degree, or within the first week, alongside the grad handbook.

DROZDECKI noted that many departments have outdated handbooks. MADDOX responded that with the new policy, all handbooks will need to be reviewed and updated. Departments will be contacted if any rules contradict or violate the new supervision policy.

FARR suggested that if two supervisors exist, both must sign each form.

BACKHAUS mentioned that additional flexibility could be beneficial.

LAWTON added that many co-supervisors are not from UVic. TURNER replied that all supervisors, whether internal or external, must be registered with FGS.

LAWTON asked whether the forms include expectations regarding mentorship for undergraduate students. She suggested that mutual and acceptable expectations of undergraduate mentorship should be included in the agreement form.

ROBERTS pointed out that it would be helpful to outline expectations around time off in the agreement form.

MURRUGAT also noted the importance of clearly defining responsibilities, such as cleaning and maintaining labs. MADDOX replied that these items can be added under “extra expectations” in the agreement form.

RAY asked whether expectations would include time frames. MADDOX responded that all important expectations will be consolidated on one page of the agreement form.

CHAPMAN raised an issue observed in Pacific and Asian Studies regarding two thesis types (short and long). The department communicated that the short thesis is intended for weaker students, which caused misunderstandings. He recommended that expectations regarding thesis type be clearly communicated to students.

WU shared that one faculty member preferred the three-manuscript dissertation format, which requires more time to complete. She agreed that supervisors’ expectations are often unclear.

DROZDETCKII added that when committees are formed, there must be accountability regarding attendance and responsibilities, as many committee members have been missing required meetings.

FARR asked what happens to the agreement if the supervisor retires. MADDOX replied that a new agreement form would need to be completed and signed, and he believes FGS would be heavily involved in such cases.

RAY commented that one of the biggest issues involves supervisors not setting or communicating clear timelines for master’s students to graduate. This leads to student frustration, and many do not approach the Ombudsperson or other offices to share concerns about delays.

2. EPLS REPORT 6:15

Lead: WEBB/WU

For: Discussion

Summary Feedback from EPLS Graduate Students and Department

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."

WEBB mentioned that this is another area of feedback that can be addressed through the agreement between supervisors and students, specifically regarding leaves. TURNER asked how students should request leave from their supervisors and suggested that FGS could provide information on the types of leave available and the relevant procedures.

AKYUREK agreed that this would be extremely helpful—such as providing a flowchart—to guide students through different situations.

ROBERTS commented that there is a lack of clarity about which academic concessions are available to graduate students. She noted that there are various forms on the website, including the deferral form used for internal processes, and asked whether there could be clearer guidance on which forms are intended for graduate students versus undergraduate students.

3. SPRING 2026 FEE REFERENDUM 6:30

Lead: LAWTON

Reference: [Draft Referendum Questions for Nov 25 GRC.docx](#)

Discussion: The GSS is taking several fees to referendum this Spring (early March 2026). Last year, the Society for Students with a Disability asked for a funding increase. We pay a fee for all UVSS Constituency Groups (defined in attachment), and have consulted with each group about their financial needs. We've also revised funds for projects that are no longer operational or that need funding increase/decreased. The draft questions include background on each fee adjustment we are proposing. Finance Committee has agreed to the financial figures here. Does GRC have further feedback on these questions before we present them to the impacted campus groups for their feedback?

BURTON asked whether the groups' budgets would change, and LAWTON responded that they will not change on their own but will only be adjusted based on the CPI. Any other changes would require a referendum.

STANDING ITEMS 6:35 PM

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:35

MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the October 21, GRC meeting as presented [OR approved with minor corrections as provided].

M/S: MADDOX/DROZDETCKII

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 October board reports for Rosemary Webb, Sarah Roberts, Maggie Lawton, and Asma Noureen;

Further to approve half stipend rate for Wyatt Maddox for September 2025;

Further to approve the September report for Jitendra Palaparty.

M/S Stipend Review/SHORE

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: academic standard by Chloe; updated on merger of academic integrity and passed a motion to create a new admission stream to undergraduate student and computer science.
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council:
- Previously appointed committees:

Committee	Appointment Date	Rep Name
Senate Committee on Libraries		Bernardo Leite

LAWTON provided updates on:

Faculty of Science EDI Committee: We are reviewing their draft Science Equity Plan. They are looking for volunteers to help sit on their Indigenizing Strategy working group.

FGS Dean Hiring Committee: We have met once and are reviewing and soliciting feedback on the 2020 criteria to develop better 2025 criteria.

FARR provided updates on:

LaunchPad Engineering and Computer Science program - an admissions stream for up to 100 undergraduate 1st year students without the required STEM pre-requisites as stated in current admissions requirements. This was passed by SCAS, and subsequently, as I saw in the Martlet, Senate. I was not in support of this, and have concerns regarding the preparedness of students entering the program (and all programs) as is, and the increasing load TAs have to bear as result.

SCAS was consulted on a draft version of an upcoming upgrade to the Academic Integrity policy, which folds in the policy on Academic Fraud. It includes one additional level for academic integrity violations: a warning with no record on transcript. It proposes an academic integrity advisor per 'unit' (unknown whether is for each faculty, school, department). It is intended to catch up with the state of GenerativeAI, though offers no assistance to instructors on when to permit student use of AI, but reads as though instructors will be supported when students violate their directives. The policy leaves open the university's right to use AI-Generation detection software. Thus far, no such software exists in any legitimate fashion that would pose more good than harm to an academic's reputation.

Reviewed the 2024/2025 grading report (distribution of grades across departments for the academic year, as well as historical trends). No obvious concerns seem to be arising. Any correlations between marginal shifts in average grades are nearly impossible to pin down due to the complex societal events (shifts in enrollment, COVID, AI, accessibility supports, etc.) that have occurred over the last 5-10 years.

Reps are encouraged to submit short written reports to 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: Graduate Student Representation on Faculty of Health Council Meetings
Member: FRANCES ARMAS

Committee: Search Committee – Executive Director, Cooperative Education Program and Career services
Member:

Committee: Search Committee for the reappointment of the Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Science
Member: SOPHIE CULOS
CARRIED

M/S: SHORE/BURTON

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: WEBB

TURNER – visual art cohort is hosting an art auction on December 6th in the visual arts building. Melodia art history and visual studies having a visual impetus and open to all departments.

NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: WEBB

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: WEBB

Next GRC Meeting: December 16, 2025

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of December 2, 2025
- Agenda to be posted: December 9, 2025

Next General Membership Meeting: GSS Semi-Annual General Meeting! March 24, 2026

- Agenda to be posted: March 10, 2026

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: The GSS will be closed December 22-January 2 inclusive for Winter Break

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting.

M/S: DROZDETCKII/SHORE
CARRIED

X 

Rosemary WEBB
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

