

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

(HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 1, 2025

Zoom Link: <https://uvic.zoom.us/j/2244264481>

EXECUTIVE INVITED:

Rosemary WEBB, Chair;

Maggie LAWTON, Director of Finance;

Sarah ROBERTS, Director of Internal/University Relations;

Jitendra PALAPARTY, Director of External Relations;

Asma NOUREEN, Director of Student Life;

Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting);

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 10:01 am by LAWTON.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territorial acknowledgment offered by TURNER. She noted that today is World AIDS Day and that Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island are disproportionately impacted by HIV. As a former HIV service worker, TURNER wanted to honour the Indigenous elders and people with living experience of HIV for their advocacy work addressing this health disparity. Indigenous health disparities are not limited to any single disease and being cognizant of this disparity is vital for settlers in recognizing the truth of colonization.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: ROBERTS/PALAPARTY

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. CHAIR TRAVEL COVERAGE

Lead: WEBB

For: Discussion

Seeking coverage for:

- Chairing mid-February and early March board meetings – assigned to LAWTON
- Chairing February 24 GRC– assigned to LAWTON
- March 2 GEC – assigned to NOUREEN. WEBB to forward the calendar invite to NOUREEN and alert the committee secretary of their coverage plan.
- Campaigning! – assigned to all
- Meeting with Jim Dunsdon - ROBERTS

2. IN CAMERA SESSION: BOARD MANAGEMENT

Lead: WEBB

Reference: Board Transition and Training

For Discussion: Board management of their roles and duties

3. FOOD BANK ACCESS FOR OFF-CAMPUS MEMBERS

Lead: WEBB/TURNER

Reference: GSS fee structure

For: Decision

As of Fall 2024, the UVSS Food Bank restricted access to fee paying members only. The GSS only charges students registered in on-campus courses for certain fees, per the referenda that created these fees. That is to say, we received member consent to explicitly exclude off-campus students from paying for services they would not normally have equal access to compared to on-campus students. We would require another referendum to alter the assessment criteria for these fees. These fees include: Campus Food Bank, CFUV, University 101, and the GSS Food and Beverage Fee. As a result, off-campus fees tend to be around \$15 less per term (co-op has additional fee exemptions.)

Per our UPASS contract and discussions with UVic and UVSS from 2020-23 (during pandemic-related enrolment chaos), it was decided that students may ONLY access the UPASS if they pay all on-campus services including the difference between student society fees paid on tuition and the “full” student society fee, the UPASS, and ATRS. The On Campus Services Package (UPASS) opt in program has been the route for students registering off-campus to have access on-campus services. This system was determined to be equitable as it would ensure that all GSS members who have access to the same services pay the same fees.

This system was set up at a time when most off-campus students either lived outside the region or worked full-time and could not reasonably access in-person campus services. The demographics of who registers off-campus and how they engage with campus services has changed post-pandemic. However, UVic is still very clear that students should register in a manner that reflects the reality of their learning environment (i.e. if you plan to be on-campus, register as on-campus.) Some graduate programs also have entirely separate programs for on-campus versus off-campus students, including separate admissions requirements, degree requirements, etc. These programs, while reasonably rare, do not allow for an immediate transfer from the off-campus program to the on-campus program: a readmission decision is required. All this to say, it is very clear that the GSS are not intended to be arbiters of who is considered on- versus off-campus. The mechanism available to grant off-campus students access to on-campus services is by opting into the On Campus Services Package.

A GSS member came with a concern that they were not eligible for the food bank as they are off-campus. They have not opted in to the On Campus Services Package. They do not wish to opt in due to cost and because they would not use all the services included. They have asked the GSS to run our own food bank in order to make up the gap in services.

There are a few available options to address this members' concern that are within GSS, UVic, and UVSS policy. Care should be taken to balance the needs of individual members, the demands placed on the student societies, continue to meet our contractual obligations, and provide services in a fair and equitable manner.

- If we wish to address this issue from the lens that an individual student is experiencing personal extenuating circumstances that may need individualized solutions outside our policy frameworks, the Appeals Committee has jurisdiction. This is the preferred solution by GSS staff.
- If we wish to address access to the Food Bank for all GSS members, we are required to take the fee to referendum to change the assessment criteria. We have previously run a non-quorate food bank fee referendum in 2023 and it was determined thereafter that we would not attempt another referendum on the food bank fee unless the UVSS holds a joint referendum to increase their fee as well. However, the need for an increase to this fee is longstanding and a referendum would give us a chance to adjust both fee amount and assessment criteria.
 - Care should be taken here as the Food Bank is still running major deficits: they cannot support the current fee paying members. Increasing eligibility criteria will worsen the Food Bank's financial position.
- Our fees have never been a la carte. Students pay for fee packages. Dismantling this system to allow students to opt into ONLY the fees they wish opens the door for students to opt OUT of fees they don't wish, violating our UPASS contract and creating financial challenges for the entire organization. If the board intends to make such a massive change, they should present a complete 5 year business plan accounting for the budget and service impacts.
- It is not viable for the GSS to run our own food bank. It will not be viable in the foreseeable future.

PALAPARTY asked about the policies for the Appeals Committee and TURNER noted that there is no policy here and it would be a negotiation with the UVSS Food Bank for this individual case.

ROBERTS noted that there was insufficient training and policy to support for Appeals Committee to take this on, but she is in support of advertising that the student may opt into the On Campus Services packages and be directed to off-campus food security resources.

PALAPARTY noted that it was difficult to ask students experiencing food insecurity to pay for these fees. She asked if the UVSS could be consulted about creating a system for rare exemptions. ROBERTS noted we'd need criteria from the UVSS to have this go through Appeals Committee.

DECISION: We will not change processes for opting into the On Campus Services Package in this case and continue to encourage folks to opt into the On Campus Services Package in order to access on campus services and refer off-campus members to off-campus resources.

STANDING ITEMS PART 2

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2025 Executive Board Meeting as presented.

M/S: ROBERTS/NOUREEN

CARRIED

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Lead: TURNER

Note: To ensure motion log is updated, ensure completed items are reported in the minutes.

Items assigned to board members that Kyla thinks are complete or abandoned will be listed below and highlighted in yellow. If there's an item you were assigned below highlighted in yellow, please confirm if the task was completed, revoked, or abandoned!

Tasks Completed/Decisions fully acted upon:

Tasks revoked or abandoned:

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

No committee appointments made.

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

No correspondence received.

H. AGENDA PLANNING, OR MEETING DEBRIEF

Reference: Meeting Debrief Template

1. Meeting debrief: November 25 GRC
 - i. WEBB noted that there was still very strong engagement around the FGS supervision policy. We continue to have very strong attendance. WEBB noted that there needs to be board solidarity once things are presented to GRC – i.e. board members should ask their questions ahead of GRC meetings about materials on the agenda. Where there is no shared understanding among board members, it demonstrates lack of solidarity and preparedness.
2. Meeting debrief: November 27 FGS Supervision Policy Consultation
 - i. WEBB noted that there was a very robust discussion and they've sent off thorough feedback in writing to FGS.
3. Meeting agenda planning: December 16 GRC
 - i. Previously submitted items:
 1. Advertise election dates
 2. Advertise January events
 3. GSAW reflections

TASK: ROBERTS and NOUREEN to prepare guiding questions for GSAW reflections at December 16 GRC

4. Meeting agenda planning: **January 13** Operational Relations – date revised!
 - i. Creating student support space in CARSA – Question for Jimmy D. ROBERTS noted that ICS have frequently asked for a drop in meeting space for ICS members. PALAPARTY noted that OSL does have programming space that they use in the old OneCard office. Questions, is this space bookable, a drop-in space only, etc. GSS asking for a general overview and their current plans.
 - ii. Residence Dining Advisory Committee report – GSS requesting a presentation on changes UVic has made to food services arising from the Residence Dining Advisory Committee recommendations, including survey report.

I. LOBBYING REPORTS

Reports due at the first meeting of every month.

J. ANNUAL PLAN CHECK-IN:

CLOSING ITEMS

EXECUTIVE INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATES/QUESTIONS

Chair: WEBB for BPC in December and January, they will review the GRC Co-Rep seat limit research, and review the drafted constitution amendments, and plan membership engagement for the constitutional review. WEBB is planning to get their prep work done for January semester before the Winter Break. WEBB, LAWTON, and ROBERTS will meet to plan chairing, minute taking, etc. for December GRC as both TURNER and Irfan will be out of office. WEBB also has the November board report due Friday and the December report once they are done work for the calendar year. They will also meet with Irfan and Semyon about election scheduling before the GRC.

Director of Finance: LAWTON for the rest of the month, she will be focused on Finance Committee – approving the fee referendum questions and a brief overview of the 2026-27 Budget and planning budget consultations. LAWTON took over grad exec committee from WEBB and has just started her work on Dean-a-palooza. LAWTON will be attending December Events Committee meeting.

Director of Internal/University Relations: ROBERTS on her December task log are: planning for A&C committee. She's done one work plan to present to the December meeting. Also generating a plan for the GSTIOP fee, BC Transit, and BC Grad Scholarship campaigns. For the A&C meeting on Dec 11, ROBERTS aims to have specific tasks to assign to committee members. She will review appeals for the Dec 12 Appeals Committee meeting. Last, she wants to work on a hand-off tool for GSAW for her successor. ROBERTS and NOUREEN will need to liaise on that document.

Director of External Relations: PALAPARTY has on her plate: A&C planning. She's made one workplan thus far, a skeleton of a plan for the BC Transit campaign. She gave updates from the Residence Dining Advisory Committee while we were planning the Operational Relations agenda. SSD had a Special General Meeting due to leadership turn over.

Director of Student Life: NOUREEN's major tasks will be: make a plan for the full Spring semester for events. January events are planned, but volunteers need to be solicited. During the December meeting, the Events Committee will work on a rough sketch of plans until April. She will be introducing the EQHR equity lens to the Events Committee to ensure our events are equitable. She will also be working with Sarah on the GSAW transition documents. She is also on the BC Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response working group. They have two campaigns right now: bystander intervention training and first responder training about receiving disclosures.

Executive Director: TURNER has a functional budget draft but needs to verify costs with UVic and add in CPI increases to fees.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Ratify referendum questions – January 5

Campaigning rules, regulations and a game plan to bring on external campaigners – Jan 5

Budget consultation – January 19

Budget vote (send to SAGM) – February 16

Approve SAGM agenda, previous minutes, any bylaw amendments – March 2

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

****Task Reminder: Please be sure your meetings and events are up to date on OUTLOOK CALENDAR****

Next Executive Meetings: January 5, 2026

Next GRC Meeting: December 16, 2025

SAGM: March 24, 2026


Office, Staff Scheduling: GSS is closed for Winter Break Dec 22-Jan 2 inclusive. Kyla will be out of office Dec 15-19.

ADJOURNMENT


Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 11:24.

M/S: ROBERTS/NOUREEN

CARRIED

X 

Rosemary WEBB
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director