

GSS 2026 Fee Referendum FAQ

The referendum questions and background information:

Background: The GSS is seeking to align our fees with our members' use of campus services. In this referendum, we are asking after the following fees:

University 101: The University 101 program was a free, non-credit program offered to community members that ended at the end of the Summer 2025 term. On-campus GSS members paid a \$0.64/term fee to support this program, increasing with CPI (inflation). We are seeking confirmation to end collection of the University 101 fee, and permission to allocate fees collected in the 2025-26 academic year to the UVSS Constituency Groups.

Student Advocate Fee: This fee was created in 2019 with the intent of hiring a full-time professional student advocate (lawyer) jointly with the UVSS. The UVSS 2019 referendum did not pass, and the GSS fees of \$1.00/term are insufficient to pay a full-time lawyer. To date, no stable use for these fees has been determined. We are seeking consent to end collection of the Student Advocate fee. Fees previously collected would be allocated in line with the intents of the existing Student Advocate Fund terms of reference.

World University Services Canada (WUSC): WUSC UVic is a branch of a Canada-wide service that sponsors 3-4 undergraduate student refugees per year to attend UVic. GSS members currently pay \$5.00/term, while undergraduates pay \$2.50/term. To better reflect Graduate Student interests and needs, we are seeking to reduce this fee to a similar level to each of the UVSS Constituency Groups.

Constituency Groups: These fees support the Native Student Union, Society for Students with a Disability, Students of Colour Collective, Gender Empowerment Centre and UVic Pride. Currently, on-campus GSS members pay \$1.33/term and off-campus members pay \$0.67/term, which is split evenly between these groups and does not increase with CPI. We are seeking consent to increase these fees to better support our partner organizations and to tie this fee with CPI.

Food & Bev Fee: These fees support the operations of the Grad House restaurant and allow the GSS to provide all Graduate Students with a 15% discount on all food items. Currently, on-campus GSS members pay \$11.00/term. We are seeking to increase this fee to better support the Grad House restaurant.

As a reminder to members, per the GSS bylaw 4.4b on referenda, where a fee is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI; inflation) by referendum, the necessary changes to bylaw 14.3 on membership fees will be made automatically.

Additional reminder: off-campus members and members on co-op pay 50% of the on-campus fee rate for the fees listed below.

Referendum Questions:

1. Do you support eliminating the University 101 Fee?
2. Do you support re-allocating fees collected for the now defunct University 101 program in the 202505, 202509 and 202601 terms to the UVSS Constituency Groups?
3. Do you support eliminating the Student Advocate Fee?
4. Do you support reducing the World University Services Canada (WUSC) fee from \$5.00/term for on-campus members to \$1.00/term for on-campus members?
5. Do you support increasing the Constituency Groups fee to \$4.97/term for on-campus members in 2025-26, thereafter increasing by the Consumer Price Index (inflation)? Fees would be distributed as follows:

Native Student Union: \$0.81

Society for Students with a Disability: \$1.64

Students of Colour Collective: \$1.07

Gender Empowerment Centre: \$1.19

Pride: \$0.26

6. Do you support increasing the Food & Beverage Fee to \$13.00/term for on-campus members?

How much will my fees increase overall?

If all referendum questions pass, there will be no increase in GSS fees due to this referendum.

Fee	Current amount	Proposed amount
University 101	\$0.64	\$0
Student Advocate	\$1.00	\$0
WUSC	\$5.00	\$1.00
Constituency Groups	\$1.33	\$4.97
Food and Beverage Fund	\$11.00	\$13.00
Total of above fees	\$18.97	\$18.97

Please note, other GSS fees do increase with inflation. More information on our complete fee structure is below.

What are current GSS fees?

The 2025-26 GSS Fee that all members pay with tuition includes the following sub-fees:

GSS Fees:	Regular (FT, On-Campus)	Co-Op	Off-Campus	Co-op & On-Campus Class
Operating Fund*	\$59.80	\$29.92	\$59.80	\$29.92
Capital Fee*	\$12.20	\$6.11	\$12.20	\$6.11
Childcare Fee	\$1.02	\$0.51	\$1.02	\$0.51
Anti-Violence Project	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$1.00
Ombudsperson	\$1.50	\$0.75	\$1.50	\$0.75
Constituency Groups	\$1.33	\$0.67	\$1.33	\$0.67
Clubs	\$0.50	\$0.25	\$0.50	\$0.25
WUSC (Student Refugee Program)	\$5.00	\$2.50	\$5.00	\$2.50
Campus Food Bank*	\$2.18	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.18
CFUV*	\$0.66	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.66
University 101*	\$0.64	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.64
Conference Travel fee*	\$5.54	\$2.78	\$5.54	\$2.78
Distance Travel Fee*	\$1.29	\$0.66	\$1.29	\$0.66
Student Advocate	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$1.00	\$0.50
Food and Bev Fee	\$11.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11.00
Total	\$105.66	\$45.65	\$91.18	\$60.13

*This fee increases with the annual BC Consumer Price Index (inflation).

Why make these changes now?

One of our key goals in this referendum is to better align our fees with the services that our members use. Another key goal was offering a cost-neutral fee referendum. That is to say, if all referendum questions pass, it will not result in an increase to student fees.

Fee	Current amount	Proposed amount
University 101	\$0.64	\$0
Student Advocate	\$1.00	\$0
WUSC	\$5.00	\$1.00
Constituency Groups	\$1.33	\$4.97
Food and Beverage Fund	\$11.00	\$13.00
Total of above fees	\$18.97	\$18.97

In Spring 2025, the Society for Students with a Disability (SSD) requested the GSS conduct a fee referendum to increase the fee supporting their services as they were experiencing financial limitations on their current fee rate. The GSS does not charge a separate fee for the Society for Students with a Disability. We collect a joint fee for all the Constituency Groups hosted in the Student Union Building. These groups include SSD, the Students of

Colour Collective, Native Students Union, Pride, and Gender Empowerment Centre. Graduate students have equal access to services and supports provided by the Constituency Groups.

We were unable to accommodate SSD's initial request as the request was made after our 2025 referendum was already in progress. However, the Director of Finance and Executive Director spent Summer 2025 gathering information from all the Constituency Groups as we knew that our fees collected towards the Constituency Groups were significantly less than those of undergraduates (see below for "How do the proposed rates compare to undergrad fees?"). As a result of this work, we are proposing an increase from \$1.33/term to \$4.97/term for on-campus grad students.

In Summer 2025, the University informed the GSS that they were ending the University 101 program. We may only change this student fee by referendum. We must also announce graduate fees to the University Board of Governors in March/April each year for the fees we'd like charged on tuition. Because of the requirements in our bylaws and within the UVic tuition system, we weren't able to immediately eliminate this fee. However, we saw an opportunity to reduce some fees and increase others to better support the services our members use most.

In Fall 2025, as part of the GSS's annual budgeting process, our Operations and Services Manager, Neil Barney, submitted a request to increase the GSS Food and Beverage fee. This fee, created in 2022, does not increase with inflation. As our members will be aware, the cost of food and drinks has increased over time. This is putting financial pressure on the Grad House restaurant. Neil drafted a proposal for the Grad House to bear the cost of Wednesday Coffee food and drinks if the Food and Beverage fee were to increase by \$2.00. Currently, Wednesday Coffee is supported by the Events and Entertainment section of our Operating budget. Due to inflation, the GSS needs to make cuts to our events and entertainment budget. By moving Wednesday Coffee costs from the Operating budget to the Grad House budget, we can reduce cuts to other events.

Upon further examination of fees and services that our members use, we felt that we could also eliminate the Student Advocate Fund and reduce the World University Services Canada (WUSC) fees in order to increase support for the Constituency Groups and Food and Beverage fund without an overall increase in membership fees.

Food and Beverage Questions

What is this fee?

This fee supports the operations of the Grad House restaurant. Prior to 2020, the Grad House had a mandate to financially support the other functions of the GSS. However, like most campus pubs in Canada, it continually ran at a loss. In 2021-22, the GSS went to member referendum asking to run the Grad House as a funded service, supported by a dedicated fee that would be applied to all on-campus members. Since then, the Grad House has run as a funded service that provides high-quality, low-cost food, gathering space, and social events for the benefit of GSS members.

The results of the March 2022 referendum were:

“Quorum for GSS referendum is 5% of our membership. With 257 or 2940 eligible members voting, our referendum was quorate with a 8.7% voter turn out. The results of this referendum were:

1. Do you support:

- a. An increase to your student fees to maintain some of all Food and Beverage services at Halpern Centre, as set out in Referendum Question 2 – 151 votes (passed)**
- b. No increase to your student fees, no Food and Beverage services at Halpern Centre, and renovations to screen off the previous kitchen and sales spaces to allow the Grad House and Side Project to be used for study and gathering spaces – 103 votes

2. If Referendum Question 1a passes, do you support:

- a. A new mandatory Food and Beverage Fee of \$20 per student per term for all on-campus graduate students to fund operations of a full service restaurant in Halpern Centre – 99 votes
- b. A new mandatory Food and Beverage Fee of \$11 per student per term for all on-campus graduate students to fund operations of a counter-services, limited menu food and beverage service in Halpern Centre -125 votes (passed)**

Therefore, a new Food and Beverage Fee of \$11 will be levied beginning May 1, 2022 for all on-campus students.”

What would the increase to Food & Bev support?

An increase to the Food and Bev fee would allow the Grad House to internally bear the costs of running Wednesday Coffee. At present, \$9,600 of the Events and Entertainment

budget within the GSS's Operating Fund is allocated to providing food and drinks at Wednesday Coffee.

The GSS is predicting needing to make approximately \$27K in budget cuts this year across the organization. We have policies requiring us to budget first for all our contractual obligations (wages, utilities, maintenance, costs of goods sold, etc.), so these cuts will need to come from our discretionary funds. Discretionary spending at the GSS includes events and entertainment, department grants, board/staff training, advertising, etc. Events and entertainment are the largest share of our discretionary spending and we will need to make cuts to the events budget for 2026-27. **By passing a referendum to increase the Food and Beverage fee now, we can enshrine Wednesday Coffee as part of the Grad House annual budget, rather than discretionary spending.**

[**Will Wednesday Coffee continue if this referendum does not pass?**](#)

Short answer: the budget does not dictate specifically where funds must be spent, but the GSS is proposing cuts to the Events and Entertainment budget of \$9,200 this year. We cannot guarantee which events will be cut, reduced, or ticketed as a result of the budget reduction, but the amount we are cutting is roughly the total Wednesday Coffee budget.

Longer answer: The GSS is predicting an overall budget reduction of \$27K in the 2026-27 year. The budget will be approved by Finance Committee and the Board in February and ratified by membership on March 24 at the Semi-Annual General Meeting. As noted above, these cuts must come from our discretionary spending. Events and entertainment is where we spend the vast majority of our discretionary funds. Therefore, the Events and Entertainment budget will be cut in 2026-27. While we've re-arranged and re-labelled our budget lines this year, the Events and Entertainment budget in 2025-26 was \$32,450. The proposed 2026-27 Events and Entertainment budget is \$23,175. This reduction will impact food at GRC and S/AGM meals, orientation events, Wednesday Coffee, and all events planned by the Events Committee.

The GSS Events Committee, board, and staff will still be able to allocate the funds within their reduced budget. Options for operating within this reduced budget include:

1. Move Wednesday Coffee off the Operating Events and Entertainment budget and onto the Grad House restaurant budget via this referendum
2. Reduce the number of events we offer and focus more on events we can provide without cost to the organization
3. Ticket more events and increase ticket prices for existing ticketed events

Constituency Group Questions

How do the proposed rates compare to undergrad fees?

Fee	UVSS Fee Rate	Current GSS Fee Rate	Proposed GSS Fee Rate
Constituency Groups	\$13.00 broken down as: SOCC: \$1.50 SSD: \$3.00 GEM: \$2.00 PRIDE: \$2.00 NSU: \$2.50 All groups: \$2.00	\$1.33 divided equally: SOCC: \$0.26 SSD: \$0.26 GEM: \$0.26 PRIDE: \$0.26 NSU: \$0.26 All groups: \$0.03	\$4.97 broken down as: SOCC: \$1.07 SSD: \$1.64 GEM: \$1.19 PRIDE: \$0.26 NSU: \$0.81

Who decided the fee rates for the Constituency Groups? How did they set these rates?

The GSS Finance Committee and the Executive Board both voted on the specific fee rates we have put on the ballot. The GSS Finance Committee reviewed information relating to each of the constituency group's organizational budgets, funds received from the GSS as a percentage of that organizational budget, as well as graduate student service use and eligibility. We reached out to each of the Constituency Groups over Summer and Fall 2025 requesting information. All groups except Pride provided responses. The budget information we received included:

Constituency Group	Funding received from GSS in 2024-25*	Most recent available budget	Year of budget	% of funds from GSS
NSU - Native Student Union	\$2,240.18	\$62,000.00	2024-25	3.61%
SSD - Society for Students with a Disability	\$2,240.18	\$156,249.00	2024-25	1.43%
SOCC - Students of Colour Collective	\$2,240.18	\$91,033.92	2024-25	2.46%
GEM - Gender Empowerment Centre	\$2,240.18	\$105,364.00	2024-25	2.13%
Pride	\$2,240.18	\$70,000.00	2023-24 - budget is approximation. No specific information provided by Pride.	3.20%

*Figures in this column were generated by the GSS and not the Constituency Groups.

The Finance Committee also considered how many graduate students were currently using services at these groups and how many were eligible for services. Data was obtained from

a variety of sources, including the UVic Board of Governors enrollment data, the Better Data project, and CAL registration reports.

Constituency Group	% of GSS members eligible for membership (if known)
NSU - Native Student Union	10.6% per BOG enrolment report
SSD - Society for Students with a Disability	15% per Better Data, 10% per CAL (compared to 18% undergrad)
SOCC - Students of Colour Collective	29% per Better Data (21.2% for all UVic students per Better Data)
GEM - Gender Empowerment Centre	57.1% per Better Data (incl. women, trans, 2 Spirit, NB, genderqueer)
Pride	31% per Better Data. (7.7% for all students per Better Data)

Lastly, we asked about the specific supports and programs offered, current and near future budget stressors, and intended use of additional funds. NSU and SSD both run food security programs which would be supported by an increase in funding from graduate students, as an example.

Based on organizational budget, programs, and availability of services to graduate students, the Finance Committee set fee rates that recognize the significant differences between the scope of each group's work. As noted above, one of the key goals the Finance Committee had for this referendum was to make the changes in fees cost-neutral for our members. As a reminder, we are proposing the following changes to fees:

Fee	Current amount	Proposed amount
University 101	\$0.64	\$0
Student Advocate	\$1.00	\$0
WUSC	\$5.00	\$1.00
Constituency Groups	\$1.33	\$4.97
Food and Beverage Fund	\$11.00	\$13.00
Total of above fees	\$18.97	\$18.97

Why is Pride not receiving a fee increase?

Current GSS Fee Rate	Proposed GSS Fee Rate
\$1.33 – divided equally between groups, i.e. SOCC: \$0.26 SSD: \$0.26 GEM: \$0.26 PRIDE: \$0.26	\$4.97 broken down as: SOCC: \$1.07 SSD: \$1.64 GEM: \$1.19 PRIDE: \$0.26

NSU: \$0.26	NSU: \$0.81
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All Constituency Groups were asked to provide financial and membership data on June 2, September 17, October 27, and November 26. We received a response in September stating that Pride would get us information as soon as possible. In our October 27 email, we specified “we’ve not received any information from you about Pride finances for planning our fee referendum. Unfortunately, this means our Finance Committee will proceed with planning fee increases on the assumption that Pride does not require additional funds from the GSS. If our assumption is incorrect, please provide the information requested. [Our Executive Director and Director of Finance are] happy to meet with you if it is easiest to get this information verbally.” We did not hear back from Pride with any of the requested information and have proceeded without an increase to Pride funding.

WUSC Questions

How do the proposed rates compare to undergrad fees?

Fee	UVSS Fee Rate	Current GSS Fee Rate	Proposed GSS Fee Rate
WUSC	\$2.50 full-time / \$1.25 part-time	\$5.00 on-campus / \$2.50 off-campus	\$1.00 on-campus / \$0.50 off-campus

Please note: The UVSS has different fee rates for full-time and part-time students. Because UVic does not have universal support for part-time graduate studies in all departments, the GSS does not offer a part-time fee rate. Additionally, because many UVic grad programs are offered exclusively remotely to working professionals, the GSS differentiates fees based on on-/off-campus registration status.

What is WUSC?

World University Services Canada is a national non-profit organization. They describe themselves as a “Canadian global development organization working in over 30 countries around the world... we have had a consistent focus on the education and economic journeys of young people, and especially those impacted by forced displacement.” You can find their website here: <https://wusc.ca/about/>. The UVic local WUSC Committee sponsors student refugees pursuing undergraduate education at UVic.

What does WUSC support?

WUSC UVic supports 3-4 student refugees annually through sponsoring the full cost of their education (tuition, books, housing, food, etc.) and providing social and academic support throughout their degrees. Student refugees sponsored by WUSC receive permanent residency in Canada to facilitate their ability to live and work in Canada for the rest of their lives. Since 2010 the WUSC UVic Local Committee has supported approximately 44 students. Sponsored students receive comprehensive, wrap around support including support in submitting housing applications, airport pick up, assistance in accessing essential documentation such as SINs and Permanent Resident cards, as well as social supports throughout their academic career. \$45,000 per year is allotted to each student refugee; this includes one full year of sponsorship and a contingency fund.

Only undergraduate students are eligible for WUSC sponsorship, however in the past 5 years, approximately 4-5 former WUSC UVic sponsored students have completed UVic graduate degrees.

Why are our WUSC fee rates currently double that of undergrads?

The GSS raised the fee to support WUSC by referendum in 2015 and 2020. In 2015, we raised this fee by \$1.00 (up from \$2.00/term) and in 2020, we raised this fee again by \$2.00. Due to these two fee increases, we surpassed the UVSS fee in 2015 and continued to increase the fee. These increases were proposed due to the trends of global displacement and refugee crises throughout the 2010's and 2020's.

We acknowledge that many of these displacements are still ongoing and will continue to support WUSC through a reduced fee. If this referendum passes, the GSS will provide an average of \$1/student to each of the Constituency Groups, and therefore we have proposed this as the new WUSC fee rate. As mentioned above, our goals for this referendum were to realign our fees with the supports our members are currently using most and, in light of ongoing difficulties with cost of living, to propose a cost-neutral fee referendum.

What would the \$4 reduction change?

WUSC UVic has confirmed for the GSS that a reduction in fees would mean that our local committee (i.e. UVic's WUSC branch) would not be able to take on a fourth student refugee each year. Sponsors would be maintained at 3 students per year.

How was the decision made to lower the WUSC fee?

The GSS Finance Committee requested information from WUSC on June 2, 2025 (email), September/October (in-person), October 27, 2025 (email), and November 26, 2025 (email)

to “ensure that we are providing proportional support to WUSC based on members’ use of services.” We asked for financial information, as well as information on how many graduate students are engaged in their programs. We requested this information be provided by September 1, 2025, but continued to provide further opportunities and extended deadlines. We stated in our October 27 email that we were “hoping to adjust [the WUSC fee] to be in line with other student groups we fund.” As you can see in our fee list (above), funding for individual student groups such as CFUV and AVP tends to range between \$0.64-2.00/student. We heard back for the first time on December 5 and received the requested information on December 10, 2025. The information provided by WUSC was reviewed by the Finance Committee on December 12.

Because we did not receive any information throughout the majority of the Fall semester, despite multiple attempts to collect it, Finance Committee proceeded with planning a fee referendum without WUSC input. The referendum questions were drafted before receiving any information from WUSC. However, Finance Committee did review information submitted by WUSC before ratifying the referendum questions. As stated above, one of our key goals for this referendum was to run a cost-neutral fee referendum to increase support for the services our members use the most and decrease or eliminate support for services that are not actively used by GSS members. The Finance Committee reviewed information provided by WUSC at their December 12 meeting, but found that the lack of graduate student involvement, WUSC UVic’s history of budget surpluses (in part related to services being unable to run during the pandemic), and the current economic climate, did not justify funding this program at the rate of \$5.00/student/term. If this referendum passes, the GSS will provide an average of \$1/student to each of the Constituency Groups, and therefore we have proposed this as the new WUSC fee rate.

University 101 Questions

Why can’t we simply strike this fee?

Our bylaws state “Membership fees shall be set by majority vote of a referendum held according to Society Bylaws.” (bylaw 14.3a). We have not amended our bylaws to unilaterally terminate fees. If there are no procedural barriers with UVic in updating our fee collection bylaws, the Bylaw and Policy Committee may choose to alter the GSS bylaws.

It should be noted that the last time a service for which the GSS collected fees was terminated was in 2020 when the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group ended service. This is not a common issue.

What is University 101?

The University 101 program was a free, non-credit program offered to community members. Courses included a broad range of topics from poetry, history, political science, and medicine. The program was designed to be a barrier-free university course for people who, for reasons of poverty, disability, single parenthood or a history of mental illness, would otherwise have no access to higher education on campus.¹ University 101 used to offer graduate students many volunteer opportunities in teaching and designing courses.

You can find the Times Colonist coverage about the end of the University 101 program here: <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/uvic-ends-free-education-program-due-to-safety-concerns-10841923>.

Will the University 101 Fees collected in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 be distributed evenly amongst the Constituency Groups, or will it be divided in a manner proportional to their budgets?

The money will be donated to the UVSS, who will distribute the funds out to the Constituency Groups. The UVSS has distributed previous fee collections evenly to all groups. However, we are not imposing specific distribution expectations on this proposed donation. It would only be restricted to the five Constituency Groups.

Student Advocate Questions:

What was the original purpose of the Student Advocate fee?

The GSS and UVSS hosted a joint referendum in 2019 to create a Student Advocate office, which would operate similar to the Ombudsperson with funding for the office coming from both student societies. The Student Advocate would have been a hired lawyer who would have been tasked with advocating on behalf of students to the university. The difference between this proposed Student Advocate and the Ombudsperson is that Ombuds are impartial arbiters of fairness while advocates are not impartial and are tasked with advocating on behalf of their client (the student).

The GSS referendum passed. The UVSS referendum did not. The GSS collects approximately \$9000 annually through this fee, which is insufficient to pay a lawyer for even part time work. Likewise, the GSS does not have the physical space or other necessities for bringing on an in-house lawyer on our own. No plan was put in place in 2019 for what to do

¹ <http://uvic.ca/news/archive/topics/2016+university-101+ring?ticket=ST-321671-qtr37e7QzZCkC4lVl-B1G5ekvx0-nighthawk>

if only one student society passed their referendum. As such, there hasn't been a stable use of these funds in the last 6 years. The GSS has asked the UVSS to re-run their referendum, but no referendum has since been approved.

Based on the lack of use of these funds, the GSS is seeking member consent to end collection of this fee.

Why didn't we end collection of the Student Advocate fee sooner?

The GSS has gone back to the UVSS asking them to run a second referendum to establish a Student Advocate Office several times in the last six years. Our hope was still to create this office and for any fees collected between when the GSS referendum passed and the UVSS referendum passed to go towards the start up costs for such an office. However, the UVSS has not expressed any interest in running another referendum on this matter and the GSS cannot, in good conscience, continue fee collection when there is no foreseeable change.

Additionally, as mentioned above under "why make these changes now?" our goals for this specific fee referendum are to align fees with services our members use and to offer a cost-neutral fee referendum. This was the most obvious place to make cuts to fees that contribute directly to the GSS budget. The Student Advocate Fund is an internally restricted fund which can only be used for purposes outlined in their Terms of Reference. We cannot simply allocate these funds for other purposes.

For more information about the GSS bylaw and UVic requirements for changing student fee rates, please see the "Why can't we simply strike this fee?" question under University 101.

What are the available uses for the collected Student Advocate fees?

[Student Advocate Terms of Reference](#)

The Student Advocate Fund is an internally restricted fund, meaning that these fees are set aside for the specific purposes of student advocacy which can only be accessed for said purposes. As noted above, the original intention (hiring a lawyer) was not possible without funds from the UVSS. Therefore, in 2021-22, the GSS Chair drafted Terms of Reference to outline the acceptable uses of this fund.

Since its implementation, the GSS has used funds collected under the Student Advocate fee to support Work Study Peer Support Workers who were tasked with meeting with students experiencing procedural or policy issues with UVic. We will use the funds previously collected in future projects that align with the set TOR.

Based on the lack of consistent use of these funds, the GSS is seeking member consent to end collection of this fee.

Who sits on the GSS Finance Committee that made the decisions over the proposed fee rates?

The 2025-26 GSS Finance Committee includes ten department representatives from the Graduate Representative Council, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Internal Relations. The GSS Executive Director sits as a non-voting member of the committee. The Finance Committee's purpose and duties, per their Terms of Reference, are:

PURPOSE

Oversee the overall financial administration of the Society.

DUTIES

- 1.1 Support and advise on transparency of the financial administration of the Society;
- 1.2 Develop an annual budget for all Society operations;
- 1.3 Oversee the maintenance of the Society's capital budget, and to make recommendations to the Executive Board on capital expenditures;
- 1.4 Make recommendations to the Executive Board on all significant matters of financial administration;
- 1.5 Serve as the Development Authority for financial Governance and Operations policy and restricted fund Terms of Reference; and carry out all other duties as directed by the GRC.

Getting out the vote:

I feel strongly about this. What can I do to make sure GSS supports the services I use or care about?

Get out the vote! Encourage as many of your graduate student colleagues to vote on Simply Voting between March 4 at 9:00am and March 6 at 4:00pm PST.

Feel even more strongly? Sign up to be part of a referendum side and campaign for the outcome you want! What the heck are referendum sides and what do we mean when we say "campaigning"? Check out our Referendum Campaign Package for a full description of our campaign rules. But, briefly, a referendum "side" is an organized effort to influence voters to vote a specific way in a referendum. They influence voters by distributing

materials (verbal, digital, or physical) that inform voters of the benefits of voting a particular way. Only graduate students may directly campaign for GSS referenda. An example of a possible referendum side in this case would be a “yes” side campaign for the fee increase for Constituency Groups. Only one campaign is permitted for each side (that is, all the “yes” supporters must work together and all the “no” supporters must work together).

You can contact our Electoral Officer, Semyon Drozdetckii, at votegss@uvic.ca if you are interested in campaigning for a side in this referendum. They will put you in touch with all other members of your side. **The deadline to register to campaign is February 23.** All individuals intending to campaign must register. Referendum sides are granted access to resources outlined in our [Referendum Campaign Package](#). You are not required to register for a referendum side in order to share your opinion about the referendum. However, only officially registered sides are permitted to formally campaign. Our Referendum Campaign Package has more information about what activities are considered campaigning.

I'm an undergrad and I want to campaign. What can I do?

The GSS is a legally separate non-profit society from the UVSS. The two student societies support separate student populations and have entirely separate finances, governance structures, etc. Our board elections and fee referenda are always independent of one another. **Only current GSS members may campaign for GSS referenda.**

We strongly encourage our undergrad peers to get involved in the UVSS fee referendum. Information is available here: <https://uvsselections.com/referendum-questions/>.

I'm an undergrad AND part of one of the impacted organizations. I want to campaign. What can I do?

Only currently registered GSS members may campaign for GSS elections and referenda. Please see our [Referendum Campaign Package](#) for regulations on campaigning.

Excerpts from the GSS Referendum Campaign Package:

Referendum campaigns may solicit endorsement from campus organizations **only if that organization includes currently registered UVic graduate students** (emphasis added), complies with all GSS campaign regulations, and registers its intent to endorse a candidate with the Electoral Officer prior to engaging in any campaign activities. Campus organizations must register their endorsement of a referendum campaign by emailing votegss@uvic.ca no later than the close of campaigning sign-up period.

Campus organizations wishing to join a GSS referendum campaign must include the name and V# of a currently registered UVic graduate student who supports their

organization's intention to campaign when they register their intent to campaign. Only currently registered UVic graduate students may actively participate in campaigning (emphasis added).

Referendum campaigns may solicit and organize GSS members to campaign on their behalf. All individuals engaged in campaigning activities must be currently registered UVic graduate students (emphasis added). Referendum campaigns are responsible for the behaviours of their members during official campaigning activities. Supporters may not contribute financially in any way to a campaign.