

# GSS Referendum

## 2026 CAMPAIGN GUIDE

### Definitions

**Campaigning** – means any activity in which referendum campaigns communicate with voters about the referendum through:

- Public appearances or speeches (e.g. at the Meet the Candidates events)
- Advertisements via email, social media or other platforms
- Distributing posters, leaflets, etc. in compliance with the regulations outlined in this guide
- Buttons, stickers, displays, chalking on sidewalks/signs, etc.

**Campaign material** – means any verbal (e.g., speech, classroom talk, video), digital (e.g., electronic, website, social media) or physical (e.g., paper, chalking, advertising) material produced by or on behalf of a candidate or referendum side to promote their campaign. Referendum campaigns are responsible for organizing their own campaign materials outside the provisions in point 6 below.

**Endorser** – means a UVic campus organization that includes currently registered UVic graduate students and who engages in campaigning in support of and/or on behalf of a GSS referendum campaign. Endorsers must adhere to all GSS campaign rules. Endorsers must register with the Electoral Officer during the sign-up period.

**Referendum campaign** – A campaign is the organized development and circulation of official campaign materials such as posters, flyers and an official campaign platform, by an organized group of UVic graduate students and/or campus organizations who include UVic graduate students. Only one referendum campaign may form in support of a referendum question (proponents) and only one referendum campaign may form in opposition to a referendum question (opponents). All proponents must work jointly to determine how campaign resources will be used. All opponents must work jointly to determine how campaign resources will be used.

**Supporter** – means a currently registered UVic graduate students who engages in campaigning in support of and/or on behalf of a referendum side. Supporters must adhere to all GSS campaign rules.

### Who is required to register for a referendum campaign

GSS members are NOT required to register to campaign in order to share their opinion or make fair comment on a campaign or candidate. GSS members are encouraged to discuss the election and referendum in their conversations, in meetings of graduate students or campus organizations, on social media, or in letters to the editor. Members may share campaign material they have received from a campaign with others without registering to campaign (e.g. pass on a handbill or forward an email to other graduate students). However, only formal referendum campaigns may access GSS resources to promote their campaign or produce campaign materials for circulation.

**Undergraduate students and campus organizations that do not include currently registered UVic graduate students may not campaign for GSS elections or referenda.** Only GSS members may actively participate in campaigning on GSS elections and referenda.

### Formation of referendum campaign side (i.e. campaigning for a referendum question)

All GSS referenda allow for the formation referendum campaign sides. This means that individual student(s) and group(s) can campaign for either a “Yes” (proponent) or “No” (opponent) vote for

any referendum question. Only formally registered campaigns may access the resources provided by the GSS, or post posters on campus, distribute handbills, or otherwise circulate campaign material. **Grad students who wish to campaign for a referendum side must register with the Electoral Officer by email to [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) by the close of the sign-up period. Campus organizations that include currently registered graduate students and wish to endorse a campaign must register with the Electoral Officer by email to [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) by the close of the sign-up period.**

There can be only one registered campaign team for each side (“yes” or “no”) on a single referendum question. The Electoral Officer will put individual students or groups who register for the same campaign side in touch with each other by email.

### Campaign behaviour

The GSS expects campaigns to be honest and respectful in their campaign communications. **Campaigning is allowed only during the campaign period.**

As voting takes place online, our members may be voting on any internet connected device on campus during the polling period. Knowingly campaigning within hearing range of members who are in the process of voting is not allowed. Simply Voting is a secret ballot. All GSS members are expected to respect the privacy of those who are casting their ballot.

Referendum campaigns **may**:

- advertise when, where, and how to vote to all GSS members and encourage voting in the election/referendum
- organize their own meet & greet events (provided no incentives for voting are given to voters)
  - Please note: referendum campaigns are responsible for complying with all booking policies and procedures for the space(s) they are considering hosting events in
- organize referendum campaign members to distribute their posters on the campaign’s behalf
- organize referendum campaign members to canvas around campus (e.g. knocking on grad student office doors to raise awareness about the referendum question and their campaign)

Referendum campaigns **may not**:

- engage in vote-buying (i.e. offering incentives to a voter to vote or not vote or to vote a certain way). Vote-buying including providing electors with food and drinks where there is a real or perceived obligation to vote a certain way
- intimidate or harass voters, including compelling voters by action or threat to vote or refrain from voting, retaliating against voters for voting or not voting, etc.
  - Voter intimidation may include aggressively questioning voters about how they intend to vote, falsely presenting yourself as an elections official, spreading false information about election candidates, referenda questions, or election procedures or other behaviours that violate the UVic Discrimination and Harassment policy.

### Rules and Regulations

- 1) **The campaigning sign-up period to join a campaign opens at 10:00am February 9, 2026 and closes February 23, 2026 at 4:00pm.**
- 2) All individuals and campus organizations intending to campaign for a referendum side **must** register their intention to campaign with the Electoral Officer by emailing [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) during the sign-up period. The Electoral Officer will grant referendum campaign members

access to a Sharepoint with other members of the referendum campaign. Campaign members are responsible for their own internal organization and conduct throughout the campaign. GSS staff cannot advise referendum campaigns on how to campaign nor provide resources outside what is included in this guide, including access to email listservs.

- 3) 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.**
- 4) The campaign period begins on February 24, 2026 and runs to March 3, 2026. We strongly recommend referendum campaigns use the campaigning sign-up period to plan their campaigns, including designing any posters for circulation, planning how to circulate your materials, etc.
- 5) Voting will be entirely online at <https://uvicec.simplyvoting.com/>. Polls will be open 9:00AM on March 4, 2026 and close at 4:00PM March 6, 2026.
- 6) **The GSS will provide the following resources to all referendum campaigns:**
  - i. The copying of (50) fifty 8.5x11" campaign posters as approved by the Electoral Officer (available at GSS office). **The GSS staff will not print, copy, or circulate posters without Electoral Officer approval.**
  - ii. Circulation of a referendum campaign statement for each campaign to all members subscribed to the GSS bulletin list-serve, the Grad Rep Council e-mail list and posted on the GSS website. This statement must be no longer than 500 words and must be submitted by email to [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) by 4:00PM, February 24.
- 7) Campaign materials must not contain messaging that violates [UVic's Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Response Policy](#) or [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- 8) Referendum campaigns are responsible for their own campaign expenses, including determining how any costs are distributed between campaign members, and may **not** spend more than \$250 on campaigning. These funds will come from the campaigns themselves, and not from the GSS. Campaign expenses **must not** be used to directly incentivize voters to vote a specific way (vote buying). The Electoral Officer retains the right to check all receipts at any time.
- 9) Posters, no larger than 8.5 x 11" can be posted on all authorized posting boards on campus in accordance with the [UVic poster policy and procedures](#). Campaign posters must first be approved by the Electoral Officer in writing (email posters to [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca)). Campaigns must then get the posters stamped for approval at the GSS Front Office. Posters cannot be posted without the approval stamp. Posters may only be affixed to authorized boards on campus. There are posting boards on the first floor of most UVic buildings. Per the UVic poster policy, each referendum campaign may post a maximum of one hundred (100) posters.
- 10) Referendum campaigns may distribute handbills/leaflets for their campaign provided they email a PDF copy of the handbill/leaflet to the Electoral Officer at [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) and receive approval in advance of distribution. Handbills/leaflets are made at the referendum campaign's expense. Handbills/leaflets must be handed directly to the recipient and not left unattended i.e. on top of tables and chairs. If left unattended the UVic Facilities staff will remove them.

- 11) Referendum campaigns may use e-mail and social media to disseminate the materials for their campaign which have been approved by the Electoral Officer. Referendum campaigns may make use of their own formal or informal listservs.
- 12) Referendum campaigns may not endorse or reference Executive Board candidates in their campaign materials.**
- 13) 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. 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.
- 14) Referendum campaigns may solicit endorsement from campus organizations **only** if that organization includes currently registered UVic graduate students, 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](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) no later than the close of campaigning sign-up period.**
- 15) Referendum sides are responsible for any campaign activities carried out by or campaign materials produced by all endorsers and supporters on behalf of the referendum campaign. Referendum campaigns are responsible for ensuring compliance with the GSS election rules and University posting regulations.
- If a referendum side allegedly violates rules of campaigning, the Electoral Officer may conduct an investigation to determine if the allegations are true. The Electoral Officer may apply a warning or a sanction up to disqualification, invalidation of referendum, and/or ban from participation in future election cycles to any referendum side or its campaign manager. In the instance where a campaign manager commits an infraction, a sanction may be applied equally to their referendum side.
- 16) Referendum campaigns are responsible for removing poster materials (posters, social media posts, handbills/leaflets) prior to voting starting.
- 17) The Electoral Officer is Semyon Drozdetckii!** They can be reached at [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca). They will handle any complaints about the election process. Complaints about election results must be lodged within 7 days of the result being announced.

*Thank you and good luck!*

When a question arises about matters not covered in this manual, the Electoral Officer will use the rules governing provincial and federal elections as our guide.

Bylaw IV of the *GSS Constitution and Bylaws* governs all University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society referenda. The bylaws are posted on our website [here](#). **Current referendum information will be posted at: <http://gss.uvic.ca/election>**