

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board (HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 19, 2026

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;
vacant, Director of External Relations;
vacant, Director of Student Life;
Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting);
GUESTS: Members of Finance Committee: Bernardo and Chloe

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 10:00am by WEBB.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territorial acknowledgment offered by WEBB. They went to east Sooke and Metchosin yesterday– the word Metchosin comes from a Coast Salish word for “place of the smelly fish” or “place of the fish oil.”

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: ROBERTS/LAWTON

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. BUDGET CONSULTATION

Lead: LAWTON, Representatives from Finance Committee

Reference: 2026-27 budget consultation template, Draft budget

For: Decision

Finance Committee consults itself, the board and staff separately about the areas of flexibility within the budget. Finance Committee members will be guiding the board through the reflection questions attached.

The GSS is predicting a \$20K deficit this year and would like to make cuts of the same amount to produce a balanced budget. The board was consulted on costs for advertising; events and entertainment; department grants; and board/staff training to identify areas for and scope of reductions.

2. PSI FUNDING REVIEW CONSULTATION DEBRIEF

Lead: WEBB

Reference: Webb's meeting notes

For: Discussion

WEBB consulted with Don Avison, KC, on the Province's post-secondary sector sustainability review on Jan 14. They have sent out detailed meeting notes. LAWTON said the notes WEBB took should go to the website.

STANDING ITEMS PART 2

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2026 Executive Board Meeting as presented.

M/S: LAWTON/ROBERTS

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:

TASK: TURNER to notify GRC of the referendum questions approved by the board within 48 hours of the board meeting.

TASK: TURNER to send draft referendum questions and election dates to the University Secretary Office for the creation of a SimplyVoting ballot.

Tasks revoked or abandoned:

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

No committee appointments made.

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (APPENDIX D)

Item 1: Current situation in Iran (Appendix D, multiple emails)

Item 2: Provincial Review of Student Perceptions of Sexual Violence Survey (on teams)

Item 3: Kyla actually got a response from government for once (re: funding review) – Appendix D.

Motion: to receive the correspondence.

M/S: ROBERTS/LAWTON

CARRIED

H. AGENDA PLANNING, OR MEETING DEBRIEF

Reference: Meeting Debrief Template

1. Meeting debrief: Jan 6 Operational Relations
 - i. We got so much info! Maggie sent detailed notes for Sarah, who had to give regrets in order to attend the Presidential Hiring Committee.
 - ii. UVic is proposing a student support centre in CARSA
 - iii. Food and Beverage Services are improving. Grad House is doing great!
 - iv. Non-Academic Misconduct Policy review forthcoming
2. Meeting agenda planning: January 22 Exec-to-Exec (already sent out)
3. Meeting agenda planning: January 27 GRC (already sent out)

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

Director of Finance: LAWTON

Director of Internal/University Relations: ROBERTS

Director of External Relations: Vacant

Director of Student Life: Vacant

Executive Director: TURNER

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

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: February 2, 2026

Next GRC Meeting: January 27, 2025

SAGM: March 24, 2026

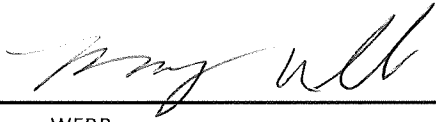
Office, Staff Scheduling: Reading week update here

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 11:35.

M/S: ROBERTS/LAWTON

CARRIED

X 

Rosemary WEBB
GSS Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX D – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Item 1 Current situation in Iran

From: [redacted]

Sent: Saturday, January 10, 2026 9:00 PM

To: President's Office UVic <pres@uvic.ca>

Cc: Lois Harder - Dean of Social Sciences <soscdean@uvic.ca>; GSS Office <gssoffice@uvic.ca>;

International Centre for Students <icsinfo@uvic.ca>

Subject: Current Situation in Iran

Dear UVic Administration,

I am writing to you as an Iranian student at the University of Victoria to express my deep concern regarding the current situation in Iran and to ask the university to be aware of its serious impact on Iranian students within the UVic community.

At this moment, widespread protests are taking place across Iran, with many citizens—particularly young people—peacefully demonstrating against the regime. In response, the government has shut down the Internet nationwide, severely limiting communication with the outside world. At the same time, there are credible and alarming reports of violent crackdowns, arrests, and the killing of innocent civilians, including youth and students.

For Iranian students studying abroad, including myself, this situation is extremely distressing. Many of us are unable to contact our families, do not know if our loved ones are safe, and are experiencing intense emotional and psychological strain. This directly affects our mental health, academic focus, and overall well-being.

I am writing not to place the university in a political position, but to respectfully ask UVic to acknowledge the human rights crisis and its impact on members of its community. Even simple actions—such as a public statement recognizing the situation, sharing mental health resources, or expressing solidarity with affected students—would mean a great deal to us and align with UVic's commitment to equity, human dignity, and global citizenship.

Universities play an important role in standing for human rights and supporting students during times of crisis. I sincerely hope UVic can recognize this moment and offer support to Iranian students who are going through an incredibly difficult time.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message and for your continued support of students.

Sincerely,
Sajjad [redacted]
[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: January 9, 2026 1:20 PM
To: International Centre for Students <icsinfo@uvic.ca>
Cc: GSS Office <gssoffice@uvic.ca>; UVSS Director of International Student Relations <internationalrep@uvss.ca>; UVSS Info Booth <uvssinfo@uvss.ca>
Subject: Request for Permission to Post and Distribute University-Wide Information on Iran

Dear International Centre, GSS, and UVSS teams,
I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing as both a University of Victoria alumna and a current staff member, and also as someone deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in Iran and its direct impact on many members of our campus community.

Students at UVic—particularly Iranian students and those with family and loved ones in Iran—are witnessing severe and ongoing human rights violations, including state violence, internet shutdowns, arrests, and the suppression of basic freedoms. Many students are affected emotionally, academically, and personally.

I am formally requesting permission to:

- Display informational posters on campus, and
- Distribute a university-wide informational email

with the purpose of informing students about what is currently happening in Iran and the actions of the regime, in a factual, educational, and non-violent manner.

Universities exist to support free expression, academic awareness, and the well-being of students—especially when global events directly impact members of our own community. Providing space for peaceful, informative awareness aligns with UVic's stated commitments to equity, human rights, inclusion, and student support.

This request is not about political advocacy, but about ensuring students are informed, supported, and not silenced when facing real and urgent humanitarian crises. Denying space for awareness would send a concerning message to affected students who already feel isolated and unheard.

I respectfully expect that UVic's student and international support bodies will stand with students by allowing appropriate and responsible information-sharing through posters and email communication.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and to working collaboratively to ensure our campus remains informed, compassionate, and supportive.

Sincerely,
Maryam [redacted]
[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: January 9, 2026 12:10 PM

To: GSS Office <gssoffice@uvic.ca>

Subject: Request for Support for Iranian Students During the Current Crisis

Dear GSS Officer,

I hope you are doing well.

I am writing as an Iranian student who is deeply distressed by the current situation in Iran. Over the past two days, the government has severely restricted internet access, leaving many of us unable to contact our families and friends or obtain reliable information about their safety. This uncertainty has caused significant emotional distress for Iranian students here.

I would sincerely appreciate any support you may be able to offer—whether by helping raise awareness within the university, sharing this situation with relevant offices, or connecting Iranian students with available resources or support networks. Any assistance or guidance during this difficult time would mean a great deal to us.

Thank you very much for your understanding, compassion, and time.

Best regards,

Hadi [redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: January 9, 2026 12:09 PM

To: GSS Office <gssoffice@uvic.ca>

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Awareness and Support for the People of Iran

Hello,

My name is Sepideh [redacted] ([redacted]). I am writing to you as an Iranian student deeply concerned about the severe humanitarian crisis currently unfolding in Iran. I kindly ask the university to help amplify awareness during this critical time.

In recent days, the situation in Iran has become extremely dire. Internet access has been shut down across cities; phone lines are being disrupted, and millions of people are being cut off from communication with the outside world. At the same time, ordinary people are courageously standing up for their most basic rights and freedoms, and many are risking their safety simply to have their voices heard. Civilians are facing immediate danger, and many innocent lives are being lost. Families and communities are suffering, and they cannot speak out or seek help as they are silenced both physically and digitally.

As students studying abroad, we simply ask for your solidarity and support in helping ensure that the voices of people in Iran are not erased. Raising visibility can make an important difference for those who are not able to speak for themselves.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message and for standing with the Iranian community in a moment where human lives are at stake. We appreciate any steps the university can take to support awareness, compassion, and advocacy for human rights.

Warm regards,
Sepideh [redacted]

Item 2: Provincial Survey on Student Perceptions of Sexual Violence On Teams

Item 3: Kyla actually got a response from government for once (re: funding review)

Not gonna lie, this is on here mostly because I feel like we all need a win.

From: Giddens.MLA, Kiel <Kiel.Giddens.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 2:08 PM

To: Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society <gssmgr@uvic.ca>

Subject: RE: Provincial Post-Secondary Sector Sustainability Review and Education in the North

Dear Ms. Turner,

Thank you very much for taking the time to write and for sharing your perspective and experience. I understand you said it was not necessary to reply, but I wanted to note that I appreciate your thoughtful comments regarding post-secondary education in the North and wanted to let you know that I have read your message carefully.

I generally agree with the concerns you have raised, particularly around the importance of accessible post-secondary and trades training for rural and remote communities. Your input is valuable, and I am grateful that you took the time to share it.

Thank you again for reaching out, and best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,



Kiel Giddens

MLA for Prince George-Mackenzie

Phone #- 250-612-4194

Email- Kiel.Giddens.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Address 102-1023 Central St West Prince George BC V2M 3C9

Fax #-250-612-4191

From: Kyla Turner - Executive Director, Graduate Students' Society

Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 3:58 PM

To: 'Rosalyn.Bird.MLA@leg.bc.ca' <Rosalyn.Bird.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; 'Sheldon.Clare.MLA@leg.bc.ca' <Sheldon.Clare.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; 'Kiel.Giddens.MLA@leg.bc.ca' <Kiel.Giddens.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

Cc: 'psfs.sustainability.review@gov.bc.ca' <psfs.sustainability.review@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Provincial Post-Secondary Sector Sustainability Review and Education in the North

Dear Mrs. Bird, Mr. Clare, and Mr. Giddens,

I'm writing today to address the Province's review of sector sustainability for post-secondary education lead by Don Avison, KC. I'm writing as a former Prince George resident, guest lecturer at UNBC and CNC, and concerned citizen. I hope you will understand that I am opting to use my professional email for this matter, as I have had cause to write Mr. Avison repeatedly in my role as the Executive Director for the UVic Grad Students' Society. I hope I can count on each of you to speak out against some elements of this review as it relates to post secondary education in the North.

I have spent more than thirteen years learning, teaching and working on our university campuses. Today, I write with the full weight of that experience to ask each of you to continue to fight for common sense changes for post-secondary education: ensuring that universities offer in-demand skills for today and tomorrow, keep BC at the forefront of research globally, invest in more trades training, and provide trades training to rural and remote learners. I hope each of you will bring these specific elements of your party's platform to the floor of the Legislature both before and after Mr. Avison issues his report in March.

I was gravely concerned when I read the questions Mr. Avison has been charged with posing to our post secondary institutions (PSIs), particularly those around consolidating institutions and the rumors that have since circulated about closing some college campuses.

I will not need to impress upon any of you the importance of local, accessible post-secondary education and training that the College of New Caledonia and University of Northern BC offer our northern communities. Most of my life has been spent in Northern BC, and I can say with certainty that there will not be financial capacity for post-secondary learners in our rural and remote communities to travel to population centres like Vancouver, Victoria, or even Prince George and Kamloops in order to seek their education. When training is not available locally, rural and remote learners go without. Should CNC, in particular, lose any of their satellite campuses, this would close doors for rural and remote learners to train for careers as diverse as bookkeeping, educational assistant, mechanics, and carpentry. This limits our young people's ability to obtain good, well-paying jobs and meaningful work while staying in (and contributing to!) their local community.

I hope I can count on each of you to speak to the need to maintain satellite campuses for colleges serving rural and remote communities across BC. Unlike the lower mainland, the difference between one satellite campus and another is not a matter of a lengthy bus or SkyTrain commute. It is the difference between obtaining career training or not. I hope that, like me, you will indicate that you are in favour of college campus closures ONLY in communities where transportation between campuses is accessible through public transit that runs at least hourly and does not result in a net loss of training programs available to BC learners. As your party's platform indicates, there are significant gaps in the availability of trades training and rural/remote learning opportunities that must be addressed for the sustainability of our Northern industries.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. Happy New Year! I wish you all more days of light, fluffy snow and less wet, heavy snow to shovel during this Winter.

With endless love for the North,

Kyla Turner (she/they)

Executive Director, University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Room 102, Halpern Centre for Graduate Students

Box 1700, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2

GSS front desk: 250-472-4543

<http://gss.uvic.ca>

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