

## University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

## Graduate Representative Council

## MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 27, 2026, 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:** vacant**Director of External Relations:** vacant**Executive Director (non-voting):** Kyla Turner**Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):**

Anthropology: <b>Semyon Drozdetchkii, Zenus Francis</b>	Ed. Psych & Leadership Studies: <b>Annie Wu</b>	Indigenous Education:	Political Science: <b>Max Backhaus; Cam Thiessen</b>
Art History and Visual Studies: <b>Melody Ray</b>	Electrical & Computer Engineering: <b>Victor Marrugat Arnal, Latifa Yusuf</b>	Indigenous Governance:	Psychology: <b>Jessica Li</b>
Biochemistry & Microbiology: <b>Liam Mihalynuk, Sophie Culos</b>	English: <b>Becca Andelyn</b>	Interdisciplinary Studies:	Public Administration: <b>Andrea Sadowski</b>
Biology: <b>Sydney Houston, Manuel Centeno Duque</b>	Environmental Studies: <b>Lauren Burton</b>	Law: <b>Chidimma Ike</b>	Public Health & Social Policy:
Business: <b>Ross Harry</b>	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed:	Mathematics & Statistics:	Social Dimensions of Health: <b>Marcela Zamudio, Maren Akyurek</b>
Chemistry: <b>Amelie Cazalais</b>	French and Francophone Studies:	Mechanical Engineering: <b>Bernardo Leite, Ama Ouchen</b>	Social Work: <b>Veronika Safina</b>
Child & Youth Care:	Geography: <b>Wyatt Maddox</b>	Medical Sciences/Neuroscience: <b>Frances Armas</b>	Sociology: <b>Jasmine Padam</b>
Civil Engineering:	Germanic & Slavic Studies:	Music: <b>Josie Hill</b>	Theatre:
Computer Science: <b>Chloë Farr</b>	Greek and Roman Studies: <b>Grace Niehaus</b>	Nursing:	Visual Arts: <b>Kylie Fineday</b>
Curriculum & Instruction: <b>Shina Khan</b>	Health Information Science: <b>Astrid Han</b>	Pacific and Asian Studies: <b>Ruyan Wang</b>	Writing:
Earth & Ocean Science: <b>Nadiya Shore, Lekima Yakuden</b>	Hispanic & Italian Studies:	Philosophy:	CUPE: <b>Cam Thiessen</b>
Economics:	History: <b>Kiran Gowdar</b>	Physics & Astronomy: <b>Maggie Berube, Laura Dufort-Gagnon</b>	Other Programs:

**Recorder** Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator**Guests:** Shahwaize Memon, Rempel, Lily Abells, Eleanore Lonsbrough, Fazila Mat**Regrets Received:** none**Absent without regrets:** Ross Harry, Grace Niehaus, Josie Hill, Maggie Berube, Kylie Fineday

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm by WEBB.

### 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 MARRUGAT.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/LEITE*

*CARRIED*

### TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: DUQUE

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

**GSS Membership:** As of January 12, 2026, the GSS has 2781 members. This number will be revised following the UVic add/drop deadline for the Feb GRC meeting.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 0 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 18

**Welcome to new GRC reps:** Welcome back everyone!

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## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

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### CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:15

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

WEBB reported that the end of December and January were particularly busy. They attended a meeting with Don Avison regarding the provincial post-secondary review.

WEBB has posted the related report on the GSS website.

WEBB and other student leaders advocated to maintain the 2% cap on annual fee increases.

WEBB noted that there will be an opportunity to drop in on Wednesdays at 3 p.m. for discussions on post-secondary funding.

WEBB shared that the operations of the Cove have been running well, particularly in terms of service delivery.

WEBB also confirmed that the GSS budget consultation process has been completed.

WEBB added that they met with the UVic executive team to discuss UVic's post-secondary funding from the BC government.

A student asked whether WEBB had been meeting with the UVSS. WEBB responded that they have not, but they have reached out to the UVSS board to explore meeting outside the legislature. They also noted that the GSS cannot formally take this on due to the board's reduced capacity.

TURNER noted that the GSS bylaws prevent the organization from joining the BC Student Alliance.

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

- Advocacy and Campaigns: met Jan 8 and did a minor debrief of PALAPARTY's resignation, welcomed a new committee member, and discussed the provincial post-secondary funding review. MARRUGAT wrote a letter regarding the funding review as an A&C rep. MARRUGAT and THIESEN drafted a template letter and email for GRC reps and graduate secretaries encouraging folks to get involved and submit feedback to the province. BC Transit recently updated their schedules, and THIESEN is looking into how many of our original transit asks have been met with these changes.
- Appeals: met and reviewed one appeal.
- Bylaw & Policy: did not meet. They had started work on a Constitutional review, but given the two board resignations, this task is outside the scope of what the board can support right now. We can look to take this work back up in Summer if still desired.
- Events: has planned February events including Valentine's card making, Lunar New Year's lantern making, and BYO book club.
- Finance: has consulted on the 2026-27 budget and completed all consultations with the board and staff. They will approve the draft budget in February for consideration at the Semi-Annual General Meeting in March.
- Stipend Review: LEITE has reviewed all submitted December board reports and circulated draft board report requirements and regulations for consideration at their February meeting.
- Electoral Officer: DROZDETCKII has reviewed and approved two campaign packages – one for board candidates and one for referendum campaigns. The referendum questions were approved by the board and circulated to GRC and the University Secretary to prepare the ballot. And of course DROZDETCKII will be running interim elections for Directors of Student Life and External Relations at GRC after 6pm.

#### 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:*

*Events: Kiran Gowdar*

*M/S: LIETE/MADDOX*

*CARRIED*

#### OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:35

LEAD: WEBB

Debrief December GRC meeting.

Questions/Concerns:

TURNER apologized to the GRC and expressed appreciation for the SRC committee. TURNER also noted that they had an opportunity to debrief with the SRC regarding advocacy concerns.

TURNER read Section 46 of the Societies Act, noting that unless the bylaws state otherwise, the section applies. “**Societies Act 46** (1)Unless permitted by the bylaws, a society must not pay to a director of the society remuneration for being a director... (4)Despite subsections (1) to (3), payment to a director by a society of remuneration or reimbursement authorized by the bylaws or this section is subject to any condition, limitation or prohibition on the payment provided for in the regulations.”

LIETE expressed appreciation for the SRC members and assured the GRC that the committee thoroughly reviews all reports

BACKHAUS suggested that if there is a warning in the reform process, it could help provide advance notice to board members regarding the stipend review committee.

TURNER responded that the stipend review committee has the authority to withhold payments, and that final approval is solely the responsibility of the GRC. TURNER added that elected GRC board members are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the GSS Bylaws.

TURNER also noted that the timing of the December meeting, occurring between the GRC meeting and the stipend review committee meeting, limits the ability to make timely decisions on stipends and reports.

#### Open Dialogue

ROBERTS stated that she sits on the accommodations group. She clarified that the group—not UVic—submitted the accommodation request and did not receive a satisfactory response. The group is now asking students who use accommodation services to attend the Board of Governors meeting on February 3.

BACKHAUS asked about the policy related to funding and suggested consulting MAX for clarification.

MADDOX explained that the supervisor policy does not allow supervisors to dictate when or where students must work. MADDOX encouraged students experiencing this issue to email him so he can propose language changes to the graduate supervision policy.

WU added comments regarding departmental grant usage at the recent EPLS event.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:55 PM

### MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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#### 1. INTERIM DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE ELECTION 6:00

Lead: DROZDETCKII

Reference: “BYLAW XI – VACANCIES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

11.1 Where an Executive office falls vacant prior to the normal expiry of the term of office, the position shall be filled during the next scheduled elections following the rules outlined in the Elections Bylaw.

11.2 Grad Council may appoint a member of the Society to fill the portion of the term remaining until the next scheduled elections for all Executive offices except Chair.”

DROZDETCKII issued three calls for nominations.

Nominations: Curran Chapman

With only one nomination received, DROZDETCKII held a ratification vote on CHAPMAN's nomination. CHAPMAN received a majority vote of confidence. WEBB, LAWTON, and ROBERTS as the GSS Board abstained from voting.

## 2. INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS ELECTION 6:10

Lead: DROZDETCKII

Reference: BYLAW XI as above

DROZDETCKII issued three calls for nominations.

Nomination – Lilly Abells and Lauren Burton

With two nominations received DROZDETCKII proceeded with a vote:

Lily Abells received 16 votes

Lauren Burton received 9 votes

WEBB, LAWTON, and ROBERTS as the GSS Board abstained from voting.

DROZDETCKII announced Lilly Abells to be the interim External Relations.

## 3. WORKPLACE SAFETY RE: BUILDING HEAT 6:20

Lead: CULOS

REFERENCE: Appendix B

For: Discussion

TURNER answered to BACKHAUS about workspace BC and heat policy. WorkSafe BC outside the scope of employer the workspace BC backs up the employer.

LAWTON added the rationale for most of the biological and chemistry reaction happen at room temperature.

MADDOX said how his work experience with the David Turpin building and how it lacks the ability to adjust the room temperature in the building.

Work group solidarity campaign working under the two hot to work campaign.

## STANDING ITEMS 6:35 PM

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### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:35

*MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2025, GRC meeting as amended presented*

*M/S: THIESSEN/ARNAL*

*Carried*

### 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 December board reports for Rosemary Webb, Maggie Lawton, Asma Noureen, and Sarah Roberts as presented.*

*M/S: Stipend Review Committee /ARNAL*

*CARRIED*

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:
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Council:
- Previously appointed committees:

Committee	Appointment Date	Rep Name
Senate Committee on Libraries		Bernardo Leite

Reps are encouraged to submit short written reports to [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) for inclusion in the minutes.

**Sarah ROBERTS**

FGS met to discuss the supervision policy review. The working group are developing possible strategies or documents to assist Graduate communications with their supervisors during the first term of study. This may be a checklist/guide or agreement, the format is still being decided upon and requests for additional feedback will be sent out in due course.

Presidential hiring committee are on schedule and are reviewing initial reports/candidates of interest from the recruiter.

**Rosemary WEBB**

Waiting for details

**Victor MARRUGAT-ARNAL**

**Senate committee for awards and appeals**

The committee received awards from the donor, and concerns were raised by the Senate regarding potentially discriminatory wording in the award description.

ROBERTS added that she served on the committee and confirmed that an EQHR representative had been invited. She noted that UVic uses standardized language developed by EQHR.

ARNAL added that the self-identification language in policy is currently being updated, particularly in areas related to Indigenous students.

Kyla is part of the educational and learning group and they are working on educating students, faculty and staff for the first year people on campus.

**Chloë FARR**

**GSS Rep for UVic Senate Committee for Academic Standards**

This month's SCAS meeting occurred this morning.

We were educated on the Indigenous Citizenship Declaration Policy to prepare us for future academic standards proposals that may be impacted by the accommodations and benefits afforded by declaring Indigenous citizenship to the university. There was nothing to vote on in relation to this.

We were presented with a proposal for a course titled "Core Writing & Research Requirement" to replace the existing "Academic and Technical Writing Requirement" course. This was a consultation session with no vote. Much of the discussion revolved around implementation. Unfortunately, implementation is outside of our purview. This led to a tangent of what our role is if we only agree that such a change will meet academic standards *if* the implementation follows what is intended. This was not completely resolved. That has been an ongoing issue throughout the meetings I've attended since October.

The course currently has exemptions for transfer students with appropriate course equivalent from their previous university and students admitted with above 86% in Grade 12 English. The proposed new program would not have the exemption for high school English grade, leaving transfer credit as the only exemption. This is because of an inflation of students admitted with grades above that threshold (increased 4x since between 2019-2021, 500 students to 2200 students, remaining states 2022 and 2023)

They are proposing allowing for program-specific implementations. ENGR currently exemplifies this, but the proposal is to enable more departments to implement this, with assistance from LTI and potentially the library who has not been consulted yet.

Competencies will extend to include Critical Thinking, Research, and Digital Literacy.

The idea is for it to be structured such that students can and will complete it in first year. Currently only 2/3 of the students are completing it in first year because A) they're not required to complete it to continue onto second year, and B) There is an extremely high waitlist preventing every student from being admitted.

Concerns raised are: supports for departments to implement and teach their own version, enforcement of departments completing the course with the required competencies. Another concern raised was the possibility of students not selecting UVic if they know that they must take this course. IE, if UBC didn't require it, would the student instead select UBC? I personally think this is a worrisome concern, as to me it implies that some SCAS members are more concerned about admissions numbers than the standards we will hold students to.

MADDOX asked FARR that they wanted to introduce this training into the current existing courses that is done by the instructors and not provide further funding. FARR replied that is not their intension and they will be working with Uvic.

WU EPLS Chair committee and EPLS equity committee

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: Chair of the Department of Chemistry*

*Member: Amelie Cazalais*

*M/S: BURTON/MADDOX*

*CARRIED*

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: WEBB

ARNAL mentioned that engagement event regarding review of sustainability of government.

NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: WEBB

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: WEBB

Next GRC Meeting: February 24, 2026

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of February 10, 2026
- Agenda to be posted: February 17, 2026

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

- Agenda to be posted: March 10, 2026

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes: GSS closed Feb 16-20 for Reading Week

ADJOURNMENT

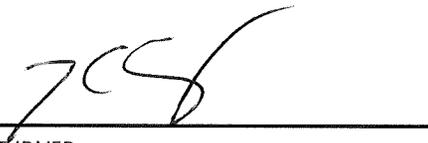
*MOTION: to adjourn the meeting.*

*M/S: LIETE/ARNAL*

*CARRIED*

X 

Rosemary WEBB  
GSS Chair 2025/26

X 

Kyla TURNER  
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX B: MEMBER SUBMITTED AGENDA ITEM

GRC AGENDA ITEM – SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

From: Sophie Culos [redacted]

Academic Unit/Committee: Biochemistry and Microbiology/Advocacy & Campaigns Committee

Date Submitted: December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Submitted to: Advocacy & Campaigns Committee / GRC

Meeting Date: January 27, 2026

How much time on the agenda are you requesting: 10 minutes

Item: (short title) Summer heat in Petch is devastating – What can we change as an institution?

\_\_\_\_\_ For Information Only

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ For Discussion Only

\_\_\_\_\_ For Decision

About the Issue: (Please provide a 1-2 sentence summary)

The problem: With rising summer temperatures, laboratories in the Petch building are often holding at temperatures exceeding 25°C and crossing thresholds for safe working conditions.

Conversations between affected students, supervisors, building staff, and the department chair have revealed institutional barriers that impede prioritizing safe working conditions in laboratories.

What I'm seeking: The backing of the GSS to push for policy changes that prioritize lab worker safety, data from other older laboratory buildings in the university, and clearer lines of communication between decision makers in Facilities Management and affected parties.

If Item is for Decision/Action, Please Propose a Motion:

Motion: BIRT\* \_\_\_\_\_

BIFRT \_\_\_\_\_.

\*BIRT = Be It Resolved That

\*\*BIFRT = Be It Further Resolved That

If there is pertinent information for this item please provide a url or hyperlink to documents uploaded to the GRC Connect:

Url: article written this summer in the Martlet: <https://martlet.ca/the-summer-heat-crisis-in-petch-needs-an-urgent-solution/>

Please note GRC agendas are required to be posted 7 days in advance. Please submit your item 14 days in advance so it can be reviewed and included by the Executive Board.

Please contact [gssgov@uvic.ca](mailto:gssgov@uvic.ca) if you would like any help with your submission.

