

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

(HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

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

EXECUTIVE INVITED:

Maggie LAWTON, Director of Finance;
Sarah ROBERTS, Director of Internal/University Relations;
Lillian ABELLS, interim Director of External Relations;
Curran CHAPMAN, interim Director of Student Life;
Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting);

REGRETS: Rosemary WEBB, Chair;

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 10:03am by LAWTON.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territory Acknowledgement offered by LAWTON. She went to the Horticulture gardens of the Pacific (HCP Gardens) this weekend. HCP labels all their plants with their Linnean scientific name, generally after the settler who “discovered” them. As part of decolonization, some scientific names for these plants have had the names of colonizers removed and replaced with more factual information about the function and form of the plant. This move also indicates that our non-human relatives are not owned by any person and should not bear their name.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.
M/S: ROBERTS/ABELLS
CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. BUDGET APPROVAL

Lead: LAWTON

Reference: 2026-27 Budget

For: Decision

Motion: to approve the 2026-27 Budget as presented and to recommend the budget for approval at the March 24, 2026 SAGM.
M/S: CHAPMAN/ROBERTS

Discussion:

LAWTON presented the final draft budget to the board and went over changes from the previous drafts (CPI, budget cuts) and a brief overview of the format of the budget.

CHAPMAN asked after details on the Events and Entertainment budget and TURNER review the budget line item break downs and sub-budgets.

ROBERTS asked after the capital budget, which TURNER and LAWTON reviewed.

LAWTON reviewed that, as a non-profit society, we budget on a revenue neutral (i.e. no deficit, no surplus) basis, which this budget has achieved.

The Board voted unanimously in support of the budget.

CARRIED

2. TASK REMINDER: SAGM REPORTS

Lead: TURNER

For: Discussion

Reminder for board members: your SAGM reports (identical format to AGM reports, but with information from October 2025-March 2026) are due March 10. These include reports from each GRC committee, as well as a board report written by the Chair. (Curran and Lily: Maggie and Sarah respectively can assist with drafting these reports.)

TASK: All board members to submit their SAGM reports to the 2026-03-24 SAGM folder on Teams by 9am on March 10.

3. PSI REVIEW LOBBYING

Lead: LAWTON

For: Discussion

LAWTON gave an overview of lobbying training provided by Graduates of Political Science (GPS) in preparation for a meeting with MLA Diana Gibson, Minister for Citizens’ Services in early March. GPS has put together a teams channel to gather information and strategize for this meeting.

4. LIMERICK FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH PROMOTING CAMPUSES

Lead: TURNER

Reference Doc: The Limerick Framework (See notes), Kyla’s very rough draft letter because she got bored.

For: Discussion

The Limerick Framework is the latest iteration of an international framework for developing “health promoting campuses.” It builds on the 2015 Okanagan Charter. UVic never signed onto the Okanagan Charter. Do we wish to request UVic adopt the Limerick Framework?

The Limerick Framework focuses on:

- Healthy planet – sustainability, equitable environmental action, honouring Indigenous knowledge and relationship with land
- Healthy places – encompassing the physical, social, cultural, digital and natural settings that shape how people learn, work, play, etc.

- Health people – taking a whole-person and community approach to advancing wellbeing while recognizing the intersecting impacts of determinants of health. Develop “relationship-rich” experiences with positive social interactions across campus while addressing prejudice and conflict.

Key principles of the Limerick Framework:

- Partnership - local, regional, national, global,
- Participation - involving everyone, especially in decision making, and
- Progress - take action that can be measured and celebrated.

Currently, UVic is supportive of both the Okanagan Charter and the Limerick Framework, but they have not committed to adoption. UVic is planning to develop a Student Well-being Strategy informed by the Charter, Framework, and the National Standard for Mental Health and Well-being for Post-Secondary Students.

Discussion:

TURNER gave an overview of the history of creating health promoting campuses strategies once per decade and the themes of the Okanagan Charter and Limerick Framework. ROBERTS asked after UVic’s history of signing onto the Okanagan Charter. TURNER gave her understanding of that history.

Decision: The GSS will ask UVic to formally adopt the Okanagan Charter and Limerick Framework.

TASK: LAWTON and ROBERTS to review a draft letter asking UVic to formally adopt the Okanagan Charter and Limerick Framework.

STANDING ITEMS PART 2

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2026 Executive Board Meeting as presented.

M/S: CHAPMAN/ABELLS

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: LAWTON shall register the Board for a “yes” side campaign on all referendum questions on or after February 9.

TURNER, ROBERTS and CHAPMAN to attend the Provincial Training on Referrals to Community Resources for Sexualized Violence Disclosures.

TURNER to submit the board’s feedback on the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy on February 6.

ROBERTS and ABELLS to follow up with EQHR re: consulting on the Equity Action Plan and circulate the survey.

Tasks revised:

TURNER and ROBERTS to attend the Provincial Training on Referrals to Community Resources for Sexualized Violence Disclosures once re-scheduled if they are available. CHAPMAN and ROBERTS noted that they have each repeatedly received similar training.

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

No committee appointments made.

G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Item 1: Faculty correspondence re: WUSC question in referendum

Motion: to receive the correspondence.
M/S: ROBERTS/CHAPMAN
CARRIED

H. AGENDA PLANNING, OR MEETING DEBRIEF

Reference: [Meeting Debrief Template](#)

- 1. Meeting debrief: None.
- 2. Meeting agenda planning: February 24 GRC
- 3. Meeting agenda planning: first thoughts on Mar 13 Operational Relations
 - i. Limerick Framework?
 - ii. Building heating?
 - iii. Equity action plan?
 - iv. Housing update?

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 is in Japan!

Director of Finance: LAWTON is busy prepping for lobbying to MLA Gibson with GPS and for the referendum campaigning.

Director of Internal/University Relations: ROBERTS is still very active on the Presidential Hiring Committee and meeting with the Student Wellness Centre.

Director of External Relations: ABELLS has been onboarding with ROBERTS. A&C met and it went well. They’ve met with EQHR re: UVic’s Equity Action Plan. They’ve met with the Ombudsperson –

Angus has been struggling with consistent student voices on his committee. They also got a response from the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, which they will forward to TURNER.

Director of Student Life: CHAPMAN events are going well. The tenant's rights workshop is still being planned. CHAPMAN is awaiting a reply. Events Committee meeting also went well.

Executive Director: TURNER is catching up from sick leave and working from home today to give the Union the building for their semesterly meeting. Reminder to the board that Neil is off this week.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Approve SAGM agenda, previous minutes, any bylaw amendments – March 3

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

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

Next Executive Meetings: March 3, 2026

Next GRC Meeting: February 24, 2025

SAGM: March 24, 2026

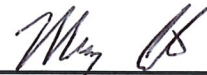
Office, Staff Scheduling:

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: to adjourn the meeting.

M/S:

CARRIED/FAILED

X 

Maggie LAWTON
GSS Vice Chair 2025-26

X 

Kyla Turner
GSS Executive Director

APPENDIX D – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Item 1: Faculty correspondence re: WUSC question in referendum

From: Maggie Lawton - GSS Director of Finance <gssfinan@uvic.ca>

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 9:38 AM

To: Scott Watson <sdwatson@uvic.ca>; GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Student Life <gsslife@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of External Relations <gssexternal@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Internal/University Relations <gssinternal@uvic.ca>

Subject: Re: GSS WUSC Referendum

Hi Scott,

Thank you for your interest in how the Graduate Students' Society fees are structured. We are glad to hear that you have opposed the underfunding of graduate students at Canadian universities - you will

understand then that graduate students are highly invested in how their fees are collected and distributed back to campus organizations, and how those organizations utilize graduate student fees. This is why we ensure any potential changes to our fee structure are voted on by our membership as a whole.

We hear your concerns for the students who may be affected by this fee referendum. If you know graduate students who are interested in campaigning, please refer them to our website <https://gss.uvic.ca/referendum/> and our Campaigning Guide: <https://gss.uvic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Referendum-Campaign-Package-2026.pdf>. As this guide indicates, **only currently registered graduate students and student organizations with currently registered graduate student members may campaign for or against these changes**. Graduate students must email our Elections Officer (vote@gss@uvic.ca) and register to campaign between **February 9, 9am—February 23, 4pm**. Campaigning by registered graduate students may only take place between **February 24—March 3**. Voting takes place online **March 3—March 6**.

As a faculty member, you are not permitted to campaign for nor vote in a graduate student fee referendum. However, you are more than welcome to inform graduate students that the GSS is holding a referendum and provide them with the above details. If graduate students have questions about our campaign guide and process, they should reach out to our Elections Officer (vote@gss@uvic.ca). If you are still a part of the UVic Local Committee for WUSC, and the committee contains an actively registered graduate student, that graduate student may register to form a referendum side at which point the UVic WUSC Committee may register as an endorser of that side.

If you would like to meet with members of our Executive Board to further discuss the history and context of our GSS fees, how the Finance Committee reviewed in detail the financial information provided to them, or if you have questions about advocacy targeted towards our members and your faculty members, please follow up with myself and our Executive Director Kyla Turner (gssmgr@uvic.ca) for scheduling.

Thanks,

Maggie

Maggie Lawton (she/her)
Director of Finance
University of Victoria
Graduate Student Society
gssfinan@uvic.ca
gss.uvic.ca

From: Scott Watson <sdwatson@uvic.ca>

Sent: February 5, 2026 4:41 PM

To: Maggie Lawton - GSS Director of Finance <gssfinan@uvic.ca>; GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; GSS

Director of Student Life <gsslife@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of External Relations <gssexternal@uvic.ca>;
GSS Director of Internal/University Relations <gssinternal@uvic.ca>
Subject: RE: GSS WUSC Referendum

Hi Maggie

Thank you for your reply and explanation for this decision. While I disagree with the rationale provided, I do appreciate your willingness to respond. I find it disheartening that the desire to save \$4 per term would outweigh taking the time to get a full understanding of the organization and the nature of the Covid induced budget surplus, but that is fair enough. It is also disturbing that assisting the world's most vulnerable people is not considered "reflecting Graduate Student interest and needs".

Let me suggest that a great many injustices have been carried out in the name of cost-neutrality - indeed, I have heard (and opposed) the exact same justification for the current underfunding of graduate students at Canadian universities.

I would be happy to meet with any students interested in discussing WUSC, even as it appears that the referendum is in motion and the only option is to mobilize in opposition. I regret to say that I intend to do so. While I am under no illusions that in the current anti-immigrant climate, any effort to continue supporting vulnerable immigrants will meet with success, I can't imagine not doing so. I'd be pleased to work with any members of the GSS board who also oppose cost-balancing a referendum on the backs of people in refugee camps.

Sincerely
Scott

Scott Watson
Professor
Department of Political Science,
University of Victoria
sdwatson@uvic.ca

I acknowledge and respect the lək'wəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day

From: Maggie Lawton - GSS Director of Finance <gssfinan@uvic.ca>
Sent: February 5, 2026 3:59 PM
To: Scott Watson <sdwatson@uvic.ca>; GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Student Life <gsslife@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of External Relations <gssexternal@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Internal/University Relations <gssinternal@uvic.ca>
Subject: Re: GSS WUSC Referendum

Hi Scott,

Thank you for the candid message. Please understand that the GSS board did not propose these changes lightly, and try to keep the best interest of our membership at heart.

To provide more context as to our decision making, the GSS reached out to WUSC regarding this referendum in June, September, October, and November 2025 requesting information relating to the planning of this fee referendum. We unfortunately did not hear back until December 5, at which point we were informed they were operating with a multi-year budget surplus. The decisions our Finance Committee made on this fee referendum were based on the financial situation of all organizations for which we are taking fees to referendum.

The GSS is seeking to increase funding to the Constituency Groups, including the Society for Students with a Disability, the Native Student Union, Students of Colour Collective and Gender Empowerment Centre. These groups have been under significant financial strain for years. GSS members directly work with, for and benefit from the Constituency Groups that address a wide range of social and economic inequities on campus. Due to the current cost of living crisis, which graduate students are particularly impacted by, we have made every effort to reduce other fees to offer the membership a cost-neutral fee referendum.

For more information on this fee and the other changes proposed in this referendum, feel free to peruse our publicly-available FAQ: <https://gss.uvic.ca/referendum/>

Unfortunately, the referendum has already been announced, and no changes can be made at this point. However, graduate students and student organizations with graduate student members may register to campaign for or against these changes. Information on campaigning can also be found on our website.

We would be happy to meet to discuss this issue further.

Thanks,
Maggie Lawton (she/her)
Director of Finance
University of Victoria
Graduate Student Society
gssfinan@uvic.ca
gss.uvic.ca

From: Scott Watson <sdwatson@uvic.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 2:39:05 PM
To: GSS Chair <gsschair@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Student Life <gsslife@uvic.ca>; Maggie Lawton - GSS Director of Finance <gssfinan@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of External Relations <gssexternal@uvic.ca>; GSS Director of Internal/University Relations <gssinternal@uvic.ca>
Subject: GSS WUSC Referendum

Dear members of the GSS board,

I am emailing with regard to the current GSS referendum that proposes an 80% funding cut for WUSC. As a former faculty advisor for WUSC here on campus, I am appalled that the GSS would seriously consider cutting funding for a program that increases accessibility to post-secondary education for the world's most vulnerable people, and that enhances diversity on this campus. While I am not sure of the motivation for this cut, it seems to reflect the current political trend that generates hostility to international students and immigration to Canada more generally. I am surprised that the GSS would lean into this type of politics.

Saving grad students \$4 a term, less than a cup of coffee, will mean one or two fewer students resettled at UVic each year. One vulnerable international student denied a post-secondary education to save \$4 – I cannot imagine the moral economics needed to justify such a calculation.

As for the matter that few of these students come over as grad students – WUSC works with the world's most vulnerable populations – most of whom were forced to flee their homes as children and have suffered incredible loss and hardship. They have grown up and been educated in refugee camps – where attaining a secondary education is extremely challenging and completing an undergraduate degree is impossible. Justifying a cut to this program partially because few grad students enter through this program exhibits a shocking degree of blindness to one's own privilege and a complete lack of empathy.

I would ask that the GSS seriously reconsider this initiative.

Sincerely

Scott Watson

Professor

Department of Political Science,

University of Victoria

sdwatson@uvic.ca

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