

*University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society*  
**Graduate Representative Council**

MINUTES

LOCATION: GSS BOARD ROOMS OR ZOOM: [LINK](#)

FEBRUARY 24, 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:** Curran Chapman

**Director of External Relations:** Lily Abells

**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</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 Mihalyuk, 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 Harryh</b>	Exercise Science, Phys. & Health Ed:	Mathematics & Statistics:	Social Dimensions of Health: <b>Marcela Zamudio, Maren Akyurek</b>
Chemistry:	French and Francophone Studies:	Mechanical Engineering: <b>Bernardo Leite, Ama Ouchen</b>	Social Work:
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>Made Caniapasis (Cania) Tatiana Popova</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:** Emily and Eleanore Lonsbrough

**Regrets Received:** Rosemary Webb (Chair), Kylie Fineday (Visual Arts), Manuel Centeno Duque (Biology),  
**Absent without regrets:** Shina Khan, Lauren Burton, Grace Niehaus, Kiran Gowdar, Frances Armas, Josie Hill, Clara Troje and Veronika Safina

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

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CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

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

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 ROBERTS. She spoke to the colonial contexts of media criticism, particularly critique media produced by colonized communities, given her field of study, Art History and Visual Studies.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:05

*MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: Executive Board/DROZDETCKII*

*CARRIED*

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:10

Today's timekeeper was: THIESSEN.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:12

**GSS Membership:** As of January 29, 2026, the GSS has 2896 members.

**Meeting Quorum:** With 3 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 17.

**Welcome to new GRC reps:** Made Caniapasis (Cania) & Tatiana Popova for Pacific and Asian Studies.

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## REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

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CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:15

LAWTON updated GRC on the goings on of the Executive Board. The Board approved the 2026-27 draft budget for ratification at the Semi-Annual General Meeting on March 24. They have onboarded Lily and Curran to their interim roles as well as worked on recruiting for the 2026-27 Board. As we will discuss further below, board nominations closed yesterday and voting will take place March 4-6.

The Board also submitted feedback to UVic on revisions to the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy. They also requested that UVic formally adopt the Limerick Framework and Okanagan Charter for health promoting campuses.

Due to budget constraints in the Provinces Budget 2026, the long-anticipated UVic grad dorm has been postponed until at least 2034. The GSS will continue to work with UVic to advocate for the project to be undertaken sooner than that. LAWTON to provide further updates on the Provincial post-secondary institutions (PSIs) funding review below.

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

- **Advocacy and Campaigns:** ABELLS and CULOS reported that A&C continues to work on the PSI funding review (more below) and seeking access to student accommodation information for teaching assistants. MARRUGAT and YUSUF have began work gathering information to support a BC Transit service improvement campaign. ABELLS noted the the Victoria Regional Student Transit Commission currently includes one student seat rotating between Camosun and UVic, and they are recruiting exclusively through UVSS. The 2026-27 board will take this back to the Victoria Regional Transit office to advocate for our own permanent seat on the Commission. A&C is also looking into survey platforms for member surveys, in advance of a possible constitutional review. CULOS also reported on further information gathered regarding building heat.
- **Appeals:** LAWTON reported that Appeals committee reviewed all submitted appeals for this month.
- **Bylaw & Policy:** WEBB reported that BPC has initiated reviews of Bylaws 10.3-4 (Executive board stipends) and 12.4 (Executive board leaves of absence) to add clarity requested by Stipend Review Committee and GRC following a leave of absence from the 2025-26 Board.
- **Events:** CHAPMAN and DROZDETCKII reported that all events for February and March have been planned, including valentines card making, Lunar New Year crafts, and forthcoming the BYO Book Club, trivia, etc. March events will include ice skating, tea party, house plant swap, end of term party, etc. Events Committee is currently working on planning April events, potentially including another pub crawl and plant pot painting, etc. They have also discussed potential budget restrictions for the 2026-27 budget. Events Committee wants to prioritize orientation events. CHAPMAN is corresponding with external parties to bring a housing rights workshop to campus.
- **Finance:** LAWTON reported that Finance Committee reviewed the completed draft 2026-27 budget and sent it for ratification at the Semi-Annual General Meeting on March 24.
- **Stipend Review:** LEITE reported that SRC reviewed board reports for January, the Electoral Officer stipends for 2025-26, and a new guidance document for Board members on completing their monthly reports. SRC will meet with the Board tomorrow, Feb 25, to discuss new guidelines for reports.
- **Electoral Officer:** DROZDETCKII reported on the close of nominations yesterday. All vacant seats will be elected at the Semi-Annual General Meeting on March 24. Likewise, all uncontested seats will be acclaimed at the SAGM. There is a Yes side campaign to all referendum questions supported by the Board. There is a No side campaign to the WUSC referendum question supported by WUSC.

## 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:*

*Advocacy and Campaign: Made Caniapasis (Cania)*

*Events: Tatiana Popova*

*Checks and Balances (Appeals, Finance, Stipend Review): Cam Thiessen*

*M/S: LEITE/CULOS*

*CARRIED*

OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:35

LEAD: WEBB

The Graduates of Political of Science (GPS) raised a concern relating to the WUSC referendum. BAKHAUS presented a written statement. TURNER asked DROZDETCKII to provide guidance on campaigning during the meeting. DROZDETCKII noted that this meeting itself is not a campaign event and not all board candidates are in the room so we cannot present a fair campaign platform in the meeting. TURNER will bring copies of the Referendum Campaign Guide to the room during the break.

ROBERTS and MARRUGAT advertised the Global Communities mentorship and the conversation partnership program, which tends to see less turn out among grad students than undergrads. Grad students are six times more likely than undergrads to be international students, but there are not always enough grad student mentors to meet demand at the International Centre for Students. Folks interested in mentorship can email [gcmmentor@uvic.ca](mailto:gcmmentor@uvic.ca).

BREAK – 5 MINUTES –5:55 PM

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MEETING NEW BUSINESS

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1. REFERENDUM/ELECTION IS ONGOING! 6:00

Lead: LAWTON

Reference: [gss.uvic.ca/referendum](https://gss.uvic.ca/referendum) and [gss.uvic.ca/election](https://gss.uvic.ca/election)

For: Discussion

This is not a campaign event – we are reminding y'all to vote March 4-6! Campaigning runs now until March 3, please expect to see campaigning on campus and engage with your candidates and referendum sides!

There are two unfilled board seats that will be elected at the Semi-Annual General Meeting (SAGM) on March 24, 5-7pm. Interested parties can nominate themselves by emailing [votegss@uvic.ca](mailto:votegss@uvic.ca) until 4pm on March 23 or in person at the SAGM.

2. PSI REVIEW UPDATES 6:05

Lead: LAWTON/WEBB

For: Discussion – GSS Board to give updates on work ongoing on this major advocacy project.

The GPS arranged a lobbying meeting with Minister for Citizen's Services and local MLA, Diana Gibson. They've included the GSS board in this meeting on March 3. We will report to GRC on how that meeting goes.

3. DEPARTMENT GRANTS 6:10

Lead: LAWTON

Reference: [2025-26 Department Grant Application Form](#)

For: Discussion

The Finance Committee has raised concerns about the equitable distribution of Department Grant funding. The GSS must make budget cuts this year, which will impact Department Grants. TURNER

recommends removing top-ups, as the funds we need to cut are equal to the average top-up distribution. We'd like to hear from GRC about their thoughts on how we can ensure that this program continues to meet the following objectives:

"The GSS Department Grant is intended to support UVic graduate students in autonomously organizing events, activities, and projects of interest to fellow department members. It is also an important engagement tool for the GSS in meeting our own purposes of ensuring graduate student representation across UVic campus. Please note, that we will strictly enforce Graduate Representative Council (GRC) attendance regulations to ensure that the departments we support are actively engaged in GSS governance and advocacy."

Discussion:

The current grant system is working for Political Science per BAKHAUS. THIESSEN raised the concern whether enforcing GRC attendance were antithetical to the "autonomous" function of departments. TURNER noted that the GSS has a constitutional mandate to run GRC but no mandate to provide funding. The Department Grant is our primary incentive model for our GRC volunteers. MARRUGAT noted that the GRC is the official representation of grad students at UVic.

WU noted that she applied for funding for AGES. AGES has had challenges with multiple applications under their name.

FARR asked if this was a BPC issue. It is an operational issue, not a policy one.

LAWTON presented a proposed restructure of the current funding caps on a enrolment based model. FARR and LEITE are in support. ROBERTS noted that smaller departments often have less funding available to them. TURNER provided a history of how the previous pendulum swing between funding on an enrolment based model: the flat rate has been seen as an equity provision for smaller departments and enrolment based models have been seen as supporting each individual grad student more equitably.

Finally, LAWTON noted that with the budget restrictions anticipated in 2026-27, we do not expect to allow top-ups.

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## STANDING ITEMS 6:35 PM

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

*MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the January 27, 2026 GRC meeting with minor corrections as provided.*

*M/S: BAKHAUS/LEITE*

*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 be approve the January board reports for Rosemary Webb, Sarah Roberts, and Maggie Lawton*

*M/S: Stipend Review Committee / CULOS*  
**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.

LAWTON reported that the Re-Appointment Committee for the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies is moving to review Dean Robin Hicks for a second five-year term.

ROBERTS reported that CAL will implement a centralized accommodation system, rather than processing through OREM.

DROZDETCKII reported from the Senate Committee on Orientation – there is no yet agreement on the committee on how to proceed.

FARR reported from the Senate Committee on Academic Standards – non-thesis option and oral defense for GSCS students were considered.

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.

No committee appointments made.

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:55

LEAD: LAWTON

NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: LAWTON

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: LAWTON

Next GRC Meeting: April 28, 2026

- Please have any potential agenda items, with supporting materials, to the Executive Board for consideration, in advance of April 14, 2026
- Agenda to be posted: April 21, 2026

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

- Agenda to be posted: March 10, 2026

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

ADJOURNMENT

*MOTION: to adjourn the meeting.*  
*M/S: LEITE/BAKHAUS*  
*CARRIED*

X 

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Maqie LAWTON  
GSS Vice Chair 2025-26

X 

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Kyla Turner  
GSS Executive Director

