

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Executive Board

(HYBRID) MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 5, 2026

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

**EXECUTIVE INVITED:**

Violet CIESLIK, Chair;  
Hannah BROWN Director of Internal/University Relations;  
Eleanore TODD, Director of Finance;  
Victor MARRUGAT, Director of External Relations;  
Manuel CENTENO DUQUE, Director of Student Life;  
Kyla TURNER, Executive Director (non-voting);

**GUESTS:** Petranella Daviel, Communications and Events Coordinator

STANDING ITEMS PART 1

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A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 11:08 by CIESLIK. TURNER reminded the board to submit their monthly stipend reports. Chloe Farr, Chair of Stipend Review, likewise sent a reminder on formatting.

B. TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Territory Acknowledgement offered by CIESLIK. She is currently in the Okanagan, the traditional territory of Nsyilxcn peoples. She spoke about learning more about the lands she's been visiting for many years and supporting local Indigenous tourism and cultural centres.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Motion: to approve the agenda as presented.*

*M/S: CENTENO/BROWN*

*CARRIED*

NEW BUSINESS

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1. WEDNESDAY COFFEE ATTENDANCE REMINDER!

Lead: CIESLIK

For: Discussion

Everybody come to Wednesday Coffee on August 19 since we have a lunch meeting and board meeting back to back to back. Dress nice, we're gonna take pictures!

DISCUSSION: CENTENO and CIESLIK also are planning a "Meet the Board" Wednesday Coffee on September 16. Additionally, all-board meet and greets will include Pancake Breakfast on Sept 9 and the Cuts Suck information session/tabling on Sept 23.

**TASK:** Each board member to draft a bullet-point, personal and fun “who/what/where/how” guide for our members contacting the board and submit to DAVIEL by the Aug 19. DAVIEL to create a section for the GSS website for this materials. Format requests: bullet points of who/what/when/how and make it fun!

**TASK:** DAVIEL to post the board’s “who/what/when/how” introductions as single-board member social media posts.

## 2. DEPARTMENT ORIENTATION SIGN UP OPEN NOW!

Lead: TURNER and DAVIEL

Reference: [Orientations Timetable September 2026.xlsx](#)

For: Decision

The board leads department-level orientations across campus throughout August-September. Petri is responsible for booking these events with department staff and generating a schedule for the board. Orientation speaking slots generally vary between 5-15 minutes. The board should add their names to the department orientations they are taking on. Petri will then connect you directly with the department staff who are arranging grad orientation events (in case of any room rebookings, etc.) Board members should present (at least) the following information to newly arriving grad students:

- i. The GSS and Grad House exist and are rad (i.e. “we are your democratically elected representatives on campus. We exist to advocate for/with you and to improve your grad school experience.”)
- ii. Reach out to the GSS staff for UPASS, Modo Car Share, and Department Grant questions
- iii. Reach out to Alumo for health and dental questions
- iv. Get involved! (i.e. promote events, EGRS, and GRC)

Kyla and Petri will prepare orientation grab bags for the board with bookmarks, buttons, event posters, etc. for the board to bring around to orientation events. Please see Kyla for re-stocking throughout August/September.

Petri makes us amazing powerpoints that will include QR codes for important items. She will send the powerpoint slides around after August 21.

**TASK:** All board members to sign up for 5-10 department orientations events before August 20.

**TURNER** to provide an overview of how to deliver an orientation at a forthcoming board meeting.

## 3. PSI REVIEW RESPONSE

Lead: MARRUGAT

Reference: [Campaign Training Presentation-July 2026.key.pdf](#), see also <https://www.cutssuck.ca/>

For: DISCUSSION

What action plan does the board want to put in place in the event that the Province releases their sector review for PSIs? Alliance of BC Students has put together a “Cuts Suck! Fix Education!” campaign against the ongoing sector wide impacts for funding gaps.

Discussion: MARRUGAT gave an overview of BC-FS Cuts Suck! Fix Education!, which is not explicitly linked to the PSI review undertaken in the last year, but calls for increasing post secondary funding from the Province to combat the number of program/faculty/support cuts happening on campuses across BC due to the chronic underfunding of PSIs and the collapse of international tuition following the IRCC changes to the student visa program that began in 2024.

BC-FS would provide their campaign materials to us for free and we could use them throughout orientations, which will include postcards, mailing lists, etc. MARRUGAT also asked if the board was interested in delivering the postcards in person to the office of the Minister of Post-Secondary Education. TURNER recommended booking a meeting with the Minister in mid-October once she's returned from maternity leave and once the legislature is back in session to ensure she's present. CENTENO recommended hosting this as an event to bring more students with us. MARRUGAT, CENTENO and BROWN recommended collaborating with UVSS for both tabling on campus and presenting the materials at the Legislature.

**TASKS: CENTENO and MARRUGAT to continue conversations with BC-FS and ask about how to access their materials (for example we don't have a photo printer), etc.**

**BROWN to share media contacts for the same.**

**TURNER to book media relations training with UVSS and UVic (circulate whentomeet in advance)**

**TURNER to reach out to Sunner's office to request a mid-October meeting date.**

## STANDING ITEMS PART 2

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### D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Motion: to approve the minutes from the July 22, 2026 Executive Board Meeting as presented.*

*M/S: BROWN/CENTENO*

*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 revoked or abandoned:**

### F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

*No committee appointments.*

### G. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (APPENDIX C)

Item 1: Information only: Ombudsperson Annual Report (see also: <https://uvicombudsperson.ca/reports/>)

Item 2: UBC-O introduction

Item 3: Follow up from prior meeting – Palestinian support letter

Item 4: Campus Transportation Strategic Plan engagement

Item 5: Request for support letter re: new apartment building proposal, see also pdf of proposal

Item 6: Third Party Elections Advertising (appendix C, see also: <https://elections.bc.ca/docs/lecfa/guide-for-local-elections-third-party-sponsors-in-bc.pdf>)

*Motion: to receive the correspondence.*

*M/S:*

*CARRIED/FAILED*

**Kyla's suggested TASKS:**

**Item 1: none. Everybody can read the 2025 Ombudsperson report at their leisure.**

**Item 2: MARRUGAT to meet with UBC-O GSA for introductions and campaign coordination**

**Item 3: Board to sign the Palestinian support advocacy letter.**

**Item 4: BROWN and MARRUGAT to attend campus transportation strategic planning engagement**

**Item 5: CENTENO and BROWN to attend Saanich council meeting on August 11 at 7pm at Saanich City Hall to speak in favour of the proposed housing project at 1805 Feltham.**

**Item 6: TURNER to register the GSS as a Third Party Elections Advertiser to allow the GSS to make fair comment on candidates/platforms/parties during the Fall 2026 local elections.**

**MARRUGAT to check in with Allie McFarland at UVSS ([allisonmcfarland@uvic.ca](mailto:allisonmcfarland@uvic.ca)) about the local election debate planning (which municipalities?)**

#### H. AGENDA PLANNING, OR MEETING DEBRIEF

Reference: [Meeting Debrief Template](#)

1. Meeting debrief: July 28 GRC – how did it go?
  - i. Feedback review will happen next board meeting
2. Meeting agenda planning: September 16 Operational Relations
  - i. Item: Planned power outage on August 8 – notice to GSS
    1. Description: UVic is doing work on their electrical grid that requires 8 hours of continuous power loss. The GSS was not included in stakeholder engagements on this issue and therefore received three weeks notice (or less) to arrange food storage for stock in the Grad House. GSS requesting inclusion on future stakeholder engagements for planned maintenance impacting electricity, gas and water. Issue previously addressed to Jim Forbes and Melissa Donaldson, July 31. Melissa responded same day. Item submitted without need for further discussion, just ensuring that operational related concerns go through Operational Relations.
  - ii. Item: Annual Plan presentation

#### I. LOBBYING REPORTS

Reports due at the first meeting of every month.

#### J. ANNUAL PLAN CHECK-IN:

## CLOSING ITEMS

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### EXECUTIVE INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATES/QUESTIONS

Chair: CIESLIK had one-on-one meetings with the board and working through BPC projects.

Director of Finance: TODD Finance Committee is consulting on how to plan the 2027 Spring Health and Dental fee referendum (i.e. planning consultations throughout Fall). TODD will reconnect with Vancity re: our questions about ethical investing.

Director of Internal/University Relations: BROWN attended Accessibility Committee meeting. A major theme was accessibility of Residence. There will be a forthcoming consultation for the Accessibility Committee on the process that Res uses for the priority consideration process and the plan to end the priority consideration process for grad students and replace it with something as yet unknown.

Director of External Relations: MARRUGAT is working on the transport representation issue. The current rep, from Camosun, is very active on the advisory committee. For building temperature safety, Victor has reviewed all feedback. WorkSafeBC recommends signage, training and, above 28 degrees, mandated breaks, be present for heat-safety. MARRUGAT to present this material to Jim DUNSDON along with CIESLIK the week of August 17. MARRUGAT and CIESLIK will meet with UBC-Vancouver AMS on Friday afternoon.

Director of Student Life: CENTENO DUQUE met with BC-FS with MARRUGAT and is progressing on the Cuts Suck advocacy campaign. The last events committee meeting is on Friday, and they are still seeking volunteers for September orientation events. CENTENO met with Robin Hicks last week and Grad Student Appreciation Week and Excellence in Graduate Research Symposium. FGS has offered an AI workshop for GSAW. Hicks recommends seeking judges for EGRS through the FGS Council on September 16 and in October. Funding for GSAW and EGRS has been secured. TURNER to circulate initial request for judges to the Grad Advisor listserv.

Executive Director: TURNER is back!

### NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Aug 19 – Review GRC feedback

Aug 19 – Orientation overview

### UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT DATES

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

Next Executive Meetings: August 19, 2026 – dress up, we're taking pictures!

Next GRC Meeting: September 22, 2026

AGM: October 27, 2026

Office, Staff Scheduling: Neil BARNEY is on vacation August 3-7.

### ADJOURNMENT

*Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 12:40.*

*M/S: BROWN/TODD*

CARRIED

X 

Violet CIESLIK  
GSS Interim Chair 2026-27

X 

Kyla TURNER  
GSS Executive Director

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## APPENDIX C – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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### Item 1: Ombudsperson Annual Report

Available online: <https://uvicombudsperson.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2025-Ombuds-Report.pdf>

### Item 2: UBC-O Introductions

From: Graduate Students' Association <[gsa.ubco@gmail.com](mailto:gsa.ubco@gmail.com)>

Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2026 3:38 AM

To: GSS Office <[gssoffice@uvic.ca](mailto:gssoffice@uvic.ca)>

Subject: Introduction of GSA at UBC Okanagan

Dear GSS Board,

We hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out, on behalf of our entire Board, to introduce myself in the capacity of Executive Director of Outreach & Advocacy of — and you may have heard — the (relatively) new Graduate Student Association at UBC Okanagan. After a referendum in October 2025, the GSA was officially formed as the representing body for graduate students on our campus.

As we continue to establish our organization, we recognize how important it is for us to form good relationships with the GSS, and other grad student unions in BC. We have a lot to learn, and we look forward to following your example of establishing successful grad student representation at UVic. We also look forward to advocating alongside you on behalf of grad students, and appreciate your leadership and guidance as we hopefully enter this process of cross-campus collaboration.

I hope this email can serve as a starting point for us to connect and get to know each other and our organizations better. We are happy to set up an introductory meeting, e.g. between our Boards, if that would be something you would be interested in.

We look forward to connecting further; until then, we wish you a great (and hopefully somewhat restful) summer!

In solidarity,  
Fabiola & the GSA Board

### Item 3: Follow up from correspondence from July 22 board meeting:

**From:** Louisa Calame <[lcalame@pssar.org](mailto:lcalame@pssar.org)>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 9, 2026 8:41 AM

**To:** GSS Chair <[gsschair@uvic.ca](mailto:gsschair@uvic.ca)>; GSS Director of Student Life <[gsslife@uvic.ca](mailto:gsslife@uvic.ca)>; [ssexternal@uvic.ca](mailto:ssexternal@uvic.ca)<[ssexternal@uvic.ca](mailto:ssexternal@uvic.ca)>; GSS Office <[gssoffice@uvic.ca](mailto:gssoffice@uvic.ca)>

**Cc:** [advocacy@pssar.org](mailto:advocacy@pssar.org) <[advocacy@pssar.org](mailto:advocacy@pssar.org)>

**Subject:** URGENT CALL FOR ACTION: Immediate Intervention for Admitted Gazan Graduate Students

Dear University of Victoria GSS Chair Cieslik, Director of Student Life Duque, and Director of External Relations Arnal,

I hope this message finds you all well.

My name is Louisa Calame and I am reaching out on behalf of the Palestinian Students and Scholars at Risk (PSSAR) network, and the 130 Palestinian students waiting on their study permits to come to Canada. PSSAR is an organization dedicated to helping highly achieved graduate students and scholars in Gaza find opportunities to study in Canadian universities.

We are writing to you today because the University of Victoria is one of the 30 Canadian universities where Palestinian graduate students from Gaza have been admitted, yet remain unable to begin their studies due to prolonged and ongoing visa delays from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). All of these students have already overcome immense barriers to access higher education, and have been accepted to Canada's most prestigious graduate programs—many with *full scholarships*—on the basis of demonstrated and outstanding merit.

These students remain barred from travelling to Canada for their studies because of IRCC's negligence. Many are trapped by the biometric requirement, while even those who *have* managed to obtain and submit biometric data have been waiting for up to *two years* to hear back from IRCC. As a result, these students not only face the threat of losing their admissions, but also are held under life-threatening conditions in Gaza.

**We need your urgent support in signing a collective letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney,** advocating for these students who have been admitted to Canadian institutions but continue to face long and dangerous delays in receiving their study permits.

This letter is part of an ongoing advocacy campaign that has been active for almost two years. It aims to demonstrate the widespread support from academic communities nationwide in giving these students a fair and equitable chance at education. The campaign has already garnered widespread support from over 900 academics endorsing the campaign's demands to Minister Diab, and from advocates, professors, University presidents, and Members of Parliament across Canada—but the federal government and the IRCC still refuse to take action. **Continued pressure has never been more important than it is right now.**

These Palestinian graduate students admitted to the University of Victoria should have been on campus long ago. As graduate students, and these Palestinian students' potential colleagues, your voices carry significant weight. By signing this letter, you are sending a strong, unified message to policymakers about the urgent need to expedite study permit processing for these students.

We kindly ask you to take a moment to review and endorse the full letter using the Google form attached [HERE](#).

In addition to asking for your formal endorsement of our campaign, this form also includes a request to send a representative from PGSS to speak in support of the campaign at the PSSAR press conference in

August. This public demonstration of support is particularly powerful in ensuring that these students are given the opportunity they have worked so hard to earn.

If you have any questions about this letter or participating in the press conference, please contact [advocacy@pssar.ca](mailto:advocacy@pssar.ca). Thank you for your time, solidarity, and commitment to equitable access to education.

All the best,

Louisa Calame, *on behalf of the PSSAR Network*

**Item 4: Campus Transportation Strategic Plan engagement**

**From:** Alannah Rodgers <alannahrodgers@uvic.ca>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 28, 2026 10:38 AM

**To:** Dale Robertson - UVSS General Manager <uvssgm@uvss.ca>; Kyla Turner <kylaturner@uvic.ca>

**Subject:** Campus Transportation & Mobility Plan - Internal Engagement Opportunity

Hi Dale and Kyla,

I hope this email finds you well.

The Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability, in partnership with Parking and Commuter Services, is in the early stages of developing a *Campus Transportation and Mobility Plan*. To inform the plan, we are looking to connect with partners across campus to help shape its direction.

We understand that transportation and commuting affect everyone differently and come with unique challenges and perspectives. Our goal with this policy framework is to build a collaborative, balanced approach that thoughtfully supports our community's diverse daily needs while navigating our shared sustainability and regional planning environments.

Because this strategy directly touches on campus access and daily operational dynamics, gathering early insights from key institutional partners is vital to making sure the plan is practical and supportive. We want to ensure that our updated policy framework is fully informed by your team's perspectives on community barriers to sustainable commuting.

We are looking to have a 30-minute meeting with you or a relevant staff member by the end of summer to discuss how we can best integrate your department's insights into this strategic plan? Alternatively, we could look to host a presentation and discussion with the UVSS/GSS committee in September. Please let me know your recommended approach to engage with UVSS/GSS.

Thank you very much for your time.

Alannah Rodgers, RPP MCIP

Campus Planner

Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability



University of Victoria

**Item 5: Request for support letter re: new apartment building proposal**

**Notes from Kyla** – Mark called for a follow up: the barriers faced by the project include height, parking, and immediate neighbourhood backlash. No units are designated as affordable due to long development process.

**From:** Mark Holland <[mark@westplanconsulting.ca](mailto:mark@westplanconsulting.ca)>

**Sent:** July 29, 2026 10:56 AM

**To:** GSS Office <[gssoffice@uvic.ca](mailto:gssoffice@uvic.ca)>

**Subject:** Opportunity to support housing diversity and affordability near UVic

☺ Good morning:

I am working with a team that is proposing a new rental housing project near UVic – at the intersection of Feltham and Tyndall Rds – and I touched base with the UVic planners and they suggested I reach out to you.



The proposal has been evolving for nearly 5 years, and we are scheduled to go to Saanich Council on August 11<sup>th</sup> for a public hearing.

We have been a bit surprised at the opposition to housing diversity and attainability from folks in the area and the Residents Association and we expect many who live in single family homes in the area will come out and speak against this project because they prefer only single-family housing in the area. And as such, we are now reaching out more broadly to those who might support more diversity and attainable housing in the neighbourhood.

I have attached a short document with information on the project, and a link to its website – that has more information about the project.

Too often, good rental projects can get turned down after years of work because City Council only hears negative opinions at a public hearing from those who own single family homes in the area.

As such, we are interested in seeing if anyone in your organization or network might be interested in sending in an email of support for the housing diversity and lower rental prices near UVic that this project could bring. And if anyone is especially passionate about the need for more housing diversity and affordability in the neighbourhood, there will be an opportunity to speak directly to Council (in person or online) at the Aug 11<sup>th</sup> public hearing – starts at 7pm at Saanich City Hall.

(Note: The deadline for sending an email of support is August 11 at noon)

And I'd be very happy to talk with you anytime if you want to know more.

Warmly,

Mark

**Mark Holland RPP**

Principal - Westplan Consulting Group

(250) 713-9789



Westplan acknowledges with respect that our offices are located on the ancestral territory of the lək'wəŋən People (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations). We also acknowledge and respect that we work on the ancestral territories of many Indigenous peoples in communities where our projects are located.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The contents of this email are confidential and reserved for the use of its intended recipients.

If you receive this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message as well as copies.

**Item 6 Third Party Elections Advertising**

From: Finance, Electoral EBC:EX <electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca>

Sent: Monday, July 20, 2026 4:25 PM

To: Finance, Electoral EBC:EX <electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca>

Subject: 2026 General Local Elections Advertising Rules

Hello,

As an individual/organization that previously conducted election advertising, this email is a reminder that election advertising rules for the 2026 General Local Elections take effect today, Monday, July 20, 2026.

Under the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act, Elections BC regulates election advertising during the:

- Pre-campaign period: July 20 to September 18, 2026
- Campaign period: September 19 to October 17, 2026

If you plan to conduct election advertising, please ensure you understand the rules regarding sponsor identification, advertising expense limits, contributions, coordination restrictions, General Voting Day advertising restrictions, and financial disclosure reporting.

For more information, visit:

- [Local Third Party Advertising Rules](#)
- [Guide for Local Elections Third Party Sponsors in B.C.](#)
- [Local Forms](#)
- [Online Learning](#)

We are also offering virtual information sessions for third party sponsors. Registration details are available on the [Information Sessions](#) page of our website.

If you do not intend to conduct election advertising for the 2026 General Local Elections, no further action is needed from you.

If you have questions, email [electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca](mailto:electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca) or call 1-800-661-8683.

Sincerely,

Electoral Finance  
Toll-free: 1-800-661-8683  
[www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca)



**Follow up inquiry from Kyla:**

From: Cook, Julie EBC:EX <Julie.Cook@elections.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2026 12:11 PM

To: Kyla Turner <kylaturner@uvic.ca>

Subject: 2026 General Local Elections Advertising Rules

Hello Kyla,

The requirement to register as a third party sponsor depends on several factors. You are correct that advertising which does not promote or oppose a candidate, elector organization, or issue associated with a candidate or elector organization is not necessarily considered election advertising.

However, another important element is that election advertising generally involves an advertising expense. For example, if the students' association posts information on its website about voting dates and polling locations, that would not be election advertising.

By contrast, if you pay to boost a Facebook post that promotes or opposes a candidate or elector organization, the boosted post would be election advertising and registration as a third party sponsor would be required. If you made the same post on social media without paying to boost it, it would not be considered election advertising because no advertising expense was incurred.

Please note, however, that the rules regarding issue advertising are broader during the campaign period. If you incur advertising expenses to promote or oppose an issue that is associated with a candidate or elector organization, the advertising may be considered election advertising even if the candidate or elector organization is not specifically named. In those circumstances, registration as a third party sponsor may be required.

Please reach out with any questions.

Regards,

Julie Cook (*she/her*)  
Compliance Officer  
Electoral Finance  
Toll-free: 1-800-661-8683  
[www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca)



From: Kyla Turner <[kylaturner@uvic.ca](mailto:kylaturner@uvic.ca)>  
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 2:51 PM  
To: Finance, Electoral EBC:EX <[electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca](mailto:electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca)>  
Subject: RE: 2026 General Local Elections Advertising Rules

Hello,

I'm seeking clarity on third party sponsorships. May organizations advertise when/where/how to vote without registering as a third party, so long as they do not take a position on issues/candidates? My reading of the definition of third party advertising in the Guide indicates that registration is only required if a position on how to vote is taken.

However, the questions below seem to indicate that any advertising that an election is occurring requires registration:

f Does the message reference the election, voting, or the date of General Voting Day? – Answer: yes, we would like to promote student knowledge of voter eligibility, when/where/how to vote.

f Does the message use language like “Your choice” or “Make your voice heard?” – Answer: yes, we would like to promote voting in local elections to university students.

f Is the message planned to coincide with the pre-campaign or campaign period? – Answer: yes, we would like to promote where UVic students can find more information about which municipality they may be eligible to vote in, where/when/how to vote.

Thanks,

Kyla Turner (she/they)  
Executive Director, University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

