

University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society
Graduate Representative Council

MINUTES

JUNE 23, 2026, 5-7 PM

Executive Board Invited (1 vote per member):

Chair: Violet Cieslik

Director of Internal/University Relations: vacant

Director of Finance: Eleanore Todd

Director of Student Life: Manuel Centeno Duque

Director of External Relations: Victor Marrugat Arnal

Executive Director (non-voting):

Elected Academic Unit Reps Invited (1 vote per academic unit):

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

Recorder: Petranella Daviel, Communications and Events Coordinator (covering for Irffy), Neil Barney, Operations and Services Manager (covering for Kyla)

Invited Guests:

Regrets Received: Kyla Turner, Executive Director; Irfan Tanveer, Governance Coordinator; Becca Andelyn; Nadiya Shore / Lekima Yakuden; Jasmine Padam; Max Backhaus / Anna-Elaine Rempel; Jasmine

Padam

Absent without regrets: Semyon Drozdetsckii/Zenus Francis; Ross Harry; Chloë Farr; Annie Wu; Latifa Yusuf; Wyatt Maddox; Grace Niehaus; Kiran Gowdar; Josie Hill; Kylie Fineday

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER 5:07 PM

Meeting called to order at 5:07 pm by CIESLIK.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5:07 PM

Councillors are asked to provide a personal, meaningful statement of land acknowledgement.

Today's personal land acknowledgement will be provided by Victor MARRUGAT ARNAL. Victor shared observations about native plants and a dogwood tree in flower surrounding the totem in front of the UVSS.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA 5:10

MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.

M/S: Executive Board/Laura DUFORT-GAGNON, Maggie BERUBE

CARRIED

TIMEKEEPER VOLUNTEER 5:12

Today's timekeeper was: Bernardo LEITE

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, MEETING QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE 5:15

GSS Membership: As of May 13, 2026, the GSS has 2438 members.

Meeting Quorum: With 4 regrets received, quorum for tonight's meeting is 15.

Welcome to new GRC reps:

REPORTS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

CHAIR'S REMARKS 5:18

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

CIESLIK reported first on her recent election to the role of Chair. She is still working on onboarding to her new role, and getting ready to onboard a new board member starting tomorrow.

CIESLIK elaborated that beyond the board turn-over, the Board has been establishing connections with other student societies across BC to prepare to respond to any changes coming out of the recent Post Secondary Institution funding review. In addition, the Board has been thinking about working towards their Annual Plan. They have also been working with UBC on a few campaigns with their External Director; D. Finance met with Jim Dunston to discuss how the GSS and executives at UVic are able to better help students, particularly with regards to AI policy.

CIESLIK invited GRC members to contact TODD if interested in the policy.

CIESLIK added that Victor had a productive meeting with Saanich Counsellor Teale Phelps Bondaroff, where he expressed what we need as graduate students, advocated for transit throughout Victoria, and overall hoping to increase transit, transit use & accessibility.

CIESLIK expressed that she looks forward to welcoming new Board member.

GRC COMMITTEE, ELECTORAL OFFICER REPORTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS 5:25

- **Advocacy and Campaigns:** FLINT reported that A&C is continuing to progress on the campaigns reported last month. Victor has been in touch with his counterpart at UBC as well as the Alliance of BC Students to discuss their planned campaigns for this year, particularly as it relates to the provincial funding review. However, the GSS continues to be ahead of the curve on our responses to the PSI funding review and our materials have been re-circulated to our sister organizations. Heat on Campus issues, as well as transit campaign mentioned by Violet, and delegating next steps for those campaigns, and health information that will be shared on the website. MARRUGAT provided an update on the PSI review; at beginning hoping province would release it, now working on being prepared *if* the province releases it, after discussing with other student unions, realized it would be worse if they do release the review; if they're not releasing it, they are not touching the cap / not making changes for the moments. Preparing to give rapid response to release of PSI review if it happens.
- **Appeals:** TODD reported that no appeals were submitted.
- **Bylaw & Policy:** CIESLIK reported that BPC has taken up several elections/referendum related bylaw/policy revision projects. The development of training on Democratic Rules of Order was assigned out to Anna-Elaine Rempel, possibly with support from other BPC members.
- **WEBB** reported they onboarded CIESLIK, and hadn't met in May due to change in Chair. CIESLIK added that she is to meet with members or SRC to discuss proposed changes to Bylaw X and XII before taking them back to BPC. BPC will meet biweekly instead of monthly so they can get potential changes done before AGM in October. CIESLIK acknowledged the conversational contributions of WEBB's cat Hobbes as well.
- **Events:** BERUBE reported on mixed attendance for events in May, acknowledging that this was not wholly unexpected in the summertime, summarized June events and gave an overview of July events as follows. BERUBE also reported that planning is underway for September orientation events. For events in June:
 - ORCID ID Info Session on June 3rd from 9:00-10:30AM
 - Pride Maker's Market on June 18th from 11:30AM-3:30PM
 - Bernardo's Patio Summer Tea Party on June 19th from 3:30-5:30PM
 - Rock Painting on June 24th from 5:30-7:00PM
 - Trivia Night with Fierce on June 26th from 7:00-8:30PM
 - For events in July:
 - Mug Painting on Wednesday July 8th, 5:30-7pm, Side Project
 - Beach Day on July 16th, 4:00-6:00pm, Cadboro Bay
 - Trivia Night with Fierce on Friday, July 24th, 7-8:30pm, Grad House
- **Finance:** TODD reported that Finance Committee did not meet this month as the information required for their next steps on investing some GSS funds has not yet been received, so no

new actions were required. Finance Committee has sent out a lot of correspondence, but have not received anything back.

- Stipend Review: ZAMUDIO reported that SRC reviewed the reports and they were good.
- Electoral Officer: FIELDER yielded time as elections will take place later in the meeting.

GRC STANDING COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENTS 5:35

If anyone wishes to change committees, please raise your hand.

No committee changes made – only one month left for GRC meetings.

OPEN DIALOGUE AND REPORTS 5:36

LEAD: CIESLIK

None!

BREAK – 5 MINUTES – 5:36 PM

GRC elected not to take a break at this time, and instead break after the election.

MEETING NEW BUSINESS

1. INTERIM DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL/UNIVERSITY RELATIONS ELECTION 5:37

Lead: CIESLIK/FIELDE:

Reference: Bylaw XI – Vacancies on the Executive Board and Policy 8 Executive Board Vacancies

For: Discussion

Sarah Roberts resigned her position as Chair on May 19. Per the Executive Board vacancy bylaws and policies, the Executive Board has elected Violet Cieslik to serve as Chair for the remainder of the 2026-27 term. GRC will now be electing a new interim Director of Internal/University Relations to serve until March 31, 2027.

CIESLIK gave an overview of the position, and the forthcoming meeting schedule to prepare candidates for the position.

Sam FIELDER will now run an interim election for Director of Internal/University Relations.

MARRUGAT asked for clarification regarding abstentions, which FIELDER provided.

FIELDER issued three calls for nominations: the first via email to all GSS members on June 9 and two calls for nominations during the meeting.

Nominations:

(From first call) 1st call

Melody Ray

Hannah Brown

Pascalie Ricard

Melia Hamilton

Xi Ren

2nd call

None

3rd call

None

With 5 nominations received, FIELDER opened the floor for each candidate to give a statement lasting no more than one minute. FIELDER kept time for candidate statements.

Xi and Melia did not send out candidate statements.

As a note, candidates' pronouns were not provided, and so DAVIEL has elected to use 'they/them' pronouns in the minutes to record the candidate statements.

BROWN presented the first candidate statement.

BROWN emphasized the extensive experience and student-centered approach to everything they do. They have gained experience over the past several years in various roles, including working with the SSD (5 years total), where they have been their Operations Director for 2 years; they have sat on UVic's Accessibility committee for 4 years, as well as their steering committee, and have worked with CAL for 4 years. BROWN outlined their strong and collaborative relationships with many partnerships for this portfolio, including the UVic Senate, FGS, campus-wide planning & policy groups. BROWN is comfortable advocating within complex systems, and feels that they have excellent experience and skills in these areas, highlighting that accessibility and equity are at the centre of these conversations. BROWN also stated that they bring strong experience in campaign & advocacy, and institutional accountability – they are one of the founding members of the SSD's #A4A (Access 4 All) campaign. BROWN noted that they were also an advocacy campaign researcher for the GSS previously, in a Work Study position. BROWN emphasized that their advocacy work is always grounded in collaboration and community needs, and that if selected, they will prioritize strengthening relationships with UVic, and ensuring graduate concerns are heard early. They expressed excitement to support EGRS and GSAW, as a previous participant. They summarized that they deeply care about grad students, understand the barriers our membership face, and stated that they have the experience to step into role immediately and effectively.

RICARD presented the next candidate statement.

RICARD introduced themselves and their research, which explores material culture, exploring meaning in creating through objects & spaces. They acknowledged that they really like the graduate world, the student experience we all go through, whichever department we're in. They stated that they are seeking the D. Internal position because they value building connections between people &

ensuring voices are heard in institutional decision-making. They have served on boards in the nonprofit sector for over 10 years, and have thus gained experience in governance, advocacy, and strategic planning. They noted that they will serve on the UVic Senate & BOG from July, providing opportunities to advocate for student interests. RICARD clarified that the meetings are once a month, and should not present a big conflict, as they will be representing graduate students generally, and will be able to represent the GSS. RICARD detailed their experience in organizing 2 departmental conferences, their work as a Communications coordinator for a number of years at CanAssist, and their experience within the world of accessibility. They have worked as a behaviour interventionist working privately with students, and have also worked with CAL. RICARD shared that they draw on their personal experience as a disabled student to advocate on campus. If elected, RICARD emphasized that they would work to strengthen communications between grad students, GSS, and UVic, and that they are committed to maintaining strong relationships between all three, to ensure grad student concerns are communicated at all levels at UVic. They highlighted their key goal of representing our membership.

Melody RAY presented the next candidate statement.

RAY stated that for the past 2 years they have been very active in their department, and have been active as Chair for their 1st year, and as an aid and functioning as Chair for their 2nd year. Through this role and the experiences gained, RAY described how they have been building connections both within and outside of their department, through campaigns like getting a fan in their grad room. RAY expressed that they very much value the importance of connecting with not only administration, but professors, and building community between grad students and UVic. RAY emphasized their experience in advocating frequently for the grads in their own department. RAY shared that they enjoy those types of conversations, and that as D. Internal, they would be supporting grad students, relaying any concerns between grad students and UVic and vice-versa.

With all candidate statements presented, FIELDER illustrated instructions for voting both in-person and online, including voting none, and abstentions, and called for a vote.

BERUBE asked why the process is different than at AGM. BARNEY explained that at the AGM, any member of the society is able to vote, whereas GRC voting representation is a little tighter – with 1 vote per departmental rep. FIELDER added that this is an interim election for an interim director and the process is slightly different to reflect that.

Co-reps online were moved to individual breakout rooms to decide on their shared vote.

CIESLIK announced a 5 minute break as votes come in. Meeting to resume at 6pm.

BREAK – 5 MINUTES – 5:55 PM

Votes received were:

Hannah BROWN 0 votes in person / 8 votes online. 8 votes total.

Melody RAY 0 votes in person / 4 votes online. 4 votes total.

Pascalie RICARD 1 vote in person / 3 votes online. 4 votes total.

Melia HAMILTON 0 votes in person / 0 votes online. 0 votes total.

Xi REN 0 of votes in person / 0 votes online. 0 votes total.

Abstentions: Manuel CENTENO DUQUE, Eleanore TODD, Violet CIESLIK, Victor MARRUGAT ARNAL, Hannah BROWN, Pascalie RICARD

FIELDER declared Hannah BROWN to be the Director of Internal/University Relations! 🙌

2. SEEKING STAKEHOLDERS FOR BUILDING HEAT CAMPAIGN 6:05

Lead: MARRUGAT

Reference:

For: Discussion

Sophie and Annabel are currently working on the issue of heat on campus and protecting our members from unsafe conditions, but we want to ensure we have eyes, ears, and all temperature-sensing organs on the ground across campus monitoring this issue.

MARRUGAT summarized the main issues to be addressed by the campaign, highlighting the need for decision makers at UVic to be convinced that these issues are vital and need to be tackled now. There is a working group, and one of the actions needed to be taken to address the issue is to collect information – what temperatures are we seeing, at what time, and where on campus those temperatures are recorded, to build grounds to convince UVic both that action *must* be taken, and *where* action must be taken first.

MARRUGAT requested volunteers to help put up posters and to request supervisors to put those posters into the labs, in order to collect contact information for volunteers to measure temperatures. Victor shared his email in the chat, requesting folks who are interested to send him an email: gssinternal@uvic.ca

BROWN mentioned the issue of heat on campus was brought up in a CUPE 4163 meeting, and that they could be a potential point of collaboration. BROWN is their Comms rep and can share information and the request for volunteers.

STANDING ITEMS 6:10 PM

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (APPENDIX A) 6:10

MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the May 26, 2026 GRC meeting as presented [OR approved with minor corrections as provided].

M/S: RAY / BERUBE

CARRIED

EXECUTIVE BOARD STIPEND REPORTS – QUESTIONS ARISING AND MOTION TO ACCEPT – 6:11

LEAD: Marcela ZAMUDIO

REF DOCS: 2025-26 Board Reports

Councillors are required to read the Executive Board reports prior to the meeting.

MOTION: to approve May reports from Sarah Roberts, Manuel Centeno Duque, Violet Cieslik, Eleanore Todd, Victor Marrugat Arnal as presented.

M/S: Stipend Review Committee / ZAMUDIO

CARRIED

REPORTS FROM GRAD REPS ON UVIC COMMITTEES 6:12

LEAD: CIESLIK

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 for inclusion in the minutes.

No reports made!

GRADUATE REPRESENTATION ON UVIC COMMITTEES (APPENDIX B) 6:12

LEAD: CIESLIK in absence of TANVEE

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: Senate Committee on Continuing Studies

Member: Bernardo LEITE

Committee: Senate Committee on Appeals

Member: Maggie LAWTON

Committee: FGS Council 2nd Member

Member: Rosemary Webb

M/S: DUFORT-GAGNON / BERUBE

CARRIED

WEBB wondered if LAWTON (not present) would be interested in continuing her work on the Senate Committee on Appeals, and recommended reaching out to Maggie LAWTON directly, as it would be great to have her continuing. WEBB would otherwise be happy to take it on.

CIESLIK to reach out to LAWTON to see if she wants to continue on Appeals; if not, WEBB may volunteer; alternately WEBB may volunteer for FGS Council.

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY/PARTICIPATION 6:14

LEAD: CIESLIK

MARRUGAT shared that they serve on the Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR) Committee, who are organizing accessible walks around campus. MARRUGAT encouraged GRC to follow AIR on Instagram (@uvic.air) and noted that the GSS Instagram also regularly shares / collaborates on their posts, as invited.

DUFORT-GAGNON shared that PAGS (Physics Astronomy Graduate Council) is hosting a medical physics outreach event for children 8 – 15 on August 8th at the BC Cancer Agency, to discuss what medical physics is. She noted that there will be activities, and encourages folks with children / siblings in that age group to bring them to the event!

CIESLIK suggested adding the event to the GSS Newsletter; DUFORT-GAGNON to share the details and event poster by email with DAVIEL.

NOTICES OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (APPENDIX C)

LEAD: CIESLIK

July GRC: Anonymous Feedback Survey for GRC reps forthcoming! What membership liked about GRC, what could be better, how we can better onboard new reps in September.

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS:

LEAD: CIESLIK

Annabel FLINT requested clarification of when next GRC meeting is – some places say 28th, some places say 21st. CIESLIK clarified that the 21st is when the agenda will be circulated, and that GRC is every 4th Tuesday.

Next GRC Meeting: July 28, 2026 – LAST GRC MEETING OF THE YEAR!

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

Next General Membership Meeting: GSS Semi-Annual General Meeting! October 27, 2026

- Agenda to be posted: October 13, 2026

Office, Staff Scheduling Notes:

CIESLIK flagged that Kyla TURNER is on vacation, and requested that GRC members reach out to GSS staff or the Board as appropriate for support.

ADJOURNMENT

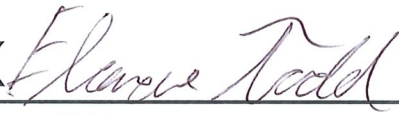
MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 6:18.

M/S: RAY / LEITE

CARRIED

X 

Violet CIESLIK
GSS Chair 2026-27

X 

Eleanore TODD
GSS Vice Chair 2026-27