



University of Victoria
Graduate Students' Society

ANNUAL PLAN

2026-2027

Advocating For
Accessibility and
Fairness

Planning For
Our Future

Bringing Voices
Together

*Diversity is a fact.
Equity is a choice.
Inclusion is an action.
Belonging is an outcome.*

— Arthur Chan

LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to another vibrant, exciting, and promising year with the Graduate Student Society (GSS). We are excited to announce this 2026-2027 Executive Board Annual Plan. This plan includes the Board's vision and goals for the upcoming year to support our membership.

This Board is made up of students who value accountability, inclusion, and advocating for student needs. We endeavour to bring together the voices of our membership by advocating and planning not only for our current membership, but also for future initiatives and graduate students alike. To ensure clarity in our vision for the upcoming year, we are pleased to share with you our three goals for the 2026-2027 Board term: advocating for accessibility and fairness is our first goal, followed by planning our future, and bringing voices together. Each of these goals is situated in ongoing work and partnerships between organizations and our membership to ensure the GSS is an inclusive place where all students feel welcome.

We hope that this Annual Plan provides reassurance of our dedication to membership and clarity on how we will go about ensuring our projects this year align with the plan presented.

We look forward to welcoming and supporting you during your time as a member of the GSS.

Your 2026-2027 Executive Board,

Violet Cieslik — Chair (gsschair@uvic.ca)

Eleanore Todd — Director of Finance (gssfinan@uvic.ca)

Manuel Centeno Duque — Director of Student Life (gsslife@uvic.ca)

Victor Marrugat Arnal — Director of External Relations (gssexternal@uvic.ca)

Hannah Brown — Director of Internal/University Relations (gssinternal@uvic.ca)

The GSS respectfully acknowledges and thanks the many generations of stewards of the unceded land on which we are situated, the water that gives us life, and the air we breathe from the Songhees, X^wsepsəm, and W̱SÁNEĆ nations. We commit ourselves to truth, reconciliation and decolonization

What it Means:

Advocating for students is what we were elected to do. During this year we will be taking action on a range of issues to ensure accessibility and fairness for all graduate students. These efforts range from increasing safety and equity in lab and research work, access to campus through public transportation, to supporting fairness in academics and professional relationships. To ensure achievable outcomes, the Board is committed to providing clear communication and strategic planning with all graduate students on actionable advocacy campaigns that directly impact graduate students.



Advocating For Accessibility and Fairness

What Success Looks Like:

- All Graduate Research Assistants at UVic are protected against the effects of working at high temperatures. They also have access to adequate spaces to conduct temperature-sensitive experimental work.
- The transport needs of graduate students are honored in the BC Transit Future Plans for the Greater Victoria area.
- Graduate students have appropriate tools to express disagreements with their graduate supervisors. They are also allowed to participate in planning the timeline of their degree.
- A fair and equitable campus where all graduate students feel their needs are being met, that they can speak up when issues arise, and where appropriate supports are in place.

Strategies

- Participating in the decision-making of building development on campus to adapt laboratory buildings to the challenges of climate change. Collaborating with OHSE to implement additional safety procedures against heat-related injuries.
- Seeking enhanced participation and influence in the Victoria Regional Transit Commission.
- Training members of the Graduate Representative Council (GRC) on the procedures to be followed in case of conflicts with graduate supervisors. Informing all graduate students about the tools available to them in case of conflict.
- Strengthening support for the UVic Office of the Ombudsperson and ensuring that academic accommodation procedures for graduate students are appropriately delivered as per FGS policy.

What it Means:

We are conscious of the additional challenges that climate and societal changes will bring onto our membership's activities. They inform us for planning our advocacy efforts as described in Topic 1.

We want to place the GSS in a strong position to continue supporting students, offering quality services at low prices. We are investing our savings to ensure the organization is given as many opportunities as we can give to support students in the future. Our policy around elections is also under revision, addressing concerns reported by prior electoral officers. Public funding for BC post-secondary education is also under review, and our advocacy this year will focus on ensuring graduate student voices are heard in the halls of those who decide the financial future of the province



Planning For Our Future

What Success Looks Like:

- Growing the savings in our capital fund for future improvements
- Having a financially sustainable healthcare plan, which meets the needs of the membership.
- Elections bylaws, policies, and procedures which are easy to interpret and implement.
- An increased awareness and activity on and off campus in response to both potential and active changes in the post-secondary public funding structure.

Strategies

- Investing most of our capital fund in guaranteed investment certificates (GIC) set to 1- to 5-year payouts. Archiving our optimized investment strategy.
- Soliciting feedback from membership regarding Insurance plan coverage and costs.
- Consulting with prior electoral officers and chairs to revise our electoral policies, electoral officer position, and the addition of an elections committee.
- Running campaigns within our organization as well as with external partners to advocate for our students' financial future.

What it Means:

Graduate students make the GSS possible. This year, we want to highlight the diversity of graduate student voices and provide an inclusive place where all feel welcome. As a Board, we are committed to promoting diversity through inclusion with a range of engagement opportunities, including weekly events, multiple graduate student orientations, and an academic conference that focuses on graduate student research. We aim to extend orientation past the 'firehose' week by offering various community building events throughout the academic year. Feedback from students is a vital part of what makes this possible. Thus, we endeavor to maintain an inviting and open space where all voices are heard, with feedback channels to learn what matters most to students and how to improve in the future.



Bringing Voices Together

What Success Looks Like:

- Graduate students feel comfortable engaging in GSS initiatives and sharing feedback with board members or their respective departmental representative.
- An orientation going beyond the first week to ease and support in the transition into grad school at UVic.
- Ensuring that our diverse membership feels actively included and welcomed in all GSS events and programming.

Strategies

- Communicating the importance of networking and conversing during GSS initiatives (i.e. Wednesday coffee) with department representatives and Board members at the September GRC.
- Running strategically scheduled orientation programming to reduce start-of-term information overload and encourage graduate student success.
- Organizing events and opportunities that reflect the diversity of our graduate student community and create a sense of belonging for our membership.