

2026-27 Advocacy and Campaigns Committee Annual Report

October 27, 2026 AGM

Membership

Chair: Victor Marrugat Arnal (he/him) Director of External Relations

Vice-chair: Hannah Brown (they/them) Director of Internal/University Relations

2025-26 members:

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| • Cania Made | • Astrid Han | • Clara Troje |
| • Annabel Flint | • Becca Andelyn | • Cam Thiessen |
| • Sophie Culos | • Max Backhaus | • Kyla Turner, ex-officio, non-voting |
| • Latifa Yusuf | • Lauren Burton | |

2026-27 members:

- | | | |
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| • Cania Made | • Akriti Singh | • Babak Ashrafkhani |
| • Annabel Flint | • Savannah Dam | Limoudehi |
| • Kaysha Lee | • Neil Brubacher | • Kyla Turner, ex-officio, non-voting |
| • Spenser Morouney | • Reia Drucker | |
| • Matt Johnson | | |

The members of the 2025-26 A&C have been fundamental to achieve our goals.

Sophie brought heat on campus to the A&C table, a major concern for graduate research assistants working in summer. They led the campaign on all fronts: bringing awareness, collecting feedback, contacting building operations staff, and other UVic officials. Thanks to them, UVic started acting even before the GSS formed the Heat on Campus campaign.

Annabel compiled the temperature and humidity data across campus needed to advocate for heat protections for graduate research assistants. Without this data, we wouldn't have been able to successfully raise this issue to UVic's management.

Cania was our main liaison with the Registrar's office, advocating for international students registered under CAL and making sure that their status is properly acknowledged.

Latifa helped liaising with other student societies during the re-birth of the VRTC's student advisory committee. This committee was designed to coordinate post-secondary student voices in Greater Victoria in front of the VRTC (Victoria Regional Transit Commission) which is the main decisionmaker on public transit planning in Victoria.

Astrid brought her background in health information science to the A&C committee and drafted the information about Fair Pharmacare and other health resources that now is on the GSS website.

Advocacy is at the forefront of the GSS, and it wouldn't be possible without our valuable representatives from Advocacy and Campaigns. A big thank you to them!

Duties of the Committee

The Advocacy and Campaigns is informed by and responds to the issues raised by the GRC. This involves researching issues of concern for graduate students and advocating for graduate student interests. Duties include proposing, planning, and organising advocacy work on graduate student issues and political action campaigns approved by GRC. The committee also communicate progress on advocacy campaigns to the membership and identifies campaign issues and strategies to recommend for the next Annual Plan.

Overview of Work Completed

Heat on Campus: the climate crisis is already impacting graduate students on campus. +30 °C days are becoming common during Victoria summers. This translates to temperatures commonly surpassing 27 °C inside UVic's buildings, which are not adapted to the new climate normals. Grad students are expected to keep conducting research during summer while both maintaining research quality and observing safety protocols. Certain research topics require temperature conditions below 27 °C. Entire thesis may be in jeopardy without climate control during our newly hot summers. Meanwhile, safety protocols in Chemistry, Biology, and other Science departments, include the use of Personal Protective Equipment, like lab coats, which increase the temperature sensation up to 3 °C.

The GSS conducted an advocacy campaign to tackle this concern affecting a big section of our membership. We collected data on a hot day, to reveal that some rooms in Elliot, Petch, and EOW buildings reached 29 °C. We proved to UVic officials that this situation would trigger protection measures like training and signage as recommended by WorkSafeBC. We asked UVic to establish training and put heat preparedness signage before the summer of 2027.

Public Transport: graduate students are actively directed towards public transport with beneficial passes, limited car ownership, and limited car parking on campus. Therefore, it is critical that the bus service connecting campus with the main regional population centers and transport hubs is frequent, reliable, and accessible. In recent years, the bus routes serving UVic collapsed every start of the school year with full buses, skipped stops, and severe lack of accessibility. This is mostly due to lack of provincial funding, which has left most of the current bus fleet in repair. Graduate students also lack public transport options that connect with the airport. Only after repeated public demands, route 72A was established in September, before that, students had to pay the price of their bus pass for a single taxi ride to downtown Victoria. The new BCTransit 25-year plan for Great Victoria does not observe any further improvement in airport connections.

The GSS and its Advocacy and Campaigns committee has put public transit in the center of their actions. For the first time in several years, we have continuous contact with the student representative at the VRTC to whom we give updates and transmit our concerns to the VRTC. This continuous interest landed in all but one municipal candidate in Greater Victoria supporting a voting student sit at the VRTC. We will demand the province to at least officialise one student vote at the VRTC.

Although being smaller, other campaigns where instrumental in this term's A&C success. Health information is now easily available for all grad students who wish to save money with their prescriptions

and complimentary health services, and administrative issues like the ones that international students registered under CAL face are being acted upon.

Overview of Incomplete and Outstanding Work

The committee is proud of the progress made to date, while recognising that several initiatives remain ongoing. Previously discussed advocacy efforts, including ensuring safety procedures against heat-related injuries and continuous contact with the student representative at the VRTC, will continue in the coming year.

A key priority moving forward is addressing accessibility barriers within Victoria's transit system. To advocate for meaningful improvements, the committee is exploring a public awareness campaign aimed at riders and drivers, alongside continued advocacy with BC Transit and potential lobbying efforts following the election of a new provincial government.

The committee will also continue its advocacy to reduce financial pressures on graduate students and protect the 2% domestic tuition cap. We have joined the province wide Cuts Suck campaign and are currently undertaking a postcard-writing campaign in support of these efforts. This is another area in which we intend to engage with the provincial government following the election.

In addition, work will continue throughout 2026-27 to provide feedback on the developing FGS Supervisory Relations Policy and to advocate for appropriate accommodations and supports for graduate students.