University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society

Constitution & Bylaws

CONSTITUTION 2
1. NAME OF THE SOCIETY 2
2. PURPOSES OF THE SOCIETY 2
BYLAWS 3
BYLAW I – INTERPRETATION 3
BYLAW II – MEMBERSHIP 3
BYLAW III – DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY OF THE SOCIETY 4
BYLAW IV – ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA 5
BYLAW V – GENERAL MEETINGS 8
BYLAW VI – GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL 9
BYLAW VII – VOTE TO FEDERATE WITH A NATIONAL OR PROVINCIAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION 11
BYLAW VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD 13
BYLAW IX – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD DIRECTORS 14
BYLAW X – EXECUTIVE BOARD DIRECTOR STIPEND 14
BYLAW XI – VACANCIES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD 15
BYLAW XII – REMOVAL OF DIRECTORS ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD 15
BYLAW XIII – RECORDS 16
BYLAW XIV – SOCIETY FINANCES 16
BYLAW XV – NON-PARTISANSHIP 19
BYLAW XVI – AMENDMENTS 19
BYLAW XVII – DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY 20

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME OF THE SOCIETY:

The name of the Society is the University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society.

2. PURPOSES OF THE SOCIETY:

The purposes of the Society are:

a. to represent the interests of the membership in a democratic manner in matters pertaining to education and the welfare of graduate students;

b. to promote the principle and practice of graduate student representation at all levels of decision making at the University of Victoria and on all agencies or other bodies which deliberate on the affairs of graduate students;

c. to promote cultural, intellectual and recreational activities among the members; and

d. to promote the academic and social welfare of its members through the provision of services.

BYLAWS

BYLAW I – INTERPRETATION

1.1 Interpretation

a. "Academic unit" means an academic unit of the University that currently has graduate students.

b. "Core Membership Fees" means Graduate Students' Society fees that support the Operating Fund and the Capital Fund.

c. "Executive" means the current elected Executive Directors of the Society.

d. "Executive Board" means the Executive and the Executive Director (ex-officio).

e. "Grad Centre" means the George and Ida Halpern Centre for Graduate Students.

f. "Grad Council" means the Graduate Representative Council.

g. "Grad Rep" means a Graduate Representative of the Graduate Representative Council.

h. "Membership fees" means the Graduate Students' Society fees.

i. "Ordinary resolution" means a resolution that passes with a simple (greater than fifty percent [50%]) majority.

j. "Provincial or National Student Organization" includes but is not limited to, the Canadian Federation of Students, and excludes organizations that do not collect membership fees.

k. "Society" means the University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society.

l. "Special Resolution" means a resolution that passes with two-thirds (2/3) majority.

m. "University" means the University of Victoria.

BYLAW II – MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Full members of the Society shall be all students enrolled in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University.

2.2 Affiliated membership:

a. Affiliated membership may be granted to students previously enrolled in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University who are on approved leave from their studies and choose to opt-in to membership in the Society.

b. Affiliated members shall have all privileges enjoyed by full members except that no affiliate member shall have voting privileges, count as a member for quorum, or hold office.

2.3 Associate membership:

a. Associate membership may be granted by an ordinary resolution of Grad Council upon receipt of written application.

b. Associate members shall have all privileges enjoyed by full members except that no associate member shall have voting privileges, count as a member for quorum, or hold office.

2.4 Honorary membership:

a. Upon receipt of written nomination by three full members, honorary membership may be accorded in recognition of significant contributions to the Society by majority vote of the membership at a General Meeting or by unanimous affirmative vote of the Grad Council.
b. Honorary members shall have all privileges enjoyed by active members except that no honorary member shall have voting privileges, count as a member for quorum, or hold office.

2.5 Cessation of membership:

a. Membership in the Society shall cease when a member is no longer registered in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, with the exception of:

i. Members under Bylaw 2.2;
ii. Members registered under a completion postponement fee adjustment, who shall continue to be members until the end of the term in which they are registered;
iii. Students enrolled in concurrent graduate/undergraduate programs, who shall continue to be members during undergraduate terms; and
iv. Members of the Executive Board, who shall continue to be members of the Society until expiry of their current term of office, provided that they are registered in the Faculty of Graduate Studies or in a concurrent graduate/undergraduate program or are full members under Bylaw 2.1 for the first nine months of their term of office.

b. Membership may be revoked by special resolution at a General Meeting.
c. Associate membership shall normally cease after one (1) year, upon non-payment of associate membership fees, or by Bylaw 2.5b. If necessary, Grad Council may renew associate membership.
d. Honorary membership shall cease according to Bylaw 2.5 b.

2.6 Where membership is revoked, the member may appeal the revocation to another General Meeting by notice in writing to the Executive Board within thirty (30) days of the revocation.

2.7 The number of non-voting members shall not exceed the number of voting members of the Society.

2.8 Members will be considered to be in good standing, as outlined within the *Societies Act*, if they adhere to all definitions outlined above for their membership class. This includes the definition of a student as per the *Societies Act*.

BYLAW III – DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY OF THE SOCIETY

3.1 The highest decision-making authority of the Society shall be referenda; followed by General Meetings; the Graduate Representative Council; and finally Executive Board.

BYLAW IV – ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

4.1 The Electoral Officer shall:

a. Be appointed by membership at the Annual General Meeting. The term of office shall be from November 1 to October 31 the following year;
b. Not be a nominee for any elected office of the Society nor be a current voting member of the Executive Board nor be a registered member of any referendum side;
c. Be responsible for the operation of all elections, by-elections and referenda according to the Bylaws of the Society.
d. Oversee implementation of electronic voting platforms;
e. Notify all candidates/referendum sides of the Schedule of Elections; and Referenda;
f. Work with the Elections Committee.

4.2 Electoral Officer Vacancy:

a. Should the office of Electoral Officer become vacant, a replacement interim Electoral Officer shall be elected at the next Grad Council meeting or General Meeting who shall hold office for the remainder of the former Electoral Officer's term.

4.3 The Elections Committee:

a. The committee shall consist of five (5) Society full members, four (4) Society full general members appointed by Grad Council, and the Electoral Officer.
b. Members of the Committee cannot be a nominee for election to the Executive Board or be a registered member of any referendum side.
c. Annual appointments shall occur in the Graduate Representative Council Meeting following the Annual General Meeting September or October, and committee members shall not be a nominee for any elected office nor be a registered member of any referendum side. Grad Council may make interim appointments to ensure that the committee has five (5) full members of the Society.
d. Committee members may be removed only by Special Resolution by Grad Council.
e. The committee shall be responsible for reviewing any and all complains regarding the integrity and fairness of elections and referenda. If necessary, it may require any reasonable remedy to rectify the situation, including the ultimate remedies of disqualifying a candidate/referendum side or requiring new elections/referendum.
f. The final deadline to submit complaints is seven (7) calendar days after the release of preliminary results.
g. The committee's decisions shall be final, in writing and made available on one or more of the Society's public-facing platforms within two (2) business days of the decision.

4.4 Referenda:

a. Referenda shall be initiated by:
    i. a resolution of the Executive Board; or
    ii. a resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3) of Grad Council; or

iii. a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the full members of the Society.

b. Referenda questions shall be phrased by the Executive Board. However, where a referendum is initiated by petition, the phrasing shall not alter the original intent of the petition.
   i. Where a referendum question creates or revises a membership fee, the text of the referendum question shall include whether or not the fee shall increase by the Consumer Price Index annually.
   ii. Where a referendum on GSS fees would necessitate alterations of bylaw 14.3 Membership Fees, the revised bylaw text shall be presented in the referendum.

c. Where the referendum is initiated by the Executive Board, the Graduate Representative Council will be notified within 48 hours of the Executive Board Meeting.

4.5 Procedure for Elections and Referenda:

a. Elections shall be scheduled every year in February or March. Referenda shall normally be held concurrent with scheduled elections.
b. Elections and referenda shall be conducted by secret ballot using the plurality system (i.e., the largest number of votes)
c. Quorum for referenda shall be five percent (5%) of the full membership.

4.6 Notice of Elections and Referenda:

a. At least twenty-one (21) days' notice of an election and/or a referendum shall be given to members, specifying the schedule of elections and referenda.
b. At minimum, notice shall consist of:
   i. A highly noticeable advertisement in one or more forms of independent campus media if their publication schedule permits;
   ii. A poster-format notice sent to each academic unit;
   iii. An electronic message sent to every eligible member; and
   iv. Notice to all Grad Reps.

4.7 Schedule of Elections and Referenda:

a. Election Nomination Period
   i. Nominations shall open at least fourteen (14) days prior to an election and be open for at least seven (7) days.
   ii. Nominations shall close at least seven (7) days prior to an election.
b. Referenda Registration Period
   i Registration for referendum sides shall open at least fourteen (14) days prior to an election and be open for at least seven (7) days.
c. Campaign Period
   i. Campaigns shall open when the nomination/referendum registration period ends.
d. Polling Period
   i. Polling shall begin no less than twenty-one (21) days after notice of an election/referendum has been given.
   ii. Polling must take place over at least two (2) business days.

e. Counting of Ballots
    i. The counting of ballots must take place within one (1) business day after the close of polls.

4.8 Election Nominations and Referendum Sides:

a. Nominees must be full members of the Society. The Electoral Officer cannot stand for election during their term of office. Members of the Elections Committee and the Stipend Review Committee cannot stand for election during the term of the Graduate Representative Council in which they were appointed.
b. Nominations must be signed by the nominee, and ten nominators, who must be members of the Society.
c. Nominations must be returned to the Electoral Officer no later than the close of nominations.
d. People wishing to campaign for a referendum side must register with the Electoral Officer prior to beginning to campaign for that referendum side.

4.9 Voting and Ballots:

a. Both physical and electronic ballots shall contain the name of the nominees, the positions that they are nominated for, and a place to register a vote. Voting by electronic means will be permitted.
b. Referenda ballots shall contain the question to be decided and provision for the member to record their vote.
c. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
d. The candidate or referendum side that receives a plurality of votes (i.e., the largest number of votes) shall be declared elected or deemed passed.
e. Candidates or referendum sides may select a scrutineer to attend the counting of ballots for all voting platforms where this is permitted.

4.10 Preliminary Election and Referendum Results

a. Preliminary results shall be posted on one or more of the Society's public-facing media platforms and made available to the membership electronically within two (2) business days of the close of polling.
b. Official results shall be posted on one or more of the Society's public-facing media platforms and made available to the membership electronically upon the disposition of any complaints or after the closing of the complaint period.

4.11 Acclamations:

a. When a nominee runs unopposed, the acclamation shall be approved through an ordinary resolution of Grad Council or a General Meeting.
b. In the event of a tie vote, the Electoral Officer shall call for a runoff vote during the same meeting, until such time that plurality is reached.

4.12 In the event that no nomination is received for an Executive Board position during the electoral nomination procedures as outlined in Bylaws 4.1 through 4.10, the following elections procedures will be followed:

a. The Electoral Officer will issue a call for candidates for any Executive Board positions for which there is no nominee. The call for candidates will be issued via electronic message to all members of the Society and a poster-format notice sent to each academic unit stipulating the process as outlined in Bylaw 4.12.b.
b. Candidates can nominate themselves at the Semi-Annual General Meeting or submit a written statement of candidacy to the Electoral Officer at least one day prior to the Semi-Annual General Meeting.
c. If a position is contested, all Society full members present at the meeting will vote by secret ballot to decide the winner. In the event of a tie vote, the Electoral Officer shall call for a runoff vote during the same meeting, until such time that plurality is reached.
d. If the position is not contested, all Society full members present will vote by secret ballot to acclaim the candidate. In the event of a tie vote, the Electoral Officer shall call for a runoff vote during the same meeting, until such time that plurality is reached.
e. Bylaw 4.12 shall only be enacted in cases where one (1) weeks' notice can be provided before the Semi-Annual General Meeting.

4.13 Stipends for the Electoral Officer

a. The Electoral Officer shall be paid a stipend for each Election and Referendum period and shall be paid a double stipend where an Election and Referendum period occur simultaneously. The Electoral Officer shall not be paid a stipend for elections held at the Semi-Annual General Meeting. The base stipend for the Electoral Officer shall be set by the Stipend Review Committee and approved at a General Meeting.
b. The Electoral Officer may be paid a stipend top-up for work on complaints, appeals, and investigations of irregularities to ensure the integrity of elections, referenda or Grad Council elections. The Stipend Review Committee shall decide the top-up based on the Electoral Officer's report. The maximum top-up shall be equivalent to one month of the Chair's stipend.

BYLAW V – GENERAL MEETINGS

5.1 Types of General Meetings:

There shall be three types of General Meetings:

a. Annual General Meetings
b. Semi-Annual General Meetings
c. Special General Meetings

5.2 Annual General Meetings:

The Annual General Meeting shall be normally held in September or October, as set by the Executive Board.

5.3 Semi-Annual General Meetings:

The Semi-Annual General Meeting shall be normally held in February or March, as set by the Executive Board.

5.4 Special General Meetings:

Special General Meetings may be called at any time by:

a. A resolution of the Executive Board;
b. A resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3) of Grad Council; or
c. A petition by at least ten percent (10%) of the full members of the Society according to the provisions of the *Societies Act,* SBC 2015, c. 75.

5.5 Notice of a General Meeting:

a. At least fourteen (14) days' written notice of a General Meeting must be given. Notice shall consist of advertisement on one or more of the Society's public-facing media platforms and website; a poster-format notice sent to each academic unit; an electronic message sent to the entire Society membership; and notification sent to each Grad Council Representative. Notice shall specify the place, time and date of the meeting
b. Notice for a General Meeting where the audited financial statements or budgets are to be reviewed and approved shall also include the availability of copies of the financial statements and budgets for no less than seven (7) days before the meeting.
c. Notice for a General Meeting shall also include the availability of the agenda of business to be conducted no less than seven (7) days before the meeting.

5.6 Procedure at General Meetings:

a. Meetings may be held either in person or virtually.
b. Quorum for all General Meetings shall be twenty-five (25) full members. In the event that attendance at a General Meeting is above fifteen (15) but below twenty-five (25) full members, the meeting will continue for the purposes of fulfilling the *Societies Act,* SBC 2015, c. 71, but shall be limited to the following items of business:
    i. meaningful, intentional, and related land acknowledgement;
    ii. reports of the Executive Board;
    iii. reports of committees of the Society;
    iv. adoption of the budget;
    v. appointment of auditor;
    vi. approval of the audited statements;
    vii. ratification of acclaimed nominees for election; and
    viii. reports on the status of the extended health and dental plan.
c. Barring Extraordinary Electoral Procedures (see 4.11), voting at all general meetings shall be by show of hands when conducted in person and by polling when conducted virtually.
d. Voting by electronic means will be permitted.
e. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
f. General meetings shall be conducted in a manner that fosters open communication and respectful dialogue. Grad Council may set formal meeting structures for general meetings for the academic year in September.

BYLAW VI – GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

6.1 Authority:

The Grad Council shall have the authority to establish policies of the Society related to governance, advocacy and representation, provided that they are in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the Society.

6.2 Purposes:

a. Grad Council shall provide a forum for members to discuss issues of relevance to grad students i.e., education, research funding, university policies and procedures, etc.
b. Grad Council shall provide direction to the Executive Board in the affairs of the Society.

6.3 Membership:

a. Graduate Representative Council shall consist of:
    i. The members of the Executive Board;
    ii. The Grad Reps for each academic unit as defined by the Society's policy, subject to Bylaw 6.3.b; and
    iii. A graduate student representative of CUPE 4163.
b. Each academic unit with at least three graduate students shall be entitled to one (1) Grad Rep or two (2) Co-Reps, from among its graduate students. Unless specified, the term "Grad Rep" in these bylaws includes Co-Reps.
c. Grad Council may create Grad Rep positions for any group by a majority resolution. This Grad Rep position will be temporary, ending with the term of the current Graduate Representative Council, on August 31.
d. A member of the Executive Board may not serve as a Grad Rep. If a Grad Rep is elected or appointed to the Executive, they shall be deemed to have resigned as a Grad Rep.
e. Grad Reps shall have the power to appoint a proxy from their academic unit to act in their stead at Grad Council. The proxy must be a member of the Society, and the proxy shall have full voting privileges for the meeting. The Executive Board may require the proxy to present a written authorization from the Grad Rep for the meeting they attend.
f. Grad Reps and proxies should be selected and operate in accordance with the Society's policies and procedures.
g. Where a voting member of the Grad Council, whether Grad Rep, Co-Rep, or proxy, from an academic unit fails to attend two (2) consecutive meetings of the Grad Council or a General Meeting of the Society, the Grad Rep(s) shall, upon the direction of the Executive Board, cease to be member(s) of the Grad Council. The Executive Board shall notify the academic unit in question that its place on the Grad Council has become vacant.

6.4 Duties of Grad Reps:

Grad Reps shall:

a. Attend the regular Grad Council meetings and general meetings of the Society;
b. Represent the best interest of fellow grad students at Grad Council;
c. Report back to respective academic units on discussions and decisions made at Grad Council;
d. Where possible, sit on one university committee; and
e. Sit on a committee of the Society as follows:

i. Where there is a single Grad Rep, they shall serve on at least one (1) committee.

ii. Where there are two (2) Co-Reps, at least one (1) Co-Rep must serve on a committee. Co-reps may share committee duties at the discretion of Grad Council.

6.5 Procedures of the Grad Council:

a. Meetings may be held either in person or virtually.
b. Meetings of the Grad Council shall be run in a manner that fosters open communication and respectful dialogue. Grad Council may set formal meeting structures for meetings of the Grad Council for the academic year in September.
c. Meetings shall be chaired by a member of the Executive Board or a meeting chair appointed by the Executive Board.
d. Meetings shall begin with a meaningful, intentional, and related land acknowledgement.
e. Grad Council shall meet approximately once per month between September and April inclusive and as needed between May and August inclusive.
f. Each academic unit has one vote at meetings of Grad Council, regardless of number of Reps. This vote may be exercised in person, by a show of hands, or electronically.
g. Notice of a Grad Council meeting shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.
h. Agendas for Grad Council shall be circulated to all members of Grad Council, including Co-Reps.
i. Quorum for Grad Council meetings shall be at least fifty percent (50%) of Grad Council members, excluding vacancies and regrets. No meeting of Grad Council is quorate with fewer than ten (10) members.
j. For the purposes of quorum at Grad Council, when two Co-Reps from an academic unit are present, they count as one member.
k. If no quorum is observed, agenda items may be moved to the next meeting.
l. All members of the Society may attend Grad Council meetings and participate in discussions, although only Grad Council members may vote.

BYLAW VII – VOTE TO FEDERATE WITH A NATIONAL OR PROVINCIAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION

7.1 The following shall be the rules and procedures for a referendum by which the members of the Society shall vote on federating with a national or provincial student organization:

a. Prospective membership is not permitted:

The Society's membership shall be ineligible for prospective membership in any national or provincial student organization.

b. Petition:

A petition calling for a referendum on the question of whether the Society should join a national or provincial student organization shall be signed by no less than ten percent (10%) of the Society full members and sent to the Society executive.

c. Notice:

i. No vote on federating may be held between the following dates:
April 1 and September 15; and

December 1 and January 15.

ii. Notice of a vote on federating must be delivered by registered mail to the Society Executive Director not less than six (6) months prior to the vote.

iii. Notice of the referendum must be distributed to the Society membership no less than 21 days prior to the vote.

iv. Failure to adhere to the notice provisions in Articles c.i and c.ii shall invalidate the results of the referendum.

d. Administering the Campaign and Voting:

Within three months of the receipt of notice, a Referendum Organizing Committee (ROC) composed of two (2) members appointed by the Graduate Representative Council and chaired by the Society Chair shall be constituted to oversee the referendum process.

The ROC shall be responsible for drafting a Referendum Protocol by which the following referendum processes shall be governed:

i. the manner of voting;
ii. the number and location of polling stations;
iii. approving the materials to be distributed during the campaign period;
iv. the ballot question;
v. the vote count;
vi. establishing all other rules and regulations for the vote; and
vii. campaign spending limits.

e. Restrictions on ROC discretion:

i. Notwithstanding section 7.1.d.i, the ROC shall not permit voting by proxy or mail-in ballots.

ii. The campaign spending limit for either side shall not exceed $250.

f. The Referendum Question:

i. The referendum question shall stipulate the specific dollar amount by which student fees shall be increased if Society membership votes by a majority (50% + 1) to join a national or provincial student organization

ii. The University of Victoria administration shall refuse to collect and remit the student fee unless the question specifically satisfies 7.1.f.i.

g. Campaigning:

i. The campaign period shall be two (2) weeks immediately preceding the voting.

ii. Only full members of the Society shall be permitted to participate in the campaign.

iii. All campaign materials shall be provided to the Society's Executive Director for distribution to the Society membership.

h. Quorum:

Quorum for the referendum vote shall be twenty-five per cent (25%) of the Society full members as determined by current enrolment figures.

i. Annual Audits required:

If the Society votes by a majority to join a national or provincial student organization, the national or provincial student organization shall provide annual financial audits as stipulated by federal and provincial legislation for registered corporations or societies under the *Societies Act*. The annual financial audits shall be provided to the Society executive within six (6) months of the organizations' fiscal year end. The failure to do so shall result in the immediate termination of the Society membership in the national or provincial organization.

BYLAW VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

8.1 Purposes of the Executive Board:

The Executive Board shall manage the affairs of the Society and shall:

a. Strike committees as necessary and select chairpersons for the committees;
b. Appoint representatives to University committees as necessary;
c. Hire and supervise the Executive Director of the Society;
d. Establish policies of the Society, including all policies related to Society operations and management;
e. Have emergency authority to ensure compliance with all legal requirements; and
f. Exercise the powers of Grad Council on an emergency basis between Grad Council meetings.

8.2 The Executive Board shall be comprised of:

a. Chair;
b. Director of University/Internal Relations;
c. Director of External Relations;
d. Director of Finance;
e. Director of Student Life; and
f. Executive Director (ex-officio, non-voting)

8.3 Term of Office:

a. The term of office shall be from April 1 to March 31.
b. The Executive must be members of the Society upon their election and during their term of office, subject to the provisions of Bylaw 2.5(a)iv.

8.4 Procedures of the Executive Board:

a. The Executive Board shall normally meet at least once per month.
b. Meetings may be held either in person or virtually.
c. Notice of an Executive Board meeting shall be given at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
d. Quorum for Executive Board meetings shall be at least one-half (½) of its current voting members.

e. Resolutions of the Executive Board shall normally require a simple majority vote of the voting members present to pass.

BYLAW IX – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD DIRECTORS

9.1 The Executive Board, in addition to any duties imposed by the *Societies Act,* SBC 2015, c. 18 shall:

a. Uphold the constitution, bylaws, and policy of the Society;
b. Attend all Executive Board, Graduate Representative Council, and General Meetings;
c. Attend meetings with senior university administrators;
d. Report to the Graduate Representative Council and all General Meetings;
e. Maintain a list of current Graduate Representative Council members and ensure that sufficient notice of all Graduate Representative Council meetings is provided to all Graduate Representatives;
f. Hire and supervise the Executive Director of the Society;
g. Not concurrently be an employee of the Society;
h. Coordinate and ensure Society representation on university committees;
i. Represent the Society on search committees for senior university positions;
j. Represent the Society on external bodies;
k. Form committees as necessary;
l. Appoint an Executive Board member to liaise with UVSS;
m. Appoint an Executive Board member to chair the Society Health and Dental Appeals Committee;
n. Appoint an Executive Board member to sit on the University Grad Fee Reduction Appeals Committee;
o. Be aware and accountable for the financial position of the Society;
p. Ensure the maintenance of the Society's records;
q. Ensure institutional memory for each Executive Board portfolio, campaign and committee is maintained;
r. Individual duties as outlined in the Governance Manual;
s. Advocate on behalf of graduate student interests; and
t. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Board.

BYLAW X – EXECUTIVE BOARD DIRECTOR STIPEND

10.1 Directors of the Executive Board shall receive an annual stipend in an amount to be recommended by the Stipend Review Committee and approved at a General Meeting. The Committee will be elected by the Graduate Representative Council annually. Terms of reference for the committee will be set by the Graduate Representative Council, but the Committee's purpose(s) must include an annual review of the directors' hours and stipends. The Stipend Review Committee may invite any member of the Executive Board to submit information pertinent to the work of the committee. However, no current Executive Board member may sit on the Stipend Review Committee. Further, no member of the Stipend Review Committee may stand for election to the Executive Board as per Bylaw 4.7.a.

10.2 The stipend shall be paid in monthly instalments: within thirty (30) days following the completion of each month of service by an Executive Board director. The stipend is subject to approval by the Stipend Review Committee based on criteria laid out in Bylaw IX.

10.3 The Stipend Review committee has the right to disapprove payment of a monthly stipend instalment if the Committee has reason to believe that criteria stated in Bylaw IX are not met. In the event of a disapproved stipend instalment the Stipend Review Committee must notify the Executive Board member in a timely manner and request that they provide further information. The Stipend Review Committee shall approve the stipend instalment if they are satisfied with the information furnished by the Executive Board member.

10.4 An Executive Board member may appeal the Stipend Review Committee's decision to disapprove a stipend instalment to Grad Council. The decision of Grad Council is final.

BYLAW XI – VACANCIES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

11.1 Where an Executive office falls vacant prior to the normal expiry of the term of office, the position shall be filled during the next scheduled elections following the rules outlined in the Elections Bylaw.

11.2 Grad Council may appoint a member of the Society to fill the portion of the term remaining until the next scheduled elections for all Executive offices except Chair.

11.2 In the case of Chair, another member of the Executive Board shall assume all incumbent responsibility and authority of Chair until the next scheduled elections and a replacement for the Executive Board member's position may be appointed in accordance with Bylaw 12.4(b-d). Grad Council shall determine which Executive Board member shall assume the role of Chair in the event of disagreement.

BYLAW XII – REMOVAL OF DIRECTORS ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

12.1 A member of the Executive Board may be removed from office by a special resolution at a general meeting.

12.2 Any Executive Board director who is absent without cause from one (1) formal meeting of the Executive Board will be given a verbal reminder. Any Executive Board director who is absent without cause from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Executive Board is deemed to have resigned. Formal meetings shall be deemed to include meetings of the Executive Board, Graduate Representative Council, and General Meetings.

12.3 Any Executive Board director who is not a member of the Society in accordance with bylaw 2.1, 2.5(a)iv, and 8.3b shall be deemed to have resigned.

12.4 Leave of Absence may be granted to an Executive Board director provided that the Executive Board is given a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice. Emergency leaves of absence will be considered on a case by case basis by the Executive Board and Stipend Review Committee and will be limited to two (2) weeks. Remuneration will be suspended for absent periods and may be reallocated to a replacement member for the duration of the absence.

a. Leaves of absence may be granted for no longer than four (4) months by the Executive Board.
b. Replacement appointments for up to a cumulative one (1) month will be made at the discretion of the Executive Board.
c. Replacement appointments for greater than a cumulative one (1) month will be made at the discretion of Grad Council.
d. Replacement members will assume all incumbent responsibility and authority of the position they take.
e. In the event that the Chair requires leave, a member of the Executive Board shall assume all incumbent responsibility and authority and a replacement may be appointed for the Executive Board member's position. Grad Council shall determine which Executive Board member shall assume the role of Chair in the event of disagreement.

BYLAW XIII - RECORDS

13.1 All records and minutes of meetings and current fiscal year financial records that are in hard copy shall be kept at the office of the Society. All electronic records shall be stored on a secure server in compliant with applicable privacy legislation. All approved minutes of Executive Board meetings other than in-camera sessions, minutes of Grad Council meetings and General Meetings, and financial statements shall be publicly available on the Society's website.

13.2 Members shall have the right to inspect the records of the Society upon written request, and in compliance with applicable privacy legislation. Records shall be made available within a reasonable period of time after receipt of written request.

BYLAW XIV – SOCIETY FINANCES

14.1 Budget and Society Expenditures:

a. The annual budget shall be presented at the Semi-Annual General Meeting and revised budgets may be presented at other general meetings.
b. The Executive Board shall authorize all expenditures not explicitly covered in the budget, budget reallocations, and budget overruns of up to $2000.
c. Grad Council shall authorize all expenditures not explicitly covered in the budget, budget reallocations, and budget overruns that are greater than $2000 but not more than $10,000.
d. General Meetings shall authorize all expenditures not explicitly covered in the budget, budget reallocations, and budget overruns that are greater than $10,000.
e. The Executive Board shall have the authority to make emergency budget allocations and expenditures for Grad Centre repairs and maintenance.

14.2 Auditor and Audited Statements:

a. The auditor of the Society shall be recommended by the Executive Board and appointed at a General Meeting.
b. The auditor:
    i. Has a right of access at all times to all documents and records of the Society; and

ii. May require from the Executive Board, members, and staff of the Society such information and explanations as are necessary to enable their to report as required by the *Societies Act,* SBC 2015, c. 18.

c. An audited statement of the Society's finances will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

14.3 Membership Fees:

a. Membership fees shall be set by majority vote of a referendum held according to Society Bylaws. Where the referendum which set or revised the fee included provisions to increase the fee annual by the Consumer Price Index, the fees shall increase by the Provincial Consumer Price Index in line with GSS Core Membership Fees.
   i. Fees which include a CPI increase include: Constituency Groups, Campus Food Bank, CFUV, Conference Travel Fee, and Distance Travel Fee.
   ii. Fees which do not include a CPI increase include: Childcare fee, Anti-Violence Project, Ombudsperson, Clubs, WUSC, and Food and Beverage Fees.
b. Total core membership fees are automatically increased annually to a maximum determined by the provincial Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous fiscal year.
c. Fees are payable at the same time as tuition fees and shall be collected and duly remitted by the University.
d. Fees for associate members shall be set by a General Meeting resolution, and such a resolution shall be deemed a budget resolution for quorum purposes.
e. Honorary members shall not be required to pay any membership fees.
f. The distribution and use of membership fees may be changed by a General Meeting resolution, and such a resolution shall be deemed a budget resolution for quorum purposes.

14.4 Funds:

As per the Societies Act (2015), the funds of the Society shall consist of:

a. Membership fees;
b. Private endowments;
c. Any revenue accruing from a Society transaction;
d. Any grants received from the municipal, provincial, federal government(s), and/or non-governmental organizations; and
e. Any public donations.

14.5 Borrowing Powers:

The Society may, by special resolution at a General Meeting authorize the Executive Board to borrow or raise money and to secure repayment of the money in such a manner as it sees fit for the purpose of carrying out the objectives of the Society.

14.6 Signing Authority:

a. The signing officers of the Society shall be the Chair, the Director of Finance, the Operations and Services Manager, and the Executive Director.
b. The Executive Board may temporarily designate additional signing officers as necessary.
c. In order for transactions to be legally binding on the Society, the following shall be required:

i. The signatures of two (2) signing officers of which at least one (1) shall be a voting member of the Executive Board; or
ii. Explicit Executive Board authorization.

14.7 Insurance:

The Executive shall maintain Director's and Officer's Liability Insurance for the Society.

BYLAW XV – NON-PARTISANSHIP

15.1 Non-Partisan Status

The Society is a non-partisan organization. For the purpose of this Bylaw, *non-partisan* means that the Society operates independently of any political party or candidate and does not endorse, support, or oppose political parties or candidates. The Society may work with elected officials, regardless of political affiliation, to bring the needs and interests of graduate students to the forefront of both elected representatives' and the public's attention.

15.2 Political Nature of the Society

Non-partisanship is not equivalent to being apolitical. The work of the Society is inherently political, as it involves advocating for the interests, rights, and welfare of its members to governmental bodies, elected officials, and other decision-making authorities. Decisions made by governments at all levels directly impact the lives of graduate students, necessitating active and informed advocacy.

15.3 Lobbying and Political Engagement

Pursuant to the *British Columbia Lobbyists Transparency Act*, all elected members of the Society's Executive Board are required to register as lobbyists with the provincial government. As political actors representing an inherently political organization, the Society and its Executive Board agree to abide by the following principles:

15.3.1 Policy-Driven Advocacy

The Society and its Executive Board shall assess, advocate for, and advance public policies based solely on the merits of the policies and their alignment with the interests and welfare of the Society's members, without endorsement of or consideration of any political party affiliation or connection to any candidate for public office.

15.3.2 Good Faith Engagement

The Society and its Executive Board shall advocate, in good faith, for its members and their interests to all relevant political parties and candidates at all levels of government, without partisan bias or preference.

15.3.3 Member Education

The Society and its Executive Board shall educate its members on public policies, laws, and other political matters impacting them to the best of their ability in an impartial, accessible, and factual manner, without promoting or opposing any political party, partisan organization, or candidate for public office. The Society may register provincially or federally as a third-party sponsor.

15.3.4 Democratic Participation

The Society and its Executive Board shall promote and facilitate graduate student engagement in the democratic process, including spreading awareness of voting rights and encouraging active participation in municipal, provincial, and federal elections, without political bias or favour towards any political party or candidate.

15.3.5 Prohibition on Endorsements

Elected members of the Society's Executive Board must not, as representatives of the Society, endorse, publicly support or oppose any political party, candidate for public office, or partisan organization.

15.3.6 Prohibition on Candidacy

No elected member of the Society's Executive Board shall seek nomination for, or become a candidate in, any municipal, provincial, or federal election during their term of office with the Society.

15.3.7 Platform Access and Engagement

While the Society may engage with political parties, candidates, or representatives from different levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal) where it serves the interests of its members, non-partisanship does not oblige the Society to offer equal platform or access to all political parties, candidates, or representatives. The Society retains the discretion to determine the appropriateness, relevance, and alignment of such engagements with its advocacy priorities and the welfare of its members. The Society is not required to provide equal opportunity or access for every political party or candidate.

15.3.8 Prohibition on Political Funding

The Society shall not accept, either directly or indirectly, any financial contributions, goods, services, sponsorships, or other forms of material support, including in-kind contributions, from any political party, candidate for public office, or related organization. For the purpose of this Bylaw, *indirectly* includes all potential indirect contributions, such as through third parties.

BYLAW XVI – AMENDMENTS

16.1 Amendments to the constitution and bylaws shall be made by special resolution at a General Meeting or by referendum, according to the provisions of the *Societies Act,* SBC 2015, c. 18.

16.2 Amendments may be initiated by:

a. A resolution of the Executive Board;
b. A resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3) of Grad Council; or
c. A petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the full members of the Society

BYLAW XVII – DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY

Upon winding up or dissolution of the Graduate Students' Society, any assets remaining after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such Canadian students' organizations promoting objectives similar to those set out in the University of Victoria Graduate Students' Society constitution.