



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS) Governance Review

UVSS is seeking to engage with a Canadian research team to develop insights, implications, and recommendations related to its governance structure.

This invitation to submit a proposal aims to engage with Canadian researchers from a variety of disciplines to submit their ideas and concepts for research that will explore the questions outlined below.

Please submit all proposals, which should not exceed 5 pages in length (excluding cover page and/or cover letter) to [execdir@uvss.ca](mailto:execdir@uvss.ca) with the subject line "UVSS Governance Review Proposal" by **April 11, 2022**.

We encourage submissions from researchers who have a background in student governance, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), or the nonprofit sector, and who would be interested in working with UVSS on future projects as well as the one detailed below. Additionally, we encourage proposals with research teams lead by (51% or more) equity-seeking or underrepresented groups including those identifying as racialized, Black, and/or People of Colour, People with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities), 2SLGBTQ+ and/or gender and sexually diverse individuals, and Indigenous Peoples.

### Background

The University of Victoria Students' Society represents approximately 19,000 undergraduate students at the University of Victoria. Our mission is to be a leader in providing high-quality accessible services, advocacy and events that enhance the student experience, and to build a campus community that embodies our values.

Our vision is to see full student engagement in our core components of advocacy, events, services, businesses and society governance. Our values are Good Governance, Environmental Sustainability, Service, Decolonization, Social Justice, and Fun.

UVSS is committed to ensuring that it embodies its values. In December 2021, the UVSS completed an equity assessment of its Board of Directors. This assessment analyzes policy, bylaws and constitution, and connects with current and previous board members and stakeholders in order to identify areas where the UVSS can improve from an equity, diversity, and inclusion perspective. UVSS is currently considering these recommendations and the Board is working to implement them.

The UVSS Board of Directors is the collective decision-making body for the Students' Society. They organize events, provide services, and advocate for students. The Board is currently made up of 22 student directors:

- Five Lead Directors
- Eleven Directors at Large
- One Director of International Student Relations
- Four Constituency Organization (Advocacy Group) Representatives, and
- One Native Students' Union Representative.

With the understanding that student burnout is on the rise, the UVSS is looking for recommendations to address this issue as it occurs in the Board.

In the past year, faculty representation in the UVSS Board of Directors has been discussed as a way to create more opportunities for representation and engagement from students. The motion to replace nine of the Director at Large positions in the UVSS to nine faculty director positions was passed in the 2022 UVSS semi-annual general meeting. This governance review may also provide insight on the strengths and weaknesses of its incorporation into the current governance structure.

### Project Overview

With the completion of an equity assessment of the UVSS Board of Directors, the UVSS has received several recommendations from both the UVSS Board and its staff on how to incorporate EDI into the organization.

In reviewing options for potential changes to the governance structure, UVSS is prioritizing the following criteria: EDI, long-term financial sustainability, and student well-being. Therefore, the research project must include the following deliverables:

- 1) Incorporation of UVSS Board of Directors' Equity Assessment
- 2) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis of UVSS' current governance structure.
  - a) Interviews of current and past Board members within the past 5 years
  - b) Review of feedback from Strategic Planning Sessions
- 3) Environmental scan of governance structures of the student societies within the following universities:
  - i) Emily Carr University of Art and Design
  - ii) OCAD University
  - iii) McGill University
  - iv) Ryerson University
  - v) University of Alberta
  - vi) University of Ottawa
  - vii) University of Regina
  - viii) University of Toronto - Scarborough Campus
  - ix) University of Waterloo
  - x) and a comparison of these structures with UVSS'.

The selected researcher will be producing a study that investigates the state of the UVSS Board of Directors in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion, and current governance structure and areas of improvement, with a focus on the well-being of the elected Board of Directors, both now and in the future. The researcher(s) will play an important role in this project, designing and conducting the study and

providing options and recommendations for a governance structure that UVSS will implement.

### Framing Questions

- EDI
  - How do we implement the findings of the UVSS' Equity Audit into the governance review, and proposed governance structure?
  - How can EDI be better incorporated in the board culture, support for Lead Directors, and an integral part of the workplace?
- UVSS' Governance Structure
  - What priorities emerge from the SWOT analysis of UVSS' governance structure?
  - How does UVSS' governance structure impact the student directors' well-being, and how can they be addressed to reduce burnout?
- Environmental Scan of Governance Structures
  - What are the governance structures of Canadian student unions/societies with comparable organizational values, membership size and budget?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of these structures?
  - Are there best practices that the UVSS should implement in order to promote financial sustainability and the well-being of student directors?
    - Are these best practices appropriate to the culture within UVSS and the UVSS' broader context?
  - Are there practices that the UVSS needs to retain, regardless of the changes that may be implemented through this study?
- Financial Sustainability
  - What, if any, are the financial implications of the proposed changes?
  - How can we secure long-term financial security?
    - Incorporating steady financial growth over the long term, other than student/membership fee.
- Student Well-Being
  - Internal: Which governance structure would be the most conducive in terms of the student directors' well-being? (Consider the following factors: workload, division of labour, resources, complexity of portfolios, opportunities for staff support)
  - External: The UVSS' mission is to enhance the student experience and to build a campus community that embodies our values (decolonization, social justice, environmental sustainability, good governance, excellence, and fun). Which governance structure would

best allow the UVSS to achieve this?

- Faculty Representation
  - How can UVSS Faculty Directors meaningfully represent and advocate for their constituents?
  - How can the findings of the UVSS Equity Audit be incorporated into this proposed model?
  - How can the UVSS avoid duplication of work and overlap in responsibilities between Faculty Directors and Course Union / Professional Development Union representatives?
  - What are current best practices in student societies with Faculty Directors?
  
- Implementation Plan
  - How can the UVSS implement these recommendations, and what is the timeframe to implement these recommendations? Please provide a recommended implementation plan with target dates for each action item.
  
- Other
  - Do the recommendations have legal implications for UVSS?

### Submissions

Key details for this opportunity are found below.

### **Scope**

The project will explore questions described above using qualitative and/or quantitative research methods. Findings will be provided to the UVSS through a presentation to the UVSS Board of Directors and the UVSS Excluded Managers. As well, the recommendations must be provided to these two groups through a briefing note no longer than 2 pages.

### **Time Period**

Project will begin on May 9, 2022, and the report will be submitted by December 23, 2022. The presentation of the report and findings will take place by January 31, 2023.

### **Deliverables**

The project will include a deliverable of a preliminary findings report and presentation by May 16, 2022. After this initial presentation, the researcher(s) may receive additional or different directions from the UVSS for this project based on feedback.

### **Ownership**

All research conducted, content created, and insights developed will be owned by UVSS.

## Budget

The project is expected to range between \$25,000 and \$40,000 CAD. Competitive proposals must thoughtfully consider and provide perspectives on the framing questions above at minimum.

The following criteria will be used to determine which budget range will be awarded to the selected research team:

Budget Range	Criteria
\$25,000 - \$30,000	<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some primary data gathered through online surveys, some interviews conducted with select UVSS staff or volunteers.</li> </ul> <p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely comprised of a review of secondary data provided by the UVSS, some primary research conducted</li> </ul> <p>Implementation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a broad date range for recommendations</li> </ul>
\$30,000 - \$35,000	<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combination of quantitative and qualitative data,</li> <li>Interview questions are grounded in the data provided by UVSS</li> </ul> <p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of secondary data provided by the UVSS</li> <li>Primary research conducted mostly through individual or focus group interviews</li> </ul> <p>Implementation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides recommendations, outlines people responsible for a task, and target deadlines</li> </ul>
\$35,000 - \$40,000	<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combination of quantitative and qualitative data,</li> <li>Interview questions are grounded in the data provided by UVSS</li> </ul>

	<p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review of secondary data provided by the UVSS</li> <li>● Primary research conducted mostly through individual or focus group interviews</li> </ul> <p>Implementation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highly specific - recommendation and deliverables, a lead and people responsible for a task, and target deadlines</li> <li>● Clear deliverables outlined in a step-by-step process for implementation</li> </ul>
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## Proposal Components

Submitted proposals should not exceed 5 pages in length (excluding cover letter / cover page), and will include:

- Research strategy, methods, and analysis plans
- Proposed partners, activities, and other deliverables
- Research team biographies and experience
- Workplan and budget

## Evaluation Criteria

All submitted proposals will be judged against these criteria:

- **Experience:** Research team has the demonstrated ability to deliver successfully on project
- **Alignment with UVSS Values:** The research team must demonstrate that they align with UVSS' values
- **Approach:** The recommended strategy and activities address the framing questions, delivering new and actionable insights to the UVSS Board of Directors
- **Value:** The budget is cost effective and the timeline meets the needs of UVSS

Additionally, we encourage proposals that meet the following criteria:

- **Diversity:** Research team is managed (51%) by equity-seeking or underrepresented groups including those identifying as racialized, Black, and/or People of Colour, People with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities), 2SLGBTQ+ and/or gender and sexually diverse individuals, and Indigenous Peoples



Proposals should be submitted by **April 11, 2022** to [execdir@uvss.ca](mailto:execdir@uvss.ca) with the subject line "UVSS Governance Review Proposal".

Any questions about the submission process and project can be directed to Charlene Campo ([execdir@uvss.ca](mailto:execdir@uvss.ca)) and must be received prior to **April 4, 2022**. Please allow two business days for responses.