ABOUT THE UVSS
The University of Victoria Students’ Society (UVSS) is a non-profit society run by students for students. It was founded in 1963 and represents all 17,000+ undergraduate students at the University of Victoria. The UVSS’ annually elected student board of directors is responsible for a $10 million year operation that is housed in the Student Union Building. The UVSS works on your behalf by offering essential services, throwing great events and building partnerships to support your interests at all levels of government.

VISION
Our vision is a picture of what we aspire to create. To be a leader in providing high-quality services, advocacy and events which enhance the student experience and build a campus community that embodies our values.

VALUES
Our values are what we stand for. They underlie our vision and guide how we make decisions, perform our work and work with each other. There are six core or primary driving forces behind all that we do:

Equity We believe in an equitable society in which no person is left behind. Whether we are providing services such as the Emergency Food Bank or advocating for an accessible and affordable post-secondary education, the UVSS works every day to achieve a just society.

Facts We believe that our campus should be fun. Students should be able to feel excited about the work their student society does and experience a dynamic atmosphere that propels engagement and positive change.

Community We believe in a campus where students feel a sense of belonging, solidarity and mutual respect. We foster this by creating spaces in which students are able to come together and participate in our events, advocacy, and non-profit services.

Inclusiveness We believe that the UVSS should be as open, transparent and welcoming as possible to all students and community members. We believe that inclusiveness is an action and not a passive belief.

Advocacy We believe in working with and on behalf of students to promote and defend their interests and rights at all levels of government. We will partner with other groups, raise awareness and empower students to create change.

Sustainability We believe that our use of resources should not only meet our present needs but also the needs of future generations. We work to reduce the environmental impact of our operations by working collaboratively with like-minded organizations.

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Message from the Chairperson
Hello UVic Students!

On behalf of your UVic Students’ Society, I would like to thank you for making the 2011-2012 term such an excellent year. As a board, we have been working hard to represent students.

This year, we’ve taken the lead in a new partnership between provincial students’ societies – the Where’s the Funding?! Campaign – to lobby for more funding for universities, the elimination of interest on student loans and a needs based grants program. The campaign has been featured in most media outlets in the province, has led to multiple meetings with the Minister of Advanced Education, and an endorsement of our recommendations by the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

Closer to home, we have worked to improve transit services through our Passed Up campaign. We met with local mayors, lobbied the University and engaged students to discuss the need to improve transit infrastructure and get more buses on the road. This campaign has also received traction – winning spots on air with CTV and CFX.

In the SUB, we worked hard to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of our businesses. Our budget includes a surplus of approximately $87,000 which we are on track to surpass. We’ve listened to students and put sustainability to the forefront. We have begun phasing bottled water out of operations, and worked with student groups to reduce food waste in our operations.

Our services exist to make student lives easier and more fun. We’ve added dental coverage. We’re proud that students are taking the leading in creating new projects on campus – this year had more clubs and course unions than ever before in UVSS history!

Looking forward, the UVSS has engaged in a long-term strategic planning process which will allow us to have a cohesive vision for the future. Our doors are always open and we would love to hear your thoughts and feedback on engaging campus community. As a board, our accomplishments wouldn’t be possible without the enthusiasm of the incredible student community. Thank you for the support!

Sincerely,

Tara Paterson
YOUR PROVINCE IS A LOAN SHARK.

BC CHARGES THE HIGHEST INTEREST ON STUDENT LOANS IN CANADA.

The government borrows at 1% below prime and charges students 2.5% above prime. Newfoundland Labrador eliminated interest on student loans in 2009. It’s time for the BC government to follow suit and stop making money off students’ backs.

EMAIL MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION NAOMI YAMAMOTO TODAY AND LET HER KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO SEE A PROPERLY FUNDED POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM IN BC.

wheresthefunding.org

Advocacy

Post-secondary Education

We have been working hard on strengthening our partnerships with other student societies in BC around the issue of affordable post-secondary education. This year, the UVSS established the Where’s The Funding?! (WTF!!) campaign with student societies from UBC, SFU, Capilano, Langara, University of the Fraser Valley and UNBC. The BCIT Student Association recently joined the campaign which means that we now represent over 180,000 students across BC, making us the largest student-organised post-secondary campaign in BC. We are going to be hosting a press conference at the provincial legislature on February 14th where we will deliver Valentine’s Day cards to the Minister of Advanced Education. We will also be hosting a lobby session with the government at the end of March around reinstating a provincial grants program. This year represents a huge step forward for the UVSS in regards to working with other student societies and expanding our capacity to conduct professional lobbying.

Public Education

The UVSS continued its collaboration with Greater Victoria education sector stakeholders this year through the United for Public Education (UPE) group – which the UVSS took a leading role in organizing. UPE operates on the basis that education sector stakeholders cannot afford to be played off against each other – and instead must lobby government for holistic, whole-systems strategies for improving education from pre-school all the way to PRD. Over the summer, UPE began building its network and in the fall it ran ads aimed at questioning whether local school boards were putting the interests of students first. UPE also made a presentation to the BC Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services – arguing for a whole-systems approach to the education sector that emphasizes Return on Investment thinking. Currently, UPE is revising its campaign plan for the 2012-2013 year.
Public Transit

The UVSS has been working hard to reduce bus pass-ups with our ‘Passed Up’ campaign this year. We have had thousands of students fill out passed up postcards that are being sent off to Minister of Transportation Blair Lekstrom demanding that money from the carbon tax be reinvested into transit in the Victoria Region to allow for more buses on the road. The bus drivers union has been very supportive of our campaign so far and has recently launched their own initiative to fight for fewer student pass-ups and to have more buses going to UVic. We have also met with B.C. Transit and municipal mayors to discuss the benefit of the proposed light rail transit project and the need to develop transit priority lanes. Meanwhile, late night transit has been approved to go even later on Friday and Saturday nights. Additionally, UVSS board members have been lobbying the University to expand transit infrastructure on campus to allow for more bus stops so that we can accommodate B.C. Transit. The issue has been picked up by local news on television (CTV), radio (CFAX) and in the paper (Times Colonist and The Martlet).

Violence Against Women

Earlier this year, the University cancelled the annual memorial service for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women for the first time in 19 years. They claimed that when UVic’s senate voted to cancel class 19 years ago, it was only meant to be for one year. There were excellent alternate events hosted by AVP, Equity and Human Rights, the Women’s Center and the Academic Women’s Caucus including a film screening of “Finding Dawn” and “Marker of Change – The Story of the Women’s Monument.” Nonetheless, without academic amnesty, it is difficult for students and faculty to attend an event in the last week of classes. The UVSS supported AVP’s clothesline project display and wrote a letter about the issue. After meeting with the University and several advocacy groups, it appears as though the dedicated hour will return.
Community & Events

Events

This September, the UVSS delivered its standard line-up of welcome back events such as the Pancake Breakfast, Clubs and Course Union Days, and the Sleeping Bag Drive In, while also bringing some new additions to the roster. For the first time ever we had an extended beer garden in front of Felicita’s for the first two weeks of class, featuring live music and allowing us to significantly expand the seating capacity of the pub. We also worked with Vikes Athletics to bring back Thunderfest, a day-long event featuring info booths, games, activities, and live sets from local artists Vince Vacarro and Acres of Lions. Another September highlight was teaming up with UVic Res Life to throw an all-ages concert featuring the indie-rock band Hey Ocean in Vertigo. Felicita’s saw its weekly fall classics return, such as UVic Idol and trivia night, while adding some new features such as our live band karaoke night, Jamaroko. In the winter months we took a break from the pub and concert-style events to focus on non-traditional events, including our day-long cultural festival and fashion show Culture Shock, and our three-day sex positive event Sexapalooza. A large theme within this year’s events committee was collaboration, as the UVSS found itself teaming up with Res Life, the Vikes, and various advocacy groups within the SUB to bring our students a wide-ranging and diverse line-up of events.

Student Groups

Clubs and Course Unions play an integral part of community on campus, providing social connections to students from all walks of life that transcend academic discipline. This year was a record-breaking year for our clubs and course unions system, with over 200 unique clubs and 45 different course unions registering with the UVSS. Some of the highlights for clubs and course unions this year include fundraisers, parties, concerts, conferences, competitions, and multinational trips for aid missions. There was an overwhelming amount of collaboration between UVic groups and affiliates. Over the past year the UVSS has worked to streamline clubs and course union policy, update manuals, and increase accessibility to resources for these groups in order to ensure their future success.

Looking to the future, we are proud to announce that Vertigo recently had a fully functional sound-system installed, as well as its lighting rack updated. We are hoping these improvements will lead to more use of the room by the UVSS and other on-campus groups for concerts, fundraisers, and other performances in the future. We have also updated our UVSS Events Facebook group and have created an events-specific Twitter account, in hopes of increasing the marketing and promotion of our events.

The events committee is in the process of planning our year-end events, and welcomes any UVic student who would like to get involved in the planning process to contact our Director of Events Remy Hall at uvsevnt@uvic.ca.
ONE OF THESE PROVINCES IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS.

BC IS THE ONLY PROVINCE IN CANADA WITHOUT A STUDENT GRANTS PROGRAM.

Part of making post-secondary education accessible is by providing needs-based grants to help students get their foot in the door. Grants were eliminated by the BC government in 2004. Let’s get them back.

EMAIL MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION NAOMI YAMAMOTO TODAY AND LET HER KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO SEE A PROPERLY FUNDED POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM IN BC.

wheresthefunding.org

Finances

Financial Position

The UVSS is expanding on great work done last year to get our finances back on track. Years of accumulated deficits are being erased by yet another year in which we are predicting a large projected surplus. Based on current projections, we should have completely eliminated our accumulated deficit by some point in 2013. We have made targeted capital investments in support of student spaces, improved our food services and we will be adding new study/working space in the main hallways of the SUB.

Our annual independent audit passed with flying colours and it is available online at uvss.ca along with our annual operating budget.

Strategic Planning

We recently began the process of developing a strategic plan – the first in the long history of the UVSS. The planning process has helped us clarify our values and hone in on problem areas that should be addressed. Currently, we are setting out a mission plan accompanied by concrete, measurable actions that can set a unified direction over the next few years.
Services

Infrastructure

A primary focus of the Board this year has been to keep our services relevant to students. The University is currently undergoing a few major renovations, so we are taking steps to ensure that the UVSS keeps up to the changing face of campus. We are in the midst of approving new seating in the hallway beside the SUB Upper Lounge which will increase study space on campus by providing high seating with laptop outlets. We will also be doing the same type of seating near Bean There to diversify the way we offer space to students in the SUB.

UVSS Emergency Food Bank

The food bank is a service which increases in usage year after year. As such, making sure we buy food at the lowest possible price is always paramount to its operation. We worked this year to make sure the doors are open as much as possible by establishing a 10 hour a week food bank assistant position to supplement our volunteer hours. We have also worked to expand the selection of food offered to accommodate students’ dietary restrictions.

Health Plan

There was a minor change to the health plan this year in regards to coverage levels. We increased our dental coverage from $750 to $850, which should be a huge benefit to students. In response to student concerns, we increased dental coverage in the Health and Dental Plan, and set up in-person opt-outs all through September. Currently, we are reviewing coverage in the plan – but we anticipate only modest changes – likely expanding coverage to ensure that certain critical pharmaceuticals are included. Dental coverage is one that students use the most, so we felt that increasing coverage can only save students money.

New Services

The UVSS Board approved going forward with needle disposal boxes in the bathrooms in the SUB to allow for safer disposal of needles and sharp objects on campus. This initiative was proposed by UVSS club Harm Less to address the diverse health needs of the campus community.
Sustainability

Energy

This year, energy efficiency in the Student Union Building was a major concern that we chose to tackle. In partnership with the University, the UVSS is renovating its massive walk-in freezers, replacing an incredibly wasteful water-cooled system with an energy efficient air-cooled system. The UVSS also commissioned an on-going top-to-bottom energy efficiency audit of the SUB, which has already identified over $13,000/year in potential savings – with hopefully more opportunities yet to be discovered.

Composting & Recycling

The UVSS has worked with environmental groups on campus this past year to see the expansion of both composting and recycling in the SUB. We were able to secure recycling storage for the UVic Sustainability Project’s comprehensive recycling program in conjunction with the Pacific Mobile Depot. Plans are underway to install a permanent recycling facility in the main hall. We also worked with Common Energy to expand our composting program, adding 6 new compost stations in the SUB.

Bottled Water

Following last spring’s referendum in which an overwhelming number of students (85%) voted to phase out bottled water on campus, the SUB has replaced bottled water with reusable water bottles in our vending machines and some food outlets. We are looking to be bottled water free by the end of 2012. We have also met with the University to lobby them to move forward with a bottled water ban as well. So far, the University has instituted “bottle water free zones” and is engaging in a consultation process to move forward with the project. Additionally, Common Energy has been collaborating with the UVSS to develop a campaign to have the University adopt a Responsible Investment Policy.