



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

About

As an undergraduate student at the University of Victoria, you automatically become a valued member of the UVic Students' Society (UVSS). Since its inception in 1964, UVSS has been a non-profit organization operated by students, dedicated to providing essential services, representation, advocacy, and organizing exciting events for our community of over 19,000 members. Our Society operates independently from the University, and we take pride in managing nine diverse student-centred businesses in the Student Union Building (SUB). We are dedicated to addressing a wide range of student issues, ensuring that the voices of our members are heard by the University administration and all levels of government.

Governance

A democratically elected student Board of Directors oversees the UVSS. The Board meets twice a month in order to effectively govern the Society. Students are invited to actively participate on the Board's various committees.

The Board consists of the following directors:

- Eleven Directors-at-Large
- International Student representative
- Four advocacy group representatives
- Native Students Union representative
- Five Lead Directors
 - Director of Campaigns and Community Relations
 - Director of Student Affairs
 - Director of Finance and Operations
 - Director of Events
 - Director of Outreach and University Relations

Elections for these positions take place in March, with the exception of: the representatives for the Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM), UVic Pride Collective, the Native Students Union (NSU), the Students of Colour Collective (SOCC) and the Society for Students with a Disability (SSD); these groups elect their representatives to the Board of Directors at their general meetings.

Message from the Executive Committee

Dear fellow students,

We want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to serve as your elected representatives and be a part of the UVSS community. Working hard for you and serving you over the past couple of semesters has been an honour.

We are thrilled to have made significant progress in enhancing campus services, running crucial campaigns, hosting exciting events, and keeping the membership informed of the available services and support.

Campus Kick-Off was a huge success this year, bringing new and returning students together to enjoy the classic free pancake breakfast, the ever-popular Movie in the Quad, and the exciting Bands on the Roof. After two years of Covid-19 restrictions, we were grateful to return to almost full capacity and make this event possible.

In addition, we ignited existing campaigns and created new ones, such as Rent With Rights, which called on the Province and UVIC to take radical action on housing. We also improved harm reduction on campus through naloxone training sessions. Moreover, we have been working diligently behind the scenes with students and staff to maintain the operation of the Student Union Building, which employs over 200 staff members.

Here are some other highlights from this year that we're proud of:

- We are proud to have released the governance review and streamlined our policies to be as straightforward as possible.
- We passed all our Bylaw and Constitution motions and amendments during the AGM and SAGM.
- We doubled the voter turnout for the 2023 Board of Directors elections from the previous year.
- We also advocated and supported the Food Bank and Free Store.
- We supported over 200 clubs, 30 course unions, and four professional development unions.
- We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you, and we wish you all the best in the coming semester.

Sincerely,

The 2022-2023 UVSS Executive Team

CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

IZZY ADACHI

Director of Campaigns and Community Relations

This year has been a momentous one for our campaigns. We've worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the student housing crisis, both in the news and at council hearings. By speaking out and sharing our stories, we've challenged the narratives that have prevented progress on this issue.

Housing Now!

Through our Housing Now! Campaign and rally, we created a collaborative banner filled with our housing horror stories and flew it in front of the legislature. This collaborative effort helped shift the conversation around housing policy not only in Victoria but also beyond.

Our collaborations with other student unions led us to prioritize affordable student housing in our 2023 budget consultation asks. Additionally, we lobbied the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training to secure funding for hybrid learning, while also advocating for the elimination of unpaid practicums, which disproportionately impact women.

Our lobbying and activism efforts resulted in significant victories, including the implementation of legalized secondary suites and roommates in Oak Bay. We also fought for the Missing Middle policy in Victoria. The provincial government committed to much of the radical housing action we asked for through Housing Now!

Let's Get Consensual

Through our Let's Get Consensual campaign, we continued to provide safer sex supplies and sex education material. Our collaboration with UVSS Advocacy, led by the Gender Empowerment Centre, resulted in a successful planning and sponsorship of SEXPO! Our annual sex positivity and education expo received positive feedback and was well-attended.

Harm Reduction

We also contributed to planning the Harm Reduction fair, in partnership with Substance UVIC, Hard LAW, Safer Use, and allies. The fair was a great success, and we were happy to see students receive Naloxone training and learn more about drug testing and harm reduction.

Access4All

In keeping with our commitment to accessibility, we officially ratified Access4All as a UVSS campaign. We regularly raise the issue of accessible learning to the university, recognizing that access is a concern for everyone. Hybrid learning would not only boost enrollment but also create flexibility for working or caretaking students, assist in mental well-being, and make spaces safer for disabled and immunocompromised students. Additionally, we provided thousands of KN95s and COVID-19 Rapid Action Tests through #MaskUpUVIC in collaboration with the Canadian Red Cross.

UVSS Elections

We are proud to have increased voter turnout in the UVSS elections from 4% to 9.9%, thanks to the hard work of staff members and volunteers alike for the UVSS referendum questions, and due to the return of in-person campaigning. We also worked with Sonia Theroux to provide UVSS Elections Workshops to our members; three workshops were held during the UVSS Elections nomination period to try to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the UVSS Board of Directors. Leadership and campaigning workshops were also held for elections candidates to develop these skills in students and to promote a fair election. Lastly, we have opened up the Campaigns fund to make grassroots student-led campaigns possible by streamlining the Campaigns committee policy.

We will continue to work towards making the UVSS more democratic and ensuring that the student voice is heard on the issues that matter. Thank you for your ongoing support, and stay tuned for more updates! Thank you for your support and stay tuned for more updates!



FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

LANE O'HARA COOKE

Director of Finance and Operations

It has been a fulfilling term in the Finance and Operations portfolio. Together, we made strides towards tangible measures that make this campus a better environment to foster vibrant student life. After serving as your Director of Finance and Operations as well as the Advocacy Representative for the Gender Empowerment Centre, I am thrilled to have been recently elected to spend another year serving on the UVSS Board as your next Director of Outreach and University Relations.

Health and Dental Plan

Established a groundbreaking pilot project with our student Health and Dental Plan which provides up to 80% coverage for adult autism assessments, as there are no publicly funded assessments for adults in the province. This ensures that students that have been historically excluded from access to diagnoses can finally receive the care and learning accommodations in class that they deserve.

Added extensive coverage for gender-affirming care in the upcoming Health and Dental Plan. This is long awaited and necessary physical and mental health care for Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary students. The UVSS will be one of the first student unions in Western Canada to add this care. Students will have the ability to use this coverage in the upcoming school year.

Sustainability

Obtained approval for a sustainability project that will break ground this summer. This project is aligned with the recommendations of the SUB's 2020 Energy Audit. A vestibule will be added to the entrance doors by Cinecenta to conserve heat during the colder months. This will save money and energy, as well as ensure comfort to students, staff, and community members in the SUB.

Affordability

The entire Executive Committee lobbied UVic on affordability issues, leading UVic to allocate an additional \$2 million towards bursaries for students in need.

Pride Collective

Laid a solid foundation of financial understanding for the Pride Collective at the most recent Pride Annual General Meeting. This empowers staff and collective members to take action and initiative with their funds to ensure a successful start to the new 2SLGBTQ+ group on campus. With the hefty amount of funds sitting in trust, Pride has the ability to provide robust services, events, and programs for students.

Food Bank and Free Store

The UVSS planned for a \$200,000 deficit this school year for our Food Bank and Free Store. Due to dire food insecurity amongst the student population, this was a necessary financial hit to take, but not a sustainable one. In my term, we were able to raise \$72,000 in funds for our food bank to offset the hit. I am very thankful for those who contributed, but disappointed to say that UVic did not donate a single dollar. Long-term, sustained support will be something I fight for in my next term as the Director of Outreach and University Relations.

Operations

Updated key pieces of equipment in our businesses, necessary for continued operation. This included a new espresso machine at the Munchie Bar, a new digital colour press for Zap Copy, and new audio-visual equipment for our catering department.

Made agreements with the Dentist and the pharmacy for long term lease extensions.

Work in progress:

Adding virtual uncapped mental health care to the Health Plan so students can connect with counsellors, psychiatrists, and other specialized mental health professionals all across the country. Students will pay zero out of pocket fees no matter how many appointments they book. Students will be matched with a specific counsellor, rather than being bounced around to whoever is available. This ensures quality and consistency in care.

This has been a year of learning, persistence, and care. I thank all UVSS Members for allowing me the opportunity to serve this community. It's been the pleasure of my life. Onwards.



STUDENT AFFAIRS

DEBORAH BERMAN Director of Student Affairs

It has been an absolute privilege serving as your Director of Student Affairs over the past year. I am thrilled with the progress we have made and am excited about the future of this portfolio with the incoming Director of Student Affairs for the 23/24 board year.

Student Affairs is a complex and multifaceted portfolio as it supports over 150 clubs, 30 course unions, 4 Professional Development Unions, and 5 advocacy groups. This year this portfolio centred on transitioning back to in-person learning and creating the foundation for connection on campus.

This year my focus was on:

- Promoting and increasing the ease and accessibility of starting and joining clubs on campus
- Fostering social justice, interconnectedness, and the UVSS' core values through advocacy
- Creating systems for succession planning and onboarding for future Directors in this portfolio

Clubs & Course Unions:

Clubs and course unions act as a crucial starting point for friendships and connections at UVic. This was extra important this year because it was the first full year back on campus. In September, I hosted the first Clubs and Course Union Days (CCU Days) in the SUB since the beginning of COVID-19. We were able to host over 100 clubs, 20 course unions and gave out over 1000 free hotdogs to students. A cool addition this year was that we hired a photographer to take professional photos of all of the Clubs and Course Unions in attendance! Similarly, in January, we hosted Winter CCU Days for the first time since 2020. As the starting points of the Fall and Winter semester, it was incredible to see all of you and connect you with students that share the same passions and interests.

Key Achievements:

- Hosted two Clubs and Course Union Days in-person.
- Offered opportunities for feedback within council on the attendance form to increase engagement with the Director of Student Affairs.
- Allocated over \$70,000 to Clubs and Course Unions through special project, travel, publication, and academic grants.
- Updated Course Union Policy for the first time since 2020.
- Created new graphics to be put in the UVSS washrooms with important ratification information.
- In the aftermath of the earthquake in Turkey, organized an emergency Clubs Council meeting to formally ratify a Turkish Students Society.
- Met quorum at almost all council meetings.
- To ensure accessibility I continued with hybrid office hours and organized one-on-one meetings outside of these times.
- Processed over 100 cheque requisitions in one week!

Advocacy Groups:

This aspect of the Student Affairs portfolio is centered on supporting our four advocacy groups (Students of Colour Collective, Society for Students with a Disability, Gender Empowerment and the Pride Collective) and the Native Students Union. As the Chair of Advocacy Relations Committee (ARC), this portfolio is responsible for creating a safe space for advocacy representatives to meet regularly and acts as the main liaison among all 5 groups. This past year we met every two weeks following the board meeting on Monday nights. This committee regularly met quorum and different advocacy representatives had the opportunity to practice co-chairing with me. I was honored to play a supporting role in advocacy run projects like GEM's Sexpo in February, the Pride Collective AGM and the ongoing Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation Program.

Key Achievements:

- Developed a new system for ARC funding proposals.
- Brought forth funding proposals to ARC which approved the use of the Advocacy Constituency Fund to be used for joint advocacy group projects like the ordering of safer sex supplies and Advocacy Week in September.
- Created a master document for onboarding advocacy representatives which provides a starting point for better comprehension of UVSS policy and institutional knowledge.
- Founding member of the Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR) Program which brought together all five advocacy groups in partnership with Vikes, CanAssist, and the Office of Student Life.
- Onboarded five advocacy representatives throughout the year in collaboration with their coordinators and outgoing representatives to ensure a smooth transition process.
- Established a new Pride Collective.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Reflections:

As I reflect on my term as a UVSS Lead Director, I recognize the importance of highlighting both the progress we have made and the issues and concerns we faced. At the beginning of my tenure, I identified a core issue within the portfolio - a gap in the knowledge of resources available to clubs and course unions. Due to high turnover rates each year, clubs and course unions require ongoing support. Therefore, I made it a priority to focused on outreach to clubs and the creation of new materials.

I am pleased to share that we have made significant progress in addressing these concerns. One of our major accomplishments was the creation of a new Course Union Handbook that will be made available on our website. We also developed cheque requisition cheat sheets, drafted a constitution to be used by all CCUs, and enhanced the information available on the CCU webpage. By creating materials that facilitate smoother transitions within the portfolio and on the club/course union executive level, we have been able to better support our members.

Another aspect of the Director of Student Affairs role is the challenge of managing two distinct spheres within the portfolio. While this remains an ongoing struggle, I took several steps to streamline processes and manage my workload effectively. I established a consistent meeting schedule for Clubs Council, Course Union Council, and ARC from the outset, which helped me prioritize meetings and workload based on upcoming deadlines. At times, I processed over 100 cheque requisitions in a single week, but by keeping a detailed schedule, color-coordinated checklist, and staying goal-oriented, I was able to handle the workload of this portfolio.

As we look towards the future of this portfolio, introducing an updated mechanism to process cheque requisitions and handle funding could alleviate some of the workload from the Director of Student Affairs. However, it is important to note that despite the demanding nature of this portfolio, it is a privilege to support the incredible work of our members.

Overall, I am incredibly proud of this past year within my portfolio! It has been an honor to represent you all as your Director of Student Affairs.



JAN 18 & 19
10am-4:30pm

HOSTED AT
THE STUDENT UNION BUILDING



EVENTS

AMBER POWELL Director of Events

This year, we have been committed to providing resources and support to ensure that students feel safe and secure while attending classes. With the affordability crisis affecting so many of us, we focused on providing hot meals, clothing, and fun activities for students and the community.

CKO - Campus Kick Off

As I reflect on the 2022-2023 school year, I am proud of the successful events we organized. Campus Kick-Off 2022 was a highlight, with the semester's first pancake breakfast attracting over 800 students. The event went smoothly, and CFUV provided music to enhance the atmosphere. The movie night featuring *Encanto* was a smash hit, and we collected numerous food donations for the UVSS Food Bank and Free Store. The final day of CKO was also a success, with well-received performances by the bands. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of our incredible staff and volunteers who dedicated their time and skills to ensure the events ran smoothly.

Hot Lunch | Clothing Swap | Puppy Cuddles

Our primary goal was to organize events that focused on mental health and student well-being. I am proud to say that we achieved this goal and have paved the way for even more frequent mental health events in the future. It is crucial to understand how the stress of the affordability crisis can negatively impact students' physical and emotional well-being. We have achieved the highest participation in hot lunches and pancake breakfasts in UVSS history, providing meals for over 1500 students this school year. Through these events, we have raised awareness of the affordability crisis and other important topics. Additionally, we organized two free clothing swaps, donating a total of 20 bags of clothing to those in need. In an effort to improve mental health on campus during final seasons, we also held three puppy cuddles and have established connections to allow for more frequent dog therapy in the coming school year.

Halloween

We have been committed to bringing fun and engaging activities to campus throughout the school year. One highlight was our Halloween costume contest held at Felicity's, which had a high turnout and maximum capacity. Attendees enjoyed wearing costumes, winning prizes, and listening to music.

Shuttle Bus

In addition, we held shuttle bus services the day before our first and second semester reading breaks, and all tickets were sold at both events. We received multiple requests to expand the shuttle service to the airport, and we plan to poll students to determine if this would be a viable service to offer.

Event Support

As outlined in our strategic plan, we aimed to hold a winter event for students. However, as other groups were already hosting large events during this time, we chose to support and promote their events instead of competing with them. Two successful events that we supported were SEXPO and the UVIC Winter Market, both of which received positive feedback from students. We feel that this decision was the right one, and we are proud to have contributed to the success of these events.

Overall, it has been an honour to serve as UVSS Lead Director of Events, and I am grateful for the opportunity to bring enjoyable experiences to our student community. I wish the next Events Director all the best in continuing this work.



OUTREACH AND UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

TON TRAN

Director of Outreach and University Relations

Hello everyone.

The Outreach and University Relations portfolio plays a vital role in conducting outreach initiatives with our members, liaising with the University, acting as the primary spokesperson for the UVSS, overseeing all policy and bylaw changes, and chairing UVSS Board meetings. This year, we were fortunate to conduct most, if not all, of our outreach initiatives and meetings in person after the lift of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Throughout the year, the Outreach and University Relations portfolio has accomplished significant achievements, including creating a more personal relationship with our membership, releasing the governance review, hosting successful Annual General Meetings and Semi-Annual General Meetings, and doubling our voter turnout. Additionally, this portfolio has played an important role in promoting other events such as Campus Kick-Off, Clubs and Course Union days, and several campaigns.

Student Engagement

- We surveyed undergraduate students during the spring of 2022 to gather feedback on our initiatives.
- We received positive feedback and engagement from our social media platforms.
- We achieved quorum at both the Annual General Meeting and the Semi-Annual General Meeting.
- Our promotion of the UVSS has continued through campus posters, handbills, SWAG, and UVic websites.
- We collaborated with UVic to increase our student outreach.
- We presented to over 30 classrooms this year to promote a variety of initiatives.
- We helped in planning the UVIC student welcome, hosted 3 workshops, gave a speech to 1500 first-year students, and provided information and UVSS branded SWAG.
- We doubled the UVSS voter turnout.

General Advocacy

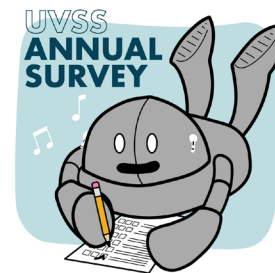
- Advocated for more funding to the UVSS foodbank through social media content, interviews, and lobbying at the university level.
- Assisted in the Housing Now campaign through interviews, rallies, and social media content.
- Promoted the 2 referendum questions to our student membership through classroom talks, tabling, and social media.
- Released the governance review to our student membership during the Semi-Annual General Meeting.
- Supported students with food insecurity through the Director of Events' hot lunch programs.
- Assisted in hosting the Pride Collective Annual General Meeting.
- Created a committee that connects UVSS board members with other student leaders like Student Senators and the Graduate Student Society through the University Representative Committee.
- Connected with different Course Unions and Professional Development Unions on general issues.

Internal Work

- Built trust with our membership through transparency and accountability.
- Created a more distinguishable line between the "university relations" and "member outreach" sections, increasing focus within each area.
- Shifted delegated tasks in a manner that decreases scope creep within the portfolio to better uplift our values of social justice, decolonization, environmental sustainability, and service.
- Held regular meetings with all areas of the UVSS to improve communication and consultation.

As my term on the Board comes to a close, I want to express my gratitude for this life-changing opportunity. Meeting so many students and learning about their unique experiences has been amazing.

Thank you to everyone who made this experience unforgettable. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.



SERVICES

FOOD BANK & FREE STORE

The UVSS Food Bank and Free Store (FBFS) have been serving students at the University of Victoria for many years now. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a surge in food insecurity among students. The rising tuition costs and inflation have only exacerbated this issue. The FBFS has seen historic usage increases this year due to this trend. We are pleased to report that our committed staff and volunteers have successfully handled the rising demand for food and other necessities. We would like to express our gratitude to our community partners who have been working with us to support our mission. This year has been filled with partnerships, events, and donations that have helped us continue to serve students in need.

Community Groups:

- **Fateh Care:** We have partnered with Fateh Care to provide hamper deliveries to students who are immunocompromised and require additional support during the pandemic. This partnership has allowed us to provide food hampers to individuals who otherwise would not have access to our services.
- **Graduate Student Society:** The Graduate Student Society (GSS) generously donated a cheque of \$10,000 to address the large debt accumulated by the Food Bank this year. This financial support has been invaluable in continuing to provide weekly food to students.
- **Island Savings:** Island Savings has continued its partnership with us through our annual Stocktober event. This year, Island Savings matched community donations of up to \$2,500 to aid us in continuing to provide food staples to students.
- **Tru Earth:** Tru Earth has supported us throughout this year by providing us with laundry detergent strips for students.
- **Campus Community Garden:** The campus community garden has provided us with fresh produce from their harvests as different produce comes into season.
- **Cobbs Bread:** Cobbs Bread has supported us by donating their unbought bread once a week. The Cobbs' bread is one of the most popular items that students come to the FBFS for.

Community Groups (Continued...):

- **Lifecycles Project:** The Lifecycles Project has provided us with fresh apples during the summer months. Unfortunately, due to the ever-changing climate, this partnership has been affected due to limited harvests. We hope to continue to work with the Lifecycles Project to provide fresh produce to students.
- **Hoyne Brewing Company:** Hoyne Brewing Company highlighted and provided a monetary donation to the food bank during the month of August.

5 Days of Action:

During the 5 Days of Action, a monetary donation was made to support our services.

Food Bank Usage:

The demand for food has continued to surge, resulting in a historic increase in usage this year. On a weekly basis, we see over 600 students utilizing our services. Our hamper program provided support to over 10,000 students last year. Over 100 individuals received delivered hampers through our partnership with Fateh Care.

Donations:

We have received an influx of community support, including donations of fresh produce, non-perishable items, and more. Tru Earth supplied us with a year's worth of laundry detergent, and we raised over \$6,000 through online donations during Stocktober. Cobbs Bread at Shelbourne Plaza donated bread on a weekly basis, while the LifeCycles Project Society donated apples in bulk on a weekly basis during the summertime. The Campus Community Garden (CCG) also donated produce on a weekly basis during the summertime. We would like to express our gratitude to Island Savings and Student Affairs for organizing the Stocktober event and for their continued support.

Free Store:

Our Free Store has seen a booming year for donations. We have received everything from computers, headphones, and kitchen appliances to textbooks, clothes, and other miscellaneous items. Residence services donated household.



[UVSS.CA/
FOODBANK](https://uvss.ca/foodbank)

SERVICES

PEER SUPPORT CENTRE

The Peer Support Centre offers a safe, non-judgmental and confidential space for students to access free support and referrals to on and off-campus resources. Our trained student volunteers are dedicated to providing empathetic listening and guidance to help students navigate student life at UVic.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the PSC remained committed to providing accessible support services. We offered online support through telemedicine software called Doxy, which allowed us to reach students who couldn't access the physical centre. This year, we were excited to welcome students and volunteers back into the centre for in-person support, while continuing to offer online services to meet diverse student needs.

The PSC's unique approach of offering both in-person and online support has resulted in our largest cohort of volunteers yet! With 34 incredible student volunteers from different faculties and walks of life joining our team, we've been able to expand our initiatives beyond peer support.

Collaborating with the SSD, we facilitated an ongoing chronic illness and ADHD support group, which was very successful. Our events this year, such as a Burnout Information Session, basement party, and study event, were also well-received by students.

As we look ahead, the Centre remains committed to providing compassionate support and responding to diverse needs that arise.



[UVSS.CA/
PEER-SUPPORT-
CENTRE](https://uvss.ca/peer-support-centre)