



# Advocacy Groups Policy

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## **Preamble**

Advocacy Groups empower, support, and provide resources to their constituents. These groups are intended to foster a welcoming space for members of minority groups to express themselves and join in activities together. This policy is designed to act as a governance and financial guide for operating Advocacy Groups for Directors, coordinators, the Constituency Groups Director and other UVSS staff, and the Director of Student Affairs.

This policy was passed by the Advocacy Relations Committee. Amendments to this policy must first be recommended to the Policy Development Committee. After approval through the Policy Development committee, all amendments will be proposed to the Advocacy Relations Committee. After approval from the Advocacy Relations Committee, the policy changes will be recommended to the Board of Directors for final approval. .

## **Part 1: Definitions**

**1.1 Advocacy Groups** - all constituency groups with the addition of the Native Students' Union, as detailed in UVSS Bylaws 15-20:

Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM)  
Native Students' Union (NSU)  
Pride Collective (Pride)  
Students of Colour Collective (SOCC)  
Society for Students with a Disability (SSD)

**1.2 Board Representative** - the official elected by the Constituency Organizations to represent their Constituency group at UVSS Board of Directors meetings and Advocacy Relations Committee;

**1.3 Collective** – the council members and active voting and non-voting members of an Advocacy Group as further defined in their respective Terms of Reference. While Advocacy Groups will encompass all students and other campus and community members who fall within the demographic they serve, the Collective is used to refer to those who actively engage with the Advocacy Group.

**1.4 Constituency Groups Director (CGD)** - the excluded manager responsible for direct supervision of the Advocacy Groups' staff. Full job description available in the Board of Directors' Policy.

**1.5 Constituency Organization/Group** - As defined in the UVSS Bylaw 15, and including the following groups:

Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM)  
Pride Collective (Pride)  
Students of Colour Collective (SOCC)  
Society for Students with a Disability (SSD)

**1.6 Council** – the student member(s) of an Advocacy Group elected by that group’s voting membership to oversee and manage the affairs and activities of that group as further defined in their respective Terms of Reference. The Council at a minimum includes for Constituency Groups, the Board Representative, and for NSU, the Firekeeper, and optionally includes additional roles, as determined by each Advocacy Group. Some groups may refer to their Council as a Board, or other title. This policy outlines further limitations and requirements of the Council in a later section.

**1.7 Excluded Manager** - the non-unionized staff who report directly to the UVSS Board of Directors, and who oversee all unionized UVSS staff. Includes the Executive Director, Constituency Groups Director, General Manager, and Human Resources and Administrative Services Manager.

**1.8 Executive Director** - the Executive Director is responsible for: legal, privacy, and financial compliance of the Students’ Society; strategic planning; risk management; human resource management; and other duties established by the Board of Directors in policy. The Executive Director directly oversees the Constituency Groups Director. The General Manager may act in place of the Executive Director in their absence.

**1.9 Firekeeper** - the individual elected by the NSU to represent the NSU at UVSS Board of Directors meetings and the Advocacy Relations Committee. This role is NSU’s equivalent to the Board Representative role, but has additional duties and responsibilities as outlined in NSU’s Terms of Reference.

**1.10 Fiscal year** - the UVSS accounting fiscal year is May 1 - April 30;

**1.11 Members** - eligible members of an Advocacy Group, with associated rights, as defined by their own bylaws;

**1.12 Terms of Reference (ToR)** - refers to all guiding policies created by an Advocacy Group for use by themselves. Alternatively called bylaws or constitution.

**1.13 The Society** - the University of Victoria Students' Society;

**1.14 Voting Membership** – all voting members of an Advocacy Group’s governance structure as defined in their terms of reference; must include the council and optionally includes other elected positions and general Advocacy Group Collective members.

Voting membership is limited to active University of Victoria students who pay student fees to the UVSS, which can include members in good standing with the GSS; Advocacy Groups may choose to serve members beyond this definition, but those members may not vote or run for election with their Advocacy Group.

## **Part 2: Governance**

### **2.1 General**

These guidelines outline the mandatory minimum requirements for Advocacy Groups to operate within the UVSS. Advocacy Groups may choose to opt into higher requirements, as per their ToR, but their ToR may not lower or overrule any requirements contained in this policy. Any instances where an Advocacy Group's ToR may deviate from this policy is clearly indicated in the relevant section of this policy.

### **2.2 Membership**

Each Advocacy Group must allow any interested student in good-standing who meets the group's membership requirements to join the Advocacy Group. Advocacy Groups may restrict membership to their respective demographics, and this is not considered discrimination against any other demographic or identity group.

### **2.3 General Meetings**

- a. Each Advocacy Group must hold both an Annual General Meeting and a Semi-Annual General Meeting once per year, with one meeting occurring in the Fall semester and the other meeting occurring in the Winter semester.
- b. These meetings must be advertised a minimum of 2-weeks in advance, and use a variety of tactics to make these meetings known to members, including, but not limited to: social media, website, and posters.
- c. These meetings must be open to all members of the Advocacy Group.
- d. Elections for the Constituency groups's Board Representative, NSU's Firekeeper, and all other Advocacy Group elected roles must be conducted at a General Meeting. See 2.4 Elections for more details
- e. Specifics regarding quorum or additional stipulations regarding General Meetings are decided by the Advocacy Groups, and can be found in their respective ToR.

### **2.4 Elections**

- a. An Advocacy Group shall hold annual elections for all council roles during a General Meeting.
  - i. The minimum number of council roles an Advocacy Group may have is one [1]. For NSU that role must be the Firekeeper, and for the constituency groups that role must be the Board Representative.

- ii. Beyond this minimum, each Advocacy Group may determine the number of elected roles and the responsibilities associated with those roles in their ToR.
- b. The elections at the General Meeting shall be conducted by the coordinator(s), unless a group's ToR specifies that an individual external to the Advocacy Group be enlisted to act as chair, in which case the external chair shall conduct all elections at a General Meeting. The elections shall be advertised with the General Meeting.
- c. Each voting member shall be entitled to one vote.
- d. Each voting member shall have the ability to be nominated to any available positions, either by themselves or another member.
- e. In the case of a vacancy of a position, the Advocacy Group may hold a by-election at a meeting of the voting membership to fill the position until elections can be held at the following General Meeting. Byelections will be conducted by the relevant coordinator.
  - i. By-elections must be advertised to the group's members at least two weeks before the election using a diverse variety of tactics, and
  - ii. Nominations must be open to all voting members.

## **2.5 Council**

- a. As expanded and defined by each Advocacy Group's ToR, the council roles for an Advocacy Group shall at a minimum include the Board Representative or Firekeeper (see below for specifics of that role).
- b. If an Advocacy Group has council roles beyond the minimum, the following stipulations apply:
  - a. Individuals must be elected by their collective's voting membership during a General Meeting and according to the Advocacy Group's ToR.
  - b. Council roles are typically limited to undergraduate students-in-good standing.
  - c. If an Advocacy Group serves both UVSS and GSS members, then an active graduate student may be elected to a council role.
  - d. If an Advocacy Group fulfills the requirements of the above section, then an Advocacy Group may have a maximum of one [1] council role filled by a graduate student.
- c. The duties of the council include:
  - a. Fulfilling the mandate laid out in their Advocacy Group's ToR;
  - b. Following the UVSS's constitution, bylaws, and policies;
  - c. Holding regular meetings (at least once per month) to discuss the activities of the group;
  - d. Directing the Coordinator(s); and
  - e. Other duties outlined in the Advocacy Group's ToR, particularly the items assigned to specific council roles.

- d. All members of the council are elected for a term of no longer than one [1] year and may run for re-election upon the completion of their term, provided they continue to meet all eligibility requirements.
  - a. The Firekeeper and Board Representatives must be elected during the Spring term General Meeting of their respective Advocacy Group and take office on May 1st along with the other UVSS Board of Directors. See below for further details.
  - b. Other council roles may be elected during their group's Fall or Spring General Meeting, as decided by the Advocacy Group's ToR.
- e. Non-staff Signing authorities for an Advocacy Group must be chosen from that Group's council.
  - a. If the Board Representative or Firekeeper is the only member of an Advocacy Group's council, that Group may choose additional signing authorities as laid out in the section below for Signing Authorities.
- f. Council members with concerns about their Advocacy Group's ToR, application of policies, and/or their Coordinator are directed to approach the Director of Student Affairs and/or the Constituency Groups Director.

## **2.6 Board Representative and Firekeeper**

- a. Responsibilities of Board Representatives and the Firekeeper include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Attending UVSS Board Orientation, generally scheduled the last week of April or first week of May;
    - A. If they are not elected before orientation, the Director of Student Affairs shall organize alternative training.
  - ii. Attending the UVSS Advocacy Relations Committee (ARC);
  - iii. Attending their Advocacy Group's Collective meetings;
  - iv. Liaising with their respective Advocacy Group collective members and Coordinator(s);
  - v. Attending UVSS Board of Directors meetings;
  - vi. Scrutinizing the activities of the UVSS Board of Directors; and,
  - vii. The duties of the council.
- b. As described in this policy, and in compliance with the UVSS Bylaws, the Firekeeper and all Constituency Organization Board Representatives must be elected at a General Meeting of their respective Advocacy Group, and their board term must align with that of the UVSS Board of Directors, running from May 1st-April 30th.
  - i. If a Firekeeper or Board Representative is elected during a by-election at a regular collective meeting, the position will be held until their Group's next General Meeting, at which point an official vote must be held to fill

- the role until the following April 30<sup>th</sup>. This does not limit an individual elected for the interim period to run for election at the General Meeting.
- ii. If the Firekeeper or a Board Representative is elected after May 1, they may take office immediately after a valid vote and ratification by the UVSS Board of Directors.
  - iii. Regardless of the date of election or assumption of office, a Firekeeper's or Board Representative's term ends the next April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- c. A Firekeeper or Board Representative may take a leave of absence from their duties.
- i. If a leave is between 1-30 calendar days, they must inform the UVSS BoD and their collective about their absence.
  - ii. Any leave that is 31 calendar days or more in length, shall be considered an extended leave, and an alternate person may be chosen to fulfil the duties of the absent Firekeeper / Board Representative, as per the Advocacy Relations Committee Terms of Reference.
  - iii. Any extended leave terminates at the end of the semester in which the leave was initiated and may not be renewed in the following semester.
- d. A Firekeeper or Board Representative who, upon the start of a new semester, is unable to resume their duties after taking an extended leave must resign from their position.
- i. The Firekeeper and Board Representative roles are intended to foster deliberate inclusion, and so it is crucial that folks elected to these roles perform the duties of these roles.

## **Part 3: Operations**

### **3.1 General**

The operations of Advocacy Groups have some variation between groups, due to financial limitations and priorities of the collective. This section details the operational requirements for all Advocacy Groups and indicates where flexibility is allowed. This section details the staff requirements for each Advocacy Group. The following work terms for UVSS staff (excluding work study staff) are subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the USW Collective Agreement, and should any section within this policy contradict, come into conflict with, and/ Advocacy Groups Policy – Effective Date: April 22, 2024 9 or be found in disagreement with the USW Collective Agreement, the offending clause(s) of this policy shall be unenforceable, and the USW Collective Agreement shall take priority.

### **3.2 Staff**



There are three types of staff that may be paid for work in an Advocacy Group. The Coordinators and student staff are UVSS employees, while the Work Study positions are UVic employees.

- a. Coordinators: Each Advocacy Group shall have a minimum of one supervisory Coordinator hired for a term that aligns with the stipulations of the USW Collective Agreement.
  - i. No Advocacy Group shall have more than one [1] supervisory Coordinator.
  - ii. Advocacy Groups may have additional lower classifications of Coordinators or assistant Coordinators. See Section 3.3 for details on creating new Coordinator roles.
- b. Student Staff: If an Advocacy Group has a single Coordinator, then that Group shall have a minimum of one student staff position.
  - i. If an Advocacy Group has more than one [1] Coordinator, they may or may not have any student staff position(s).
- c. Work Study: Each Advocacy Group shall apply for work study positions with UVic annually.
  - i. Work Study staff are the employees of UVic, not UVSS, and the allocation of Work Study hours is entirely decided by UVic and not guaranteed to Advocacy Groups.
  - ii. The UVSS General Office Manager will inform Advocacy Group Coordinators about requirements and timelines for all stages of the Work Study program.
  - iii. Work Study staff of an Advocacy Group are allowed to hold elected positions with that same Group but must abide by limitations as per Board of Directors Policy section 2.2 Employment Conflict of Interest.

### **3.3 Role of Coordinators**

The role of the Coordinator(s) in Advocacy Groups is to ensure the functioning and longevity of their respective Advocacy Group. All efforts made and endeavours undertaken by Coordinators must be in service of their student members. Coordinator positions that are term contracts are designed to provide professional experience to recent UVic undergrads, or students who are in the final stages of obtaining their degree but may be filled by individuals outside this intention depending on the applicant pool at the time of hiring for coordinator positions.

- a. Coordinators' responsibilities, regardless of Advocacy Group, include but are not limited to:
  - i. Preparation of the Annual Work Plan;
  - ii. Preparation of the Annual Report, to be presented at a General Meeting of the Advocacy Group's membership;

- iii. Ensuring that all expenditures reflect the priorities of members and approved programming;
  - iv. Pursuit of programming that aligns with the goals of their collective;
  - v. Completion of administrative tasks necessary for the functioning of the Advocacy Group;
  - vi. Maintain regular weekly office hours for a minimum of four [4] hours per week;
  - vii. Keeping members apprised of the Advocacy Group's ongoing financial status at regular collective meetings and with a presentation at General Meetings;
  - viii. Creation and review of budgets;
  - ix. Ensuring their Firekeeper / Board Representative or a temporary alternative representative attends the Advocacy Relations Committee at which budgets are due;
  - x. Ensuring staff and collective members are aware of any applicable UVSS policies, and notifying the CGD of any breaches to policy;
  - xi. Endeavouring to fill any vacant council positions.
- b. Regardless of the individual who completes the tasks outlined above, the supervisory Coordinator is ultimately responsible for those tasks being completed.
- c. All Coordinators must maintain a working relationship with their collective.
- i. If the collective members of an Advocacy Group have concerns about their Coordinator's job performance, or complaints about discrimination or harassment, the collective may discuss these concerns in an in-camera session of their regular council meeting. In-camera sessions are outlined by each Advocacy Group's ToR.
  - ii. Collective members may bring forward their complaints and/or concerns to the Director of Student Affairs and/or the CGD. If an in camera session has occurred, notes from that discussion are encouraged to be provided when bringing the concerns forward.
  - iii. If the relationship between Coordinator and collective is strained, the Coordinator is directed to bring these concerns to the CGD to discuss potential solutions.
- d. Each Advocacy Group may implement additional requirements in their respective ToR regarding specific duties for their Coordinator(s).
- i. These additional duties may not require a Coordinator to perform duties outside of their job description.
  - ii. Subject to limitations in all staff job descriptions, Coordinators may complete or delegate the above tasks to other staff members or elected council members, as per their group's ToR.

### **3.4 Role of Student Staff**

Student staff positions are limited to individuals who are currently pursuing an undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria and are designed to provide students with work experience in an advocacy setting while completing their studies. These positions give students the opportunity to learn new skills in a professional environment. For full details about student staff positions, please view the relevant job description. In general, student staff are either responsible for or assist the Coordinators with:

- a. Overseeing the social media communications for their Advocacy Group, including:
  - i. Content creation;
  - ii. Responding to direct messages;
  - iii. Sharing of other Advocacy Groups' content;
  - iv. Liaising with the Communications and Graphics departments for collaborative social media posts with the UVSS.
- b. Ensuring the Advocacy Group has a relevant brand guide and is utilizing it in digital and print outreach or promotional materials.
- c. Tabling and other in-person outreach at events.
- d. Ensuring all resources available in an Advocacy Group's space are up-to date, liaising with community partners as necessary to accomplish this
- e. Liaising with local organizations, community partners, and/or similar groups at other educational institutions.
- f. Assisting or leading specific programs or initiatives as they relate to their job description.

### **3.5 Alterations to Staffing**

This section applies only to UVSS staff who work in the Advocacy Groups. This does not apply to Work Study staff.

- a. An Advocacy Group may desire to create a new non-supervisory coordinator position. To do this, the Advocacy Group must:
  - i. Meet with the CGD to discuss rationale for a new position and financial capacity.
  - ii. Draft a proposal and accompanying budget for the additional position and make this proposal available to the membership of the Advocacy Group for review and comment for a minimum of two [2] weeks.
  - iii. Hold a General Meeting where the proposed position is voted upon.
- b. If an Advocacy Group fulfills the above requirements to create a new Coordinator role, the establishment of and hiring into that new role is also subject to final approvals from:
  - i. The Constituency Groups Director;
  - ii. Other UVSS excluded managers; and

- iii. The USW union.
- c. An Advocacy Group shall not lay off a student staff member to allow for the hiring of a newly established Coordinator position.
  - i. If a student staff position becomes vacant, an Advocacy Group may choose not to rehire into that role in favour of establishing a new Coordinator position.
- d. If an Advocacy Group desires to update existing Coordinator or student staff job descriptions, that Advocacy Group must present the updates to the CGD who will then advise on next steps for approval with the USW union.
  - i. All job description updates are subject to approval by the USW union and must abide by any restrictions outlined in the USW Collective Agreement.

## **Part 4: Financial Management**

### **4.1 General**

Advocacy Group coordinators shall work with their council to compile a single budget document for the next fiscal year. This annual budget must pass through the Advocacy Group's voting members and the Advocacy Relations Committee (ARC). In order for Constituency Control fees to be released, Constituency groups shall meet the requirements set out in this policy and shall meet the requirements to be a recognised Constituency Organisation as outlined in UVSS Bylaw 15.1: Recognition of Constituency Organisations. The Native Students Union shall meet the requirements set out in this policy and shall meet the requirements to be recognized as the Native Students Union as outlined in UVSS Bylaw 20.3: Recognition of the Native Students Union.

### **4.2 Definitions**

- a. **Advocacy Groups Base Fund (account 3148, also called Constituency Control)** - Shall consist of all student fees dedicated and collected for the sole purpose of funding Advocacy Groups other than respective fee levies, ie: the Constituency Groups Fee and any other applicable fees which may or may not be from UVSS, GSS, and / or Continuing Studies student membership fees.
- b. **ARC Joint Fund (account 3145)** - Used for collecting and distributing membership fee revenue other than respective fee levies for Advocacy Group capital acquisitions and joint projects.
- c. **Constituency Groups Fee** – The student fee levy collected for use by all five [5] Advocacy Groups and which is separate from the respective fee levies for each Advocacy Group.
- d. **Triple Net** - the rate charged per square foot to recover building operation costs, including janitorial, utilities, and maintenance costs of general and individual spaces. This amount is deducted from the amount collected for the Base Fund

prior to applicable amounts being deposited in each Advocacy Group's respective trust.

### **4.3 Budgeting Schedule**

The following dates may vary depending on where they fall on the calendar week but are generally indicative of the timing and schedule for key budget-related dates.

- February 1** The Constituency Groups Director notifies the Firekeeper, Board Representatives, and coordinators of the budgeting timeline for that year.
- The Constituency Groups Director shall request that UVSS Accounting create a budget template and complete the labour section for all Advocacy Groups. The CGD is responsible for emailing this template and relevant financial reports to the Coordinators and their associated Firekeeper / Board Representative.
- Coordinators collaborate with their council, and other relevant collective members, to draft the budget.
- March 1** Draft budget presented to Constituency Groups Director. Draft budget revised to reflect Constituency Groups Directors suggestions, if applicable.
- April 8** Final draft budget presented to and passed by voting membership. An Advocacy Group's voting membership may pass their budget before this date if the draft budget has been approved by the CGD. Coordinators gather and finalize the list of signing authorities.
- April 15** List of signing authorities with emails and final budget sent to the Constituency Groups Director and the Director of Student Affairs with minutes of the meeting at which it was passed by voting membership.

- April 30** Budget for upcoming fiscal year and the actual spending from the current fiscal year presented by each Advocacy Group's Firekeeper or Board Representative, or by a temporary alternative representative at ARC.
- Budget approved at ARC by a majority vote. Advocacy Groups are recommended to bring their budgets and financial presentations to ARC as soon as they have been approved by their voting membership. All budgets must be approved by April 30th each year to satisfy requirements for the release of funds to Advocacy Groups.
- May 1\*** The Constituency Groups Director emails approved budgets to the Accounting Manager and gives them a directive to release funds from the Advocacy Groups Base Fund as it is received.
- If an Advocacy Group's budget is not passed at ARC by May 1st because quorum is not met, fees will not be released until quorum is met at ARC.
- \*The Director of Student Affairs and Constituency Groups Director may conditionally approve the Advocacy Group's budget upon meeting with both the relevant Coordinator and Firekeeper or Board Representative, or other designated council member, and then release the fees.

#### **4.4 Budget Submissions**

- a. The Constituency Groups Director or the Director of Student Affairs will provide coordinators with a budget template. This template will be prepared by UVSS Accounting and will be an Excel document. Advocacy Groups are not to convert this template to any other format (ie: Google Sheets).
- b. Before fees are released, each Advocacy Group's budget must be approved, in the following order, by:
  - i. The CGD
  - ii. the relevant Advocacy Group's voting members; and,
  - iii. the Advocacy Relations Committee
- c. All budget submissions to the Advocacy Relations Committee must be sent to the Director of Student Affairs along with minutes of the meeting at which the voting membership passed the budget prior to the official ARC vote to approve that budget as the Director of Student Affairs must send the budget for review along with the meeting agenda.
  - i. The Firekeeper or Board Representative associated with the budget being presented at ARC must abstain from voting to approve their own budget. However, their presence at the ARC meeting does contribute toward

quorum for that meeting. See section below for additional details regarding ARC meetings.

- d. The Firekeeper or Board Representatives may ask questions of the relevant Group's Coordinator(s), Board Representative / Firekeeper, and other council members in attendance during the presentation of their financial actuals and draft budget.

#### **4.5 Funding**

- a. Advocacy Group Accounts - The UVSS shall maintain the following trust accounts for the purposes specified below.
  - i. One trust account for each Advocacy Group for its operations.
    - 1. Collected fees are held in internal accounts for all levied groups. Advocacy Groups must not have external bank accounts.
  - ii. Advocacy Groups Base Fund: Used for collecting and distributing membership fee revenue other than respective fee levies for Advocacy Groups' operating budget.
  - iii. ARC Joint Fund: Used for collecting and distributing membership fee revenue other than respective fee levies for Advocacy Group capital acquisitions and joint projects.
- b. Collection of Funding and Initial Disbursement – The UVSS shall collect all Advocacy Group student fees into the Constituency Control Account, exempting respective fee levies for each group which are instead directly deposited to the respective group's account, and this non-exempted revenue shall be disbursed in the following ways:
  - i. 7% shall be allocated to the ARC Joint Fund.
  - ii. 5% shall be held in the Constituency Control Account as a reserve for unanticipated expenses.
  - iii. Additional portions of funding may be withheld as per stipulations in UVSS Board of Director's Policy and / or UVSS Bylaws.
  - iv. The remaining amount is divided by the number of Advocacy Groups eligible for funding that term and disbursed to those groups.
    - 1. Each group's triple net fees shall be deducted directly from the respective amount to be given to each Advocacy Group before it is transferred.
  - v. This shall happen four [4] times per year in accordance with the collection of student fees.
- c. Disbursement of Funding through Advocacy Relations Committee – The UVSS shall disburse all revenue collected for the Constituency Control Account in the following ways:

- i. At the fiscal year end, 90% of revenue remaining in the Constituency Control Account (ie: amounts held in reserve) shall be divided evenly between all Advocacy Groups eligible for funding at that time; and,
- ii. The remaining 10% of revenue remaining in the Constituency Control Account shall be moved to the ARC Joint Fund to be allocated by ARC for any of the following purposes:
  - 1. Collaborations among Advocacy Groups;
  - 2. Events organised by an Advocacy Group;
  - 3. Donations agreed upon by at least two thirds [ $\frac{2}{3}$ ] of ARC; and
  - 4. Joint capital projects by Advocacy Groups including but not limited to construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement projects for an existing facility
- d. Funding Eligibility - In order to be eligible for funding in a given term, an Advocacy Group must:
  - i. Be recognized as either a Constituency Organisation or as The Native Student's Union according to the specifications in UVSS Bylaws;
  - ii. Have at least three [3] active signing authorities, of which the majority must be students;
  - iii. Hold an annual election for all council roles; and
  - iv. Present a budget for the upcoming fiscal year alongside financial actuals of spending in the current fiscal year to ARC annually, and according to the schedule detailed in this policy.

#### **4.6 Financial Responsibility**

- a. Advocacy Groups may not budget for a yearly accumulated deficit, unless they have sufficient funds in their trust account to cover that deficit.
- b. If an Advocacy Group's accumulated deficit is larger than the projected regular semesterly fees for the same semester, then the UVSS will work with the Coordinator and relevant council members to draft a recovery budget that will be in place until the accumulated deficit is recompensed.
  - i. For Interpretation, "regular semesterly fees" include only the amounts designated to each Advocacy Group by their respective fee levies, and does not include any of the shared funds disbursed through the Constituency Control Account or through the ARC Joint Fund.
  - ii. A recovery budget may be imposed on an Advocacy Group by the CGD, Director of Student Affairs, or other UVSS Excluded Management if an Advocacy Group is unwilling to participate in the creation of a recovery budget.
  - iii. All recovery budgets must be presented to ARC along with the projected deficit.
- c. When a recovery budget is in place, the UVSS will not sign off on any cheque requisitions for spending outside of the parameters set by the recovery budget.



- d. When a recovery budget is in place, other financial sanctions such as holding back funding, temporarily halting spending, and removing signing authorities, may be imposed by the Society if the Advocacy Group is not compliant with the recovery budget. i. Signing authorities may only be removed as a sanction if there is a pattern of non-compliant spending submitted with their signature.
- e. A recovery budget is subject to the following stipulations:
  - i. It may not reduce a Coordinator's contractually guaranteed hours.
  - ii. It may not reduce any staff member's benefits.
  - iii. It may prevent the hiring of new positions or the filling of vacant roles, except in the case of the supervisory Coordinator.
  - iv. It may, if any Coordinator's contract ends, reduce the hours offered in a new contract to the minimum allowable under BC Labour laws and the USW Collective Agreement.
  - v. It may, according to stipulations in the USW Collective Agreement, lower the number of student staff hours, or lay-off the student staff.
  - vi. It may not reduce non-staff expenditures by more than 75%.
    - 1. For interpretation, "non-staff expenditures" here refers to all non-labour expense lines combined, to allow an Advocacy Group's recovery budget flexibility to their needs (ie: a recovery budget does not simply reduce each expense line by up to 75%).
- f. An Advocacy Group may apply for and successfully achieve grant monies from external sources at any time.
  - i. A recovery budget may be recalled if the scope and amount of an achieved grant is deemed by the Director of Student Affairs and the CGD or other UVSS Excluded Management to sufficiently offset the Advocacy Group's projected or accumulated deficit.
- g. In the case where a group has a net accumulated deficit at the end of the fiscal year, any requests for emergency funds may be approved by the UVSS Board of Directors.

#### **4.7 Signing Authorities**

- a. The number of signing authorities permitted per Advocacy Group shall not exceed seven [7].
- b. The majority of signing authorities for an Advocacy Group must be student members of that group. i. In the case of Advocacy Groups that serve both undergraduate and graduate students, there shall be no more than one [1] signing authority who is a graduate student.
- c. All Coordinators for a group are signing authorities for their group.
  - i. Coordinators may not sign on behalf of any other group.
  - ii. Coordinators and Excluded UVSS Management are the only non-student signing authorities permitted for Advocacy Groups.
  - iii. If a Coordinator is also a UVic student, they shall not be considered a student for the purposes of this policy.

- iv. UVSS Excluded Management shall not count toward an Advocacy Group's maximum number of signing authorities, as they are granted signing authority for all groups due to the nature of their position.
- d. Student staff employed by an Advocacy Group may or may not be a signing authority for that Group.
  - i. If a student staff member is a signing authority, they shall count as a student, and not as a staff member, for purposes of interpreting "signing authorities" in this policy.
- e. Advocacy Groups shall have a minimum of three [3] signing authorities, unless that minimum does not allow for the majority of signing authorities to be students, in which case the minimum number of signing authorities is increased to the lowest number needed to satisfy the requirement that the majority of signing authorities are student members.
- f. The Firekeeper and Board Representatives must be student signing authorities.
  - i. Other student signing authorities should be chosen from an Advocacy Group's council, except when a student staff member is granted signing authority.
  - ii. If the Firekeeper or Board Representative is the sole council member for an Advocacy Group, that Group's ToR may allow for additional student signing authorities to be voted upon by the voting members of that Advocacy Group or may specify that work study and / or student staff roles are granted signing authority status.
- g. The Coordinator of an Advocacy Group shall provide updated signing authority lists to the UVSS General Office Manager any time there is a change to the list, and at a minimum of once per year.
- h. Signing authorities shall abide the requirements for spending on behalf of an Advocacy Group as outlined below and shall provide all required documentation for any purchases or expenses.
- i. All signing authorities are accountable to the membership of their respective Advocacy Group and UVSS leadership, particularly the Director of Student Affairs and the CGD, especially regarding financial mismanagement.

#### **4.8 Auditing**

- a. Advocacy Groups are included in the UVSS' annual audit.
- b. Should an audit indicate financial irregularities that cannot be accounted for or should spending fail to comply with internal regulations outlined in this or any UVSS policy, the Advocacy Group shall be subject to financial sanctions by the UVSS, including but not limited to holding back funding and temporarily halting spending.
  - i. Before financial sanctions can be put in place, the Director of Student Affairs and the Constituency Groups Director shall meet with the relevant

- Advocacy Group's coordinator and Firekeeper / Board Representative to clarify the nature of indicated financial irregularities.
- ii. Upon meeting with the Advocacy Group's Coordinator and Firekeeper / Board Representative, the Director of Student Affairs shall bring proposed financial sanctions to a UVSS Board of Directors meeting, which must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote.
  - iii. Financial irregularities include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - 1. Significant expenses not budgeted and not approved by members,
    - 2. Significant expenses not approved by members, and
    - 3. Expenses made for personal use rather than the Advocacy Group's use
  - c. Financial irregularities may be brought forward by any UVSS Lead Director, UVSS staff person, work study staff working for the Advocacy Group, voting and non-voting members of the Advocacy Group's collective, or any other individual who could reasonably be expected to have knowledge of financial irregularities within an Advocacy Group.
    - i. If concerns about financial irregularities are brought forward outside of the annual audit, the steps toward investigating and rectifying shall be the same as if the irregularities were identified during the audit.

#### **4.9 Spending**

Advocacy Groups must spend monies allocated to them in a responsible manner that adheres to UVSS policies and bylaws, applicable federal and/or provincial legislation, and any requirements or restrictions placed upon specific funds obtained through grants or other external funding.

- a. The preferred method of spending funds on for the purposes of an Advocacy Group is to do so using an Excluded Manager's UVSS credit card and submitting a Visa Requisition form. This is to reduce the amount of money the UVSS owes to students or staff.
- b. Alternative spending options include: cheque requisitions, as in the case of honorariums or reimbursements; Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) for established vendors; and FAST charges through UVic.
  - i. When in doubt as to which spending option is most appropriate, the relevant Advocacy Group's Coordinator should reach out to the Constituency Groups Director.
- c. Regardless of method of spending, all Advocacy Groups require documentation to justify their expenses. This documentation includes:
  - i. A receipt that clearly shows the items purchased (ie: itemized) and the date of purchase.
  - ii. Any additional documentation that can verify the purpose for the expense. This can include, but is not limited to: advertisement, such as a social media post, for specific events, programming, and/ or initiatives; a

- screenshot of text communications discussing the expense; and / or alternative quotes for similar expenses.
- iii. If the purchase is below \$500, it must be accompanied by written approval from two signing authorities of the group making the purchase, one of which must be a student.
    - 1. For interpretation, “written approval” is understood to be: one signing authority signing the cheque or visa requisition form and the other acting as the requestor on that same form; or
    - 2. as two signing authorities signing the relevant visa or cheque requisition form, one of whom is also the requestor.
  - iv. If the expense is above \$500, the Advocacy Group’s voting membership must approve the expense before it is incurred.
    - 1. This approval must be recorded in collective meeting minutes or in the form of electronic votes submitted by screenshotting the original messages and must be attached to the receipt and relevant paperwork when submitted for payment.
  - v. If the expense is above \$1500, the Advocacy Group must obtain the approval of the CGD or, in exceptional cases, another Excluded Manager, prior to making the purchase and after the collective has voted in favour of the expense.
    - 1. That same Excluded Manager must sign the paperwork before it is submitted to Accounting.
  - vi. The only type of spending that does not require the signature of a student is when staff are accessing benefits or professional development monies as granted by the UVSS and/or the USW Collective Agreement.
    - 1. This spending requires the signature of an Excluded Manager, regardless of amount.
  - d. It is considered best practice for the CGD to sign or initial all expenditures made by Advocacy Groups, and UVSS Accounting may use their discretion to hold payments that do not have this signature or initial until the CGD or another Excluded Manager reviews the expense and accompanying paperwork.
  - e. If an Advocacy Group fails to provide appropriate documentation or fails to follow internal guidelines for spending practices, see the following courses of action:
    - i. For a first-time issue, the CGD will review relevant spending policies, guidelines, and / or practices with the relevant Coordinator. The Director of Student Affairs may also address this concern with the relevant Board Representative or Firekeeper.
    - ii. If continued infractions occur, the Advocacy Group may be temporarily restricted from using any Excluded Manager’s UVSS credit card, and/or may face other restrictions as appropriate to the type and level of infractions.
  - f. Visa Requisitions require completion of the Visa Requisition Form (provided by the UVSS) and the Visa Tracker (provided by CGD).

- g. Cheque Requisitions require completion of the Cheque Requisition Form (provided by the UVSS).
- h. An Advocacy Group shall not transfer funds from any source that is not that Advocacy Group to any recipient.
  - i. Funds received through grants shall be exempt from the above statement.
- i. In the case that an Advocacy Group's budget is not passed by April 30th, that Advocacy Group will not be able to make purchases or spend money in any way other than staff wages until their budget is passed either at ARC or conditionally approved by the Director of Student Affairs and the Constituency Groups Director.
- j. Any Directors with questions about spending by Advocacy Groups shall contact: the applicable Advocacy Group Board Representative or Firekeeper, the Director of Student Affairs, and the CGD.
  - i. If the relevant Board Representative or Firekeeper role is vacant, or the person elected to that role is unresponsive, BoD Directors should instruct the CGD to contact the relevant Coordinator.

#### **4.10 Gifts**

- a. Gifts consist of all non-monetary compensation to a party.
- b. Items presented as gifts shall be left up to the discretion of the voting membership, but must not include alcohol or gift cards.
- c. Council members are not eligible for gifts solely because they have fulfilled the duties of their council roles.
- d. Coordinators and Advocacy Group members are prohibited from buying gifts for themselves or each other with student fees.
  - i. If an Advocacy Group member is the recipient of a gift, that member must not be present during either the motion or voting to approve the allocation.
  - ii. Advocacy Group members may receive a gift as recognition of volunteer work done for the Advocacy Group. In this case, such gifts shall not exceed \$50 in value.

#### **4.11 Honorariums**

- a. Honorariums consist of all extra-contractual monetary compensation to an individual or group and which are not donated monies.
  - i. Honorariums are money given as a token of appreciation for services and / or labour and are not intended as payments which reflect adequate or above average compensation.
- b. Honorariums should be limited to participation in events organized by the Advocacy Group issuing the honorarium, such as: chairing an annual general meeting, performance as an entertainer, conducting or facilitating a workshop, or other similar activities.

- i. Payments for chairing a meeting should range from \$25 to \$100 depending on the length and complexity of the meeting. Payments for performances and workshops should range from \$50 to \$500 depending on the length of the event, preparation time, and education or professional designation of the presenter or performer.
  - ii. When issuing payments for the above types of services, Advocacy Groups should assess whether the individual(s) receiving payment should invoice the Advocacy Group for their time or skills instead of filing payment(s) as an honorarium(s).
- c. Advocacy Groups shall not receive funds from any source which are designated for use toward any honorarium payment(s) for purposes organised or originating outside of that Advocacy Group.
- d. Cheque requisitions for honorariums must be accompanied by the Honorarium Request Form.
- e. Advocacy Group members may receive honoraria for services rendered for the Advocacy Group, including workshop facilitation and chairing meetings, but must not be present during either the motion or voting regarding their payment.
- f. UVSS staff are not eligible for honorariums, regardless of whether they fulfill any of the above services for an Advocacy Group.
- g. If a UVSS staff member should receive payment for services to an Advocacy Group that they do not normally work for, that Advocacy Group is responsible for paying that staff member's normal wage and any applicable overtime.

## **Part 5: Advocacy Relations Committee**

### **5.1 Type**

- a. Standing committee of the UVSS BoD with closed membership.

### **5.2 Purpose**

- a. Act as the primary liaison among Constituency Groups, NSU, and the BoD.

### **5.3 Duties**

- a. Ensure the successful operation and participation in UVSS affairs of all Constituency Groups and NSU.
- b. Review policy directly impacting Constituency Groups and NSU for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Policy Development Committee.
- c. Approve all draft policies directly impacting Constituency Groups and NSU before it proceeds to the BoD.
- d. Work collaboratively to support the goals, events, and initiatives of Constituency Groups, NSU, and the BoD.

- e. Serve as a forum for Constituency Groups, NSU and the BoD to work collectively on common social justice issues on campus and in the community.
- f. Approve Constituency Groups' and NSU's previous and current semesters' financial documents, as per BoD finance policy.
- g. Allocate funds from the constituency control account to Constituency Groups and NSU as detailed below.
- h. At the first meeting of each semester, familiarize committee members with all policies directly relevant to the committee, including its terms of reference.

## 5.4 Membership

- a. Voting Members are limited to the following individuals:
  - i. The BoD representative for each Constituency Group.
  - ii. The Firekeeper for NSU.
  - iii. Director of Student Affairs - ex officio and chair of the committee.
  - iv. An alternate representative for each Constituency Group and NSU for up to one semester upon ratification by their respective Constituency Group or NSU and by Advocacy Relations Committee, and only in the case that a Firekeeper or Board Representative role is vacant, or the incumbent is away on an extended leave and unable to complete their duties.
    - A. This alternate must be a student voted into a council level role with the Advocacy Group that they represent.
- b. Non-voting Members include\*:
  - i. One [1] director elected by the BoD - ex officio and second chair of the committee
  - ii. Executive Director - ex officio
  - iii. Constituency Groups Director - ex officio
  - iv. General Manager - ex officio
  - v. Human Resources and Administration and Services Manager – ex officio
  - vi. Policy, Research, and Communications Manager – ex officio
  - vii. Director of Finance & Operations - ex officio
  - viii. Director of Campaigns & Community Relations – ex officio
  - ix. Director of Outreach & University Relations – ex officio
  - x. Director of Events – ex officio
  - xi. All council members of each Constituency Group
  - xii. All council members of the NSU
  - xiii. All Coordinators of each Constituency Group and the NSU

\*Voting members shall reserve the right to meet without non-voting members present.

### **5.5 Voting**

- a. Voting shall be limited to the voting members designated in this policy.
- b. Temporary alternative representatives may be selected by each Group, for a semester upon presenting minutes from a quorate meeting from their respective Advocacy Group ratifying their representative.
- c. All guests invited to attend a meeting must be unanimously approved by voting members in advance of their attendance.
- d. All voting decisions must be made by a 2/3rds majority.

### **5.6 Quorum**

- a. Shall be the chair and a minimum of three other voting members.

### **5.7 Meetings**

- a. Shall meet bi-weekly at a day/time agreed upon by committee members at the beginning of each term or upon the call of the UVSS BoD, CGD or other Excluded Manager, Constituency Groups, or NSU.
- b. The chair shall distribute meeting agendas and policy under consideration a minimum of 48 hours in advance of all meetings.
- c. The chair shall record minutes for each meeting containing an attendance list and important decisions and distribute these minutes within 72 hours of the completion of the meeting.

### **5.8 Term of Office**

- a. Shall be for the duration of the Board of Directors' term (May 1 – April 30) with an annual reset at the beginning of each board term.