



Minutes

**University of Victoria Students' Society/Local 44 of the Canadian Federation of Students
Monday March 23, 2009 – SUB Upper Lounge 6:00 pm**

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Ahmed Mumeni, Tracy Ho, Sinead Charbonneau, Erin Lacharity, Geordon Omand, Brodie Metcalfe, Caitlin Meggs, Dylan Hardie, Veronica Harrison, Teresa Sims, Luam Kidane, Stafford Richter, Richard Park

Absent:

Gary Dawson-Quatell, Christine Comrie, Meaghan Kerr, Heather McKenzie, Daniel Ancil

Staff:

Marne Jensen, Joanna Groves

USW Representative:

Melissa Pritchard

Guests:

Sarah Mann, Cat Wood, Gina Wilson, Sabrina Buzzalino, Julia Wolfenden, Mac Lugay, Kirsty Blair, Renee Mackillop, Kaitlin McNabb, Ilaina Decter, Lauren Warbeck, Sam VanSchie, David Foster, James Cocco, Matt Ostergard, Kelsey Hannan, Nathan Warner, Hassan Sheriff, Shantelle Moreno, Jose Barrios

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 6:01 pm

2. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORIES:** Meggs

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA & ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
 - a. **Adoption of Minutes**
 - i. **Minutes of 2009/03/09**

Motion to Adopt the Minutes of 2009/03/09 - Ross/Omand

Motion to Amend - Ross/Ho

BIRT section 5.b be amended to read "helped to prepare for Pride SAGM" in place of "attended Pride SAGM."

Amendment Carried

Motion to Adopt the Minutes as Amended Carried

b. Adoption of Agenda
i. Agenda of 2009/03/23

Motion to Adopt the Agenda of 2009/03/23 - Harrison/Mumeni
Motion Carried

4. PRESENTATIONS

a. Shantelle Moreno - Women's Equity Outreach and Pro-Choice Club

Moreno: Read out Pro-Choice Club and Women's Equity Outreach's stance on funding anti-choice clubs at UVic. (See speech in Appendix)

Stafford entered at 6:13 pm.

Park entered at 6:18 pm.

Metcalf: Thank you for your speech. You made a lot of good points.

Harrison: It's good to hear another side of the debate.

Foster: YPY said that they would be presenting on April 6th. Why was the Pro-Choice Club not told they should present at the next meeting instead?

Meggs: We were not informed that YPY would not be coming to this meeting. There was obviously a miscommunication.

Foster: It isn't fair that YPY isn't here to defend themselves.

Stafford: Has there been any GAP posters on campus?

Moreno: No.

Ho: The Pro-Choice Club can come back at the next meeting so we can hear both sides together. YPY claims that the posters up on campus are theirs. Thank you to Moreno for coming out. She articulated everything I have wanted to say on the debate.

Lacharity: We are discriminating against YPY. The money isn't an issue, but they should be allowed to have the same rights, privileges and opportunities as other clubs. How do we have the right to do this? We're denying them the right to get their message out, which is why they're on campus.

Ross: YPY was invited to speak at the last meeting as well as this one, and have also presented their case at Clubs Council.

Moreno: YPY has funding from other organizations, so they have more than enough money. This debate is about all students at UVic being forced to fund them as well.

Matt Ostergard: Private organizations can decide who they will or will not fund. I was at the Clubs Council meeting, and it was a 12:4 decision. I didn't find the meeting intimidating. Because YPY wants to take away the rights of women they shouldn't be funded. But, this decision could be used to not fund other clubs for other policy reasons, such as Israeli clubs.

Moreno: If you look at the premise of the group, the aim is to prevent women from having abortions. To call women murderers on a campus where we promote gender equality is not logical. This is about equality for all women. Doubt the other clubs mentioned are attacking other's rights directly, and if they are they should be dealt with.

Lauren Worbeck: an Israeli group is not necessarily a Zionist group. This group is trying to take away women's rights. The examples are not the same. If you don't believe in abortions, don't get one. Message they're conveying is the dominant one in this culture. The tactic of trying to wear down the UVSS and the funding they have to do that shows that they represent the dominant, conservative society. We are grassroots. They have tons of resources, and they should be accountable for the power they wield.

Ahmed Mumeni: YPY has not been censored by the board. Letters have been printed by *the Martlet*, for example. This society is mandated by issues policy among others. The policy states...[UVSS Gender Policy read aloud]. As board members we're legally liable to follow these rules.

Sinead: I don't believe in giving equal rights to everyone because I wasn't born equal. I don't know if you believe the argument of excluding other clubs based on this precedent. An anti-Islamic poster came before the board, and everyone got behind stopping it. Why can't we apply the same logic and rigor to women's rights. We should apply equality here first.

Kelsey Hannan: I'm pro-choice, but we must listen to YPY's argument. From their perspective it's murder, so asking them to stop is fundamentally against their beliefs. I disagree with the argument that we must deny funding based on the Issues policy. There's nothing in clubs policy about not giving funding based on not following policy. The issues policy holds the board to account when representing students in public. This does not apply to clubs. There's a lot of issues policy that would disqualify many other clubs funding. Any use of the constitution or bylaws to deny funding should result in the denial of both club status and funding, because there's no constitutional distinction between the two. YPY should receive funding because the issues policy argument is flawed.

Sarah Mann: We don't tolerate racism, and clubs that promote racism are condemned. I feel marginalized when I see YPY posters. I can't believe that this form of sexism is allowed to continue. Why is there still a discrepancy between racial and sexist discrimination.

Mac Lugay: Good point about policy affecting public stances. Funding a group falls into this category, and that's the difference between granting status and giving funding.

Meggs: Thank you to everyone for coming.

Moreno: Thank you for your patience in this issue.

5. REPORTS

a. Committee Reports

i. Advocacy Council – Did not meet.

- ii. **Armed with Understanding** – Met on March 11th. Held screening of "RIP! A Remix Manifesto" on March 18th in Vertigo.
 - iii. **Clubs Council** – Has met and approved a few clubs for ratification tonight.
 - iv. **Communications Committee** – Met on March 17th. The committee is working on the website, the 09-10 handbook, and SUB mugs.
 - v. **Course Union Council** – Met on March 19th. Approved travel pool and academic fund requests, and set a sub-committee to look at policy and ideas for purchases.
 - vi. **Electoral Committee** – Has been meeting with the electoral officers. The elections are now over, and we're just waiting for all co-op ballots to come in. The Electoral Report will be presented at the next board meeting.
 - vii. **Environmental Responsibility Committee** – Will be holding a campus food forum this weekend.
 - viii. **Finance Committee** – Has been working with the accounting technician to get the financial statements up-to-date. We will look at Fall statements this Thursday.
 - ix. **Organisational Development Committee** – Did not meet.
 - x. **Political Action Committee** – Is holding two pre-election forums this week, and is planning a voter registration campaign.
 - xi. **Special Events Committee** – Held St. Patrick's Day events. There'll be a coffee house and open mic night this Saturday, the UVic Idol finale is coming up. B³ is planned for April 3rd, with all student bands booked. Community leaders from Res came and talked about their event - we'll be supplying mocktails for the night.
 - xii. **Student Services Committee** – Did not meet.
 - xiii. **SUB Development Committee** – Did not meet.
- b. **Director and Staff Reports**

Kidane: The M21 event was successful. SOCC's SAGM will be in 2 weeks.

Ross: Tabled at M21. Pride's SAGM will be held on April 8th

Lacharity: Pass.

Charbonneau: We are half-way through Third Space, having a zine trade, participated in the M21 event, held workshops at the single parent resource centre, and will be holding an end-of-year gender-inclusive party on April 2nd.

Sims: Slept outside last week for poverty fundraiser. Attended Clubs Council, and helped at UVic Idol for the last 2 rounds.

Ho: Has been helping organize the food bank, which has a brand new freezer and shelving thanks to the Grad Class. Sat on 2 hiring committees. Has an update on the UVSS's complaint regarding the anti-Islamic posters: UVic issued another letter

to ban Lorenzo Bouchard. Helped with CUPE's Death of Public Education rally, Grad Class issues, wrote a letter to *the Martlet* regarding marginalization on campus, attended LMC, and the first staff meeting of SUB managers.

Pullman: Attended CSSAL (Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders), where we decided to lobby the government on the following points: decrease student loan interest rates, eliminate interest during the grace period, integrate repayment programs for Canada and provincial student loans, restore the grants program. Screened Veer and raised money for SPOKES, in the process of renewing Studentsaver contracts.

Hardie: Has been mainly making posters and coordinating the fish farm panel debate.

Mumeni: Has been working on textbook issue and planning the Grad Party.

Harrison: Attended Communications and Special Events committees, tabled and helped set-up for the St. Patty's Day event, worked the door at UVic Idol, served hotdogs at M21, and has been prepping for upcoming events,

Richter: Has been working on the STV debate, finding bands for B³ (didn't find any), and attending Electoral Committee.

Melissa: Pass.

Marne: Pass.

Park: Pass.

Groves: Pass.

Meggs: Has been working on the same things as everyone else. There's an event every night this week, and they will all be good events.

Metcalf: Has been working on the Positive Space campaign.

Omand: Has been working on the STV forum, putting posters up downtown, classroom speaking, and buying gifts for speakers.

- c. **CFS Provincial Executive Report** – Met last weekend. Reviewed logistics from previous general meetings, programmes, and campaigns. Reviewed the federal budget, and contrasted it with the US budget which featured ~\$70 billion in education funding, whereas Canada had nothing new. There's grad scholarship funding, but it's controversial because the government is trying to control where it goes. The executive attended lobby days in Ottawa – a whole week of lobbying where they met with 200 MPs on student aid and dedicated transfer payments. Emily Carr and VCC are launching a complaint to the BC Ombudsperson regarding TransLink's revenue neutral policy, which means the price of UPass won't be discounted much in schools where ridership is already high. This is a discriminatory policy. Also engaged in some pre-election planning.

6. QUESTION PERIOD

Richter: Do VCC students pay the same for their UPass as other students?

Pullman: They're being offered a revenue-neutral price that is more than other colleges in Vancouver.

David Foster: [Referring to Harrison's letter in *the Martlet*] Why didn't you mention all 5 advocacy groups?

Harrison: Because only the 4 groups were attacked.

Kidane: Was there a recount for all Board positions?

Meggs: There was no recount, but one was requested for the directors at large.

Kelsey Hannan: Where are June 30th, 2008 and January 25th, 2009 minutes online?

Meggs: It's possible we didn't make quorum for the June meeting. I will look into the January minutes.

Barrios: There's the possibility of closing the Info Booth in summer. There will you be directing students?

Meggs: This is true. The Info Booth's services are not heavily depended on by students in the summer.

Ahmed: Is there the intention to post meeting agendas beforehand?

Meggs: This hasn't been discussed before. Agendas are finalized on the Friday before the meeting, so the timeline is tight. Any Board member can take the initiative on these kind of issues.

Lacharity: Do students use info booth for opting out of the health and dental plans in the summer?

Ho: There are no opt-outs during the summer.

Hannan: What steps have been taken to ensure neutrality at the PSE pre-election forum?

Meggs: The UVSS is nonpartisan.

Hannan: There was a complaint from the BC Liberals about a refused booking, but the NDP are allowed to book. What's going on?

Meggs: Political clubs can book, but outside organisations have to pay. Only organisations that have cause problems in the past would be refused booking.

James Coccola: Asked for clarification on Board of Directors Policy 2.3, where the General Manager will report at a Board meeting every month.

Meggs: Marne gives a report when she feels it something needs to be reported. All directors and staff have the right to pass on giving reports.

Hardie: Asked Marne Jensen about the decision to replace the ATM next to Felicita's. He had heard that the room would be used for a coat check space, but this obviously changed. This decision never went to the Board.

Jensen: It was always the plan to replace the Royal Bank machine with another ATM as well as to put in a snack machine. They had hoped for a smaller machine, but this wasn't possible. The decision was discussed at two Finance Committee meetings.

Richter: Can the General Manager fix the wobbling door in the Upper Lounge?

Jensen: Yes, but any director can report building deficiencies to the General Office.

7. MAIN MOTIONS

Motion 2009/02/09:01 – Comrie/Omand

BIRT *Journalist for Human Rights UVic* be ratified as a probationary club for the Spring 2009 semester, as recommended by Clubs Council.

Motion Carried

Motion 2009/02/09:02 – Ho/Hardie

BIRT nominations be opened for one delegate to attend the April 3-5, 2009 National Aboriginal Caucus of the Canadian Federation of Students, as recommended by the Native Students' Union.

Ho: Every year in addition to the national AGMs, there's a stand-alone National Aboriginal Caucus for two full days. This year it will be held in Victoria from April 3-5. The NSU has a nominee.

Motion carried

Nominations: Ho nominated Gary Dawson-Quatell, as recommended by the NSU

Motion to Ratify - Kidane/Harrison

BIRT Gary Dawson-Quatell be elected as a delegate to the 2009 National Aboriginal Caucus.

Motion Carried

8. MEETING TIMES

The next meeting scheduled by the Board of Directors is:
Monday April 6, 2009.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn - Ross/Omand

BIRT the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.

Appendix

Written By: Shantelle Moreno
Delivered: March 23rd, 2009
UVSS Board Meeting
Upper Lounge – SUB

Why a Pro-Choice Campus Matters for Gender Equality

On October 17th, 2008 the University of British Columbia Student Union – Okanagan set precedence in the BC Supreme Court as the first BC Student Society to win a court case brought against them by a campus anti-choice group called Students for Life. In his court ruling, Judge Honorable Justice Wong addressed issues likened to the situation we are meeting to discuss today. In his ruling he stated:

“Whether or not the Students for Life Club is ratified, its members are entitled to meet together, to act in concert to advance their views, to refer to themselves as “Students for Life” or any other name they may choose, and otherwise give expression to their anti-abortion views. The UBCSUO has no general right to control activities on the UBC campus, and if the Students for Life wish to organize displays on the common areas of the campus, or in classrooms or other UBC facilities, the UBCSUO has no authority to hinder them. The issue is not whether the petitioners may hold the beliefs they do, or express those beliefs by any means they see fit, but rather whether they can force, in the name of religious freedom, every student on campus to fund them to do so.”

As a person who vehemently believes in a woman’s right to bodily integrity and reproductive choice, this ruling is clearly not ideal. Ideally, this ruling would uphold a firm stance to protect women’s reproductive choice on campus, offering women a full range of options concerning reproductive health. In an ideal situation, the Canadian education system from preschool to post-secondary would take every step necessary to create a truly equal learning environment for women and men.

In practice, this equality would incorporate the following ideas: offering comprehensive sex education, including sex-positive education for young women and men, affordable and

accessible contraception, access to compassionate and stigma-free services for women facing unexpected pregnancy, well-funded sexual assault and rape services, and resources for single-parents including fully subsidized child care on campus. If this were a reality, we would not be here today to discuss whether or not to fund anti-choice group Youth Protecting Youth (YPY), because universities across Canada would have already taken the steps needed to FULLY support women in post-secondary institutions by offering the necessary services required for women to succeed in a world where women's bodies are frequently treated as public property that is both controllable and disposable.

I would also venture to assume that this ruling was not ideal for the anti-choice group which was rightfully denied both ratification and funding at UBC-O.

However, what this ruling and the discourse seen in campus communication mediums, such as the Martlet here at UVic, have created is a completely dichotomous understanding of the abortion debate. This polarized debate serves to remove arguments about abortion away from lived experience, away from reality, and away from the living, breathing person at the centre of the debate – the woman.

Today, I am here to talk about women, women's bodies and reproductive justice. You can attach whatever name you want to, to my argument, however this argument encapsulates the interests of all women regardless of religion, age, race, class, culture, ability or geographic location.

Women the world over live in constant fear of bodily violation. In 2001, several international organizations, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Fund for Women found that 1 out of 3 women worldwide has experienced rape or sexual assault. In Canada, 23.3% of all women have been victims of rape and attempted rape. On Canadian campuses, these numbers begin to expand exponentially. At present, 25% of Canadian women in college or university will be raped during their undergraduate career. When we bring this into a lived context, this means that at UVic, as the university continues to strive toward gender equality, including equality of opportunity, these numbers tell us that

one out of every four women attending UVic will be raped. These statistics multiply if you are an Indigenous woman, a woman of colour, if you are queer, if you live below the poverty line, and if you have a disability. And if this is not disturbing enough, 60% of Canadian college-aged males indicate that they would commit sexual assault if they were certain they would not get caught. (Stats from www.elitecanada.com/pdfs/cnd_rape_stats.pdf)

So, what do these numbers tell us? They tell us, with increasing fortitude, that girls learn from a young age that their bodies will likely be violated, that their decisions are void because they have no control over how they are treated, that they must fear harassment, violence, sexual assault and rape and that they must rely on others to make important decisions about their bodies for them.

We are in a unique position today to take a strong stance as university students committed to gender equality, to support women in making autonomous decisions about their bodies and about their reproduction, and to support groups which acknowledge women's fundamental right to make reproductive decisions on our campus free of intimidation and coercion. Being a Pro-Choice campus involves fully supporting female students facing unexpected pregnancy, by offering resources and support which highlight all of the options, including parenting, adoption and abortion, as equally viable choices which they are free to make without fear of stigma or hostility.

Groups like YPY strip women of their choices during pregnancy by condemning abortion as murder of the unborn, by denying women bodily integrity and clouding the fine line between freedom of speech with the upholding of one the most basic human rights – the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence. What we are talking about is YPY, and other “pro-life” student groups as part of a larger conservative religious movement – which, to be clear, is not the same as individual religious people or Conservatism in general. This movement has taken it upon itself to ‘put women in their place,’ in terms of their rights to bodily autonomy and self-determination, the role of women in society and the construction of the family. And while groups that are part of the religious right certainly do not come out in *support* of rape, they do promote an extremist

ideology that *enables* rape and promotes a culture where sexual assault is tacitly accepted. This is a culture where the so-called 'rights of the fetus' outweigh the rights of women, where freedom of expression is used as a sword by which certain groups may secure advantages to distribute information that stigmatizes and harms women as a gendered group, where rape and sexualized violence are bypassed as condemnable acts but a woman's decision to obtain an abortion is immoral and fundamentally inexcusable. This is an atmosphere of ambient violence that YPY promotes not only in their poster campaign but in their entire existence as an anti-choice group that is at its core, anti-sex, anti-abortion and anti-women's rights.

Take for example the posters that YPY has chosen to display around campus. Rape and sexualized violence against women is completely side-stepped as an issue in the abortion debate. In this poster, for example, a picture of a young woman is displayed with the caption "Did I deserve the death penalty?" underneath. Below, the poster states – My "crime" was being conceived through rape. So the next time you hear people talking about "exceptions" to abortion for rape and incest, think of me. My name is Rebecca. I am that exception. Question Abortion. This poster provides the opportunity to condemn violence against women within a Pro-Life framework but rather than advocating for respect for the woman's body who was terribly violated, this poster centers around the right to life of the fetus without any mention of the immorality of rape and incest. In fact, this poster takes a complicit stance on rape and incest, arguing that there is not exception to a fetus' right to life, even if it's mother's body is brutally violated and abused

YPY has denied the use of this poster on campus, however, because the group has been getting posters approved at the University Centre which does not keep a spare copy of stamped posters, there is no accountability to which posters have been used or not. In the past YPY has distributed posters and omitted attaching their name. As a club that seeks student funding for poster and other pro-life projects, how could any student who saw these posters, agreed with them and needed support, possibly join YPY and use their "services" if YPY does not attach their name and contact information? This begs the question, does YPY truly exist to support women and increase membership, or does it

merely exist to push a political agenda at the expense of all women on campus.

It is clear, that the posters and other means that YPY has been using to spread their anti-choice messages have been solely to intimidate, scare and chastise female students who have had abortions. (Such as with this poster, with a photo of a baby with the words, "Is this the face of the enemy?" on it.) If we claim to be a progressive campus that believes in gender equality, posters such as these should be seen as offensive, intimidating and threatening. The complicity of those who believe these posters fall under a freedom of speech argument shows a severe disregard for women's issues, including women's basic safety and reproductive rights. It is Clubs Council's responsibility to condemn "behaviour from groups that discriminates against persons on the basis of their sex, and to report behaviour of clubs that has the affect or purpose of unreasonably creating a hostile or intimidating environment" (Club Council Policy).

Groups like YPY which discriminate against women and exist to shame, guilt and coerce women away from exploring the full range of their reproductive choices should not feel entitled to receive funding from the UVSS, which an openly pro-choice society nor from the undergraduate student body, who voted in 2005 to uphold a campus-wide pro-choice stance. Pro-choice is not synonymous with pro-abortion, rather pro-choice emphasizes that having a child is a personal choice that affects a woman's body, personal health, and future. Pro-choice advocates believe that both parents' and children's lives are better when abortions are accessible, safe and legal. In this sense, abortion is an issue of bodily autonomy, and forced abortion is as legally indefensible as the outlawing of abortion.

"While issues like reproductive justice may initially seem unrelated to rape and sexual assault, they are a crucial aspect of women's bodily autonomy and integrity – legally forcing a woman to carry a pregnancy for nine months and give birth against her will and without her consent, or coercing certain kids of "unfit" women into not reproducing, are deeply troubling uses of women's bodies to serve the needs, ideologies and desires of others. Allowing women a full range of reproductive freedoms affirms the fact that women's bodies are private property, and that their sexual and reproductive choices should not be forced or

coerced.” (From *Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape* edited by Jessica Valenti and Jaclyn Freidman).