

# Welcome to Grad Studies - Transcript

## *January Orientation 2021*

10:33:48 This meeting is being recorded.

10:33:52 And if you'd like to change your name or add anything to your name, you can do so by clicking more next to your name and the participants tab and selecting rename just a good option if you don't immediately pop up with your preferred name there.

10:34:10 And

10:34:13 I believe that is all of the notes that I have for folks today.

10:34:20 And, and as always we just encourage you to do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself throughout the session so if you need to get up and take a stretch look away from the screen at any point in time, feel free to do so, and out the other

10:34:32 And hope the other quick thing I'll just note is because we have quite a few people in this call today. And we recommend that you keep yourself on mute, and perhaps even with your video off, just to ensure that the session runs smoothly, unless you are

10:34:47 Unless you are directed otherwise. Some people might ask you to turn your video on time to so we can see your smiling faces, but definitely if you can remain on mute throughout the duration that will help ensure that the call runs smoothly as possible.

10:35:02 And so, without further ado, I will pass things over to Dr Cedric little wood to get us started with today's session.

10:35:11 Thanks very much, Jana, and welcome to everyone. Those of you who are here Christina who made the move to Victoria tonight and for those of you in India, or the Philippines.

10:35:24 So, I'm an Associate Dean, in graduate studies the faculty of Graduate Studies. And there were three of us, and what I'm hoping to do today is start with a little bit of general administrative information so that you can understand what the faculty of

10:35:42 Graduate Studies is and how the university structured.

10:35:46 And then I'm going to talk about the supervisory relationship.

10:35:51 How you form a supervisory committee, and how it's supposed to work. Because this is one of the things that most distinguishes graduate study from undergraduate study.

10:36:03 And at the end of my presentation. I'm going to look at some sources of support outside the faculty of Graduate Studies.

10:36:12 I've got a PowerPoint presentation and I'll screenshot in a moment.

10:36:18 There are a number of you here, if you have a question while I'm talking, by all means, put it in the chat and I'll do my best to monitor it.

10:36:27 There will be some time for question and answer at the very end.

10:36:31 But if I see a question come up, I'll maybe be able to address it as I'm talking.

10:36:37 But don't worry if your question doesn't get answered. One of the things both Neil, and I are keen to do is show you how it is that you ask a question to whom you may take your question.

10:36:49 So even if it doesn't get answered today.

10:36:53 I promise you it will get answered soon.

10:36:55 So that's my introductory spiel, and I'll try to share my screen.

10:37:01 Okay.

10:37:07 Okay. I'm hoping that's, that's all good.

10:37:15 Yeah. Okay, so this is a little map of faculties and divisions that you Vic.

10:37:22 I've color coded them on the left of the screen, not just to make a pretty screen, but for a significance that you'll see on the next slide. So, try to find your faculty on the left hand side and know what color it is born of these faculties exist in

10:37:41 a relationship or a partnership with the faculty of Graduate Studies, which is commonly referred to as FGS. So in practical terms that means you'll be taking courses in your home unit, perhaps, the School of Engineering, perhaps the School of Business.

10:37:59 But when you actually get your degree, it will be the Dean of Graduate Studies, that gives you your degree.

10:38:07 A lot of the administrative processes are overseen by the faculty of Graduate Studies. And so it's a big partnership between that central faculty, and all the units, and the people who supervise you people who instruct you will typically be members, both

10:38:25 both of their home units. Fine Arts, Humanities wherever it might be, but also members of the faculty of Graduate Studies. So one way to think about this is there's an awful lot of dual citizenship going on here.

10:38:40 Both you and your instructors belong to two different faculties.

10:38:46 One thing not on this slide is something called Garrow Garo, which is graduate admissions and records office. This is a division of the registrar's office, and you will already have been communicating with them through making your applications.

10:39:07 A lot of the routine business that you engage in as a graduate student, maybe, applying for a request for oral examination, or asking to asking for leave a lot of that business gets handled and recorded in the registrar's office.

10:39:28 So, That's what Garrow is when you hear reference to it later.

10:39:38 Slide, that's an advancing.

10:39:40 Okay. That'll do.

10:39:41 So, this is the structure of the faculty of Graduate Studies, you can see that there's a dean Stephen Ovens and three associate Deans John Down, myself, Cedric Littlewood, and Jennifer White who's acting the role at the moment.

10:39:58 And you can see that our colors correspond to the colors on the previous slide. One of our jobs is to have particular responsibility for some of the faculties.

10:40:12 So for example, I'm responsible for the faculty of human, human and social development. And I, if you are registered in that faculty, then I am your contact.

10:40:24 And you can get in touch with me through one of my programs Clark's in the same for the other two associate Deans, my own program Clark. Her name is Sandra, and her email address is FGS at youvic.ca so it's impossible to forget.

10:40:40 And if you ever wanted to make an appointment to talk to me about any aspect of your study, I encourage you to do so.

10:40:49 Just send an email, make an appointment, and we can chat.

10:40:54 Other important people in the Faculty of Graduate Studies office, or those who work in scholarships and awards. So these are the people who administer any funding, you might be receiving, the people who will assist you if you apply to an external grant.

10:41:13 So, there are two of them, one Yvonne Rondo, the other Kathy McCarthy.

10:41:19 I haven't written their names up here or their addresses, but if you go to the FGS website and the directory, you'll find them there.

10:41:27 So this is really more a map to say anything to do with graduate funding application for external grants, that's something that we assist with and implement.

10:41:41 The last box on this page, the coordinator information research and communications, that's actually a single individual who's the nerve center of FGS, a name is Carolyn Swayze, that most of your contacts or be with the scholarships and awards people, or

10:41:59 one of the associate Deans by communication through a program Clark.

10:42:08 Can you.

10:42:10 Okay, so that's people available to you in the Faculty of Graduate Studies in your home department, there's a chair.

10:42:19 In most departments, responsible for the day to day operation of the department.

10:42:24 But as a graduate student, perhaps the most important single person is the graduate advisor who directs the graduate program, or graduate programs within your unit, that person some member of the FGS Council, the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council.

10:42:44 Why do I bother mentioning that it's because every graduate advisor feel like gathers together, how to counsel to communicate.

10:42:54 They receive information at that Council, from the Dean of Graduate Studies and from each other, and then take it back to their home units, and if there are any issues arising in that home unit, they can be brought forward to that Council, and that's

10:43:07 one way in which the individual departments, talk to each other about issues facing graduate programs and graduate students, and the graduate advisor is the primary link between the department or the school and the faculty of Graduate Studies.

10:43:26 Another really important person in your life is the graduate secretary. Let's say you wanted to apply for a personal leave.

10:43:34 Who is going to help you with that who is going to explain it to the graduate secretary.

10:43:43 As I said in, in my initial introduction, your experience as a graduate student is in some ways similar to that of an undergraduate, but crucially, different in the supervisory relationship.

10:44:03 Perhaps at the end of your undergraduate degree you did an honors essay under the supervision of a faculty member.

10:44:11 But not everyone will have done so, and that that close relationship with a faculty member is more characteristic of graduate study, and that's why I want to devote most of the rest of this presentation to the supervisory relationship.

10:44:27 Okay.

10:44:29 So, you will need a primary supervisor.

10:44:34 If you're doing an a course based, and only course based program with some no project no thesis no dissertation. You normally have a supervisor, but you don't absolutely have to have one.

10:44:47 If you're writing a project or a thesis at the Masters level or doing a doctorate, you absolutely have to have a primary supervisor.

10:44:57 In addition to that, you will have a supervisory committee, which includes any co supervisors.

10:45:08 Members, both internal and external to the department, and one question that that sometimes comes up is can we have someone on my supervisory committee, who's not a faculty member at Ufuk, maybe from another university, maybe from a profession someone

10:45:24 who works in the health service someone who works in industry, or someone in the community.

10:45:29 And the answer is, Yes, you may. That person needs to be nominated to the committee, and a form or go forward to graduate studies. But absolutely, you can benefit from the expertise of people outside you thick.

10:45:49 I would encourage you, for reasons that I won't go into to make such people members of your committee, rather than supervisors, it's a much simpler administrative process.

10:46:02 The structure of a Masters supervisory committee is different from a doctoral one. Now look at that in a second.

10:46:14 But before leaving this slide, I do want to emphasize the very last line of it where it says you should feel free to consult with members of your supervisory committee.

10:46:25 That sounds really obvious but the point I'm trying to make here is that sometimes people think that you should communicate primarily with your supervisor.

10:46:38 And only when the project or thesis or dissertation is at an end, maybe talk to the other members of the committee or get their view on what you've, you've worked on.

10:46:49 And I would encourage you to consult with them whenever you feel like it. The whole point of a supervisory committee is a group of people to share their expertise, and you want to be doing that, during the course of your project or thesis not at the very

10:47:04 end of it, only when the supervisors are satisfied with it. It's supposed to be a collective cooperative activity.

10:47:18 There is some annual progress review for masters and doctoral programs at which the entire supervisory committee and you gather together to look back over the past year, and look forward to the next year and sharp progress so you will be gathering at

10:47:37 least once a year, but more informally. When you can benefit from the expertise but member of your committee, get in touch with them Don't feel shy about it.

10:47:48 Okay. And now some of the administrative detail on how you how you create these, these committees.

10:47:58 So, for doctoral students, there's a minimum of three members on the committee, you have a primary supervisor from your home unit, and a minimum of two other people.

10:48:11 One of them has to be from outside the home academic unit and one of them has to be from inside it.

10:48:19 And it's certainly possible for one of those members to be a co supervisor.

10:48:25 I would stress here that this is a minimum of three members, you may have more than three members on your supervisor committee. If you wish, and if faculty members are willing I'm willing to, to sign up for it.

10:48:41 My advice here would be that if you find that there is another faculty member who has special expertise that's really important to your project or dissertation, that the three members of your supervisory committee don't have, then by all means, add a

10:49:00 fourth member, but also bear in mind that you're going to be responding to the critique and feedback of all the members of your supervisory committee.

10:49:11 And you really want a committee of 17 people and responding to all their critiques and feedbacks, probably not. So, keep it as small as is necessary.

10:49:23 But, by all means expanded. When you.

10:49:27 By doing so, you would gain access to a whole distinct area of expertise that you would otherwise not have.

10:49:35 Okay, so that's the doctoral program for master's degrees.

10:49:41 It's fewer it's two members.

10:49:43 Again, the primary supervisor has to be from the home academic unit. And the second member may be either from inside or outside the unit.

10:49:54 One thing not mentioned on this slide is external examiner.

10:49:59 If you write a thesis or dissertation, they'll definitely be an examination of it with an external examiner.

10:50:10 The reason I haven't included the external examiner is that that person isn't actually a member of your supervisory committee, they only come in at the very end, as an external expert to assess the quality of your work, they don't work with you in the

10:50:27 creation of it the way your supervisory committee does, and in fact it's really important that they not be involved at all. in any stage of your work.

10:50:38 During the course of your studies, because if they are, they can't be your external examiner that person must be at arm's length.

10:50:50 Okay.

10:50:50 Okay, what else I got to say.

10:50:54 So, you should be presented within the first weeks of study with a couple of pieces of policy, the faculty of Graduate Studies graduate supervision policy.

10:51:07 So, this is a document that we updated in 2017, and it describes everyone's responsibilities in the supervisory relationship.

10:51:21 What are your obligations, what are the obligations of a supervisor, as distinct from a member of your committee.

10:51:29 Guess the short answer to that is that the supervisor has primary responsibility for the direction of your studied.

10:51:40 And then also the department graduate handbook.

10:51:46 I've written here that this is a guide to completing your program requirements in a timely manner but really the department graduate handbook does an awful lot more than that.

10:51:57 There are certain policies at UVA, that are common to every graduate degree, but at the same time, there are features of graduate programs that are unique to particular programs.

10:52:12 And where are you going to find the information about them, not in the graduate calendar. But in individual departmental graduate handbooks. So, what kinds of things, am I talking about.

10:52:26 If you're doing a doctoral degree, what does my candidacy exam look like you're not going to find the answer to that, in the university graduate calendar, because everyone's candidacy exams look different, but you will find the answer in your departmental

10:52:41 graduate Handbook, so it's a resource for things like that. Funding policies within your unit. Is there a minimum stipend for your program is funding renewable, again, there are different answers to those questions depending on what department or school,

10:52:59 you're in, so the the answers to those questions will be in the graduate handbook.

10:53:04 It also provides them. A very good overview of the sequence of courses you take as you progress towards your final project thesis or dissertation, So it's a really important resource for you.

10:53:22 The, the supervision policy does include some general statements about, for example, when can you expect feedback on work that you you submit. How often should you be meeting with your, your supervisor, The answers to those questions are.

10:53:45 You shouldn't go more than 40 days without meeting your supervisor, but you may meet, more commonly and you typically do feedback should be a couple of weeks.

10:53:56 Normally, but it's going to vary. If you hand in a short thing expecting a short response to the turnaround should be quicker if you hand in an entire doctoral dissertation, it might take longer.

10:54:08 But there are general guidelines and the supervision policy about what you might reasonably expect in terms of feedback and and meetings.

10:54:21 One thing I probably should have said earlier, I've stressed how important the supervisory committee is. And the important role of a supervisor, but I haven't said when you should start forming these committees.

10:54:38 Again, your unit will have a policy on this.

10:54:42 But if you were to look up in the university graduate calendar, you would find that you don't need to form your supervisory committee, until three terms, after registration in your project thesis or dissertation.

10:54:57 And what I would like to say to you is, please form your committee earlier.

10:55:03 If you think about it, that's three terms of project thesis or dissertation passed without the benefit of your supervisory committee members.

10:55:13 If you leave it till that late, so I strongly recommend that the moment you begin your project thesis or dissertation, you try to constitute a full committee, even if you're not administratively required to do so.

10:55:26 How do you do that. Well as you proceed through your coursework, you can find people who have interests that mesh with yours.

10:55:34 You can look at the departmental websites for the interests of faculty members within them and think who might be good on your committee, you'll take coursework and think oh that was an interesting person, maybe I could have them on my committee and always

10:55:49 be thinking of this from the moment you begin your studies.

10:55:54 Okay.

10:56:02 Okay. What does FGS do to help graduate students what kind of business do we engage in.

10:56:10 We receive requests for academic concessions, namely leaves of absence parental medical compassionate and personal personal leaves of absence. Just interruptions in your study, they lost a turn.

10:56:28 So you can have more than one altogether, you can have six in a doctoral program and three and a master's program. You don't have to justify them just indicate that you're going to take them.

10:56:37 But one thing I would note here is that the clock continues ticking during your time of personal leave. In other words, if for example you're in a doctoral program, you have three years altogether.

10:56:51 To complete your candidacy exam. If you go on personal leave the comp carries on ticking through that time, even though you're not actually working on your studies.

10:57:02 Parental medical and compassionate leave anytime taken off for those reasons, does not count towards your program time.

10:57:11 In all cases, when you're on leave you're obviously not paying tuition, and you're not studying and you don't have access to university resources.

10:57:21 What else might you apply to FGS for for program extensions when you haven't completed within your time candidacy exam extensions, problem solving, there's no form for problem solving, but if there's an issue you to discuss, you can certainly discuss

10:57:38 it in confidence with me, or one of the other associate Dean's requests for oral examinations the formal combination of your program approval of external examiner for the PhD.

10:57:50 And as I've mentioned before, assistance with funding.

10:57:58 Okay, maybe one last thing from this slide.

10:58:02 I mentioned leaves of absence.

10:58:06 If you, if you think you are going to need to take a leave of absence, please contact your supervisor as soon as possible and make the request, as soon as possible.

10:58:21 The worst thing really is, if you struggle through a time, and at the end of it, say, okay, frankly for medical reasons I basically got nothing done. I really wish I'd applied for leave that you know that's unfortunate it's much better to to face up to

10:58:39 the issue early and say, realistically, I'm not going to be able to stay and take a time off. If it's a medical leave look after yourself and return when you're healthy, rather than struggling on when you're not able to do it, compassionate leave.

10:58:54 So you've got childcare obligations or an unexpected family.

10:59:15 You don't want to be paying tuition fees when you really not able to take advantage of the instruction that's offered parental leave. You got a young charge or the primary caregiver.

10:59:18 Take the time away. if you need it, and then come back.

10:59:23 Okay so, apply in a timely fashion as far as as possible.

10:59:29 Okay.

10:59:33 All right, so these last few slides and I am I promise getting to the end, deal with other sources of support for you beyond the faculty of Graduate Studies.

10:59:45 So here you are in the middle with the pink rectangle, the student as the head of your unit the graduate advisor, and also the graduate secretary who are perhaps your, your first ports of call for narrowly academic matters.

11:00:03 Your supervisor and a written resource the graduate handbook.

11:00:10 So, for academic questions. These will be your primary resources, and let's start filling in some of the, the other boxes here, all the boxes in green.

11:00:26 For different kinds of support outside your unit. So the Center for Accessible learning.

11:00:34 If you are long term going to need some accommodation to your study if you have a barrier to instruction, and you want that assessed, please consult and get registered with the Center for Accessible learning.

11:00:50 And they will assess your case. And they are the experts who we all consult, and on the basis of their written assessment, all kinds of expectations of your study will be revised and they can also provide supports that will break down that barrier to

11:01:12 study University Health Services counseling services in extreme situations campus security.

11:01:22 The bottom the box at the bottom right is EQ HR equity and human rights. If you're facing an issue that you think falls within that province, by all means go to consult them.

11:01:33 And all of these are confidential consultations, if you wish them to be very commonly. If someone asks me a question and the faculty of graduate studies that I think falls within the province of equity and human rights, then I will refer you and direct

11:01:48 you.

11:01:56 I saw a number of people attending today are international students. You have probably already communicated with international students services, but they are an ongoing resource particularly the moment for the changing landscape I saw someone in the

11:02:07 process of applying for a visa. Obviously, I SS don't issue visas, but they can give you up to date information, and frankly better information than I can

11:02:20 Finally, but other resources, the graduate students society Neil Bonnie will talk to you in a moment about that large council that group and student groups within your own department.

11:02:35 And finally, finally, the ombudsperson. This is a potential advocate for you.

11:02:42 Again, someone whom you can consult in confidence, and maybe the very last thing I would say is that you can consult with any university individually or body in conference, and never feel that you're going behind someone else's back and doing so that

11:03:01 shouldn't consult the faculty of Graduate Studies without okay with your supervisor, we're all working together to support you and if you want a competent confidential consultation about anything, please reach out is much better to ask and reach out.

11:03:24 not to allow a problem to continue when, when it was susceptible of solution. Anyway, that's the end of my presentation. Thank you very much.

11:03:28 And I'm okay.

11:03:31 back.

11:03:35 So I think I probably exhausted. Almost all of my half an hour.

11:03:43 Nail Do you want to do you want to take up now and then we can do questions and answers at the end or, we, what do you think, if I see there are two questions in the chat and if your preferences to answer those two before I go, I'm very happy with that.

11:03:57 Yeah, I'll try to.

11:04:00 So I've completely messed up my thing and trying to find that chat. Sure.

11:04:04 What am I done with it.

11:04:09 The experience of screen sharing has now been lost my I Here we go, here we go. Okay, let's have a look at the chat for how many times during the program can we defer the terms, for example with a health problem Queen leave for two years and return and

11:04:22 continue the program after that okay thanks very much for that, that question.

11:04:27 So, this is a question about leaves of absence and I said there are compassionate leaves medical leaves parental leaves and personal leaves. So for personal leaves, there is a limit of six times for within a doctoral program, either all together in one

11:04:50 lump or sit about for a master's program it's three medical leave has no limit at all. However, if the medical issue is such that,

11:05:08 you know, it's been going on for a year and season. And it's not immediately getting better. Sometimes, we recommend saying, Well, why don't you withdraw, and look after your health and if you feel well enough to return to study at some later date.

11:05:29 Then, apply at that stage you can be readmitted make an official withdrawal.

11:05:36 You never forced into doing that you can take medical leave after medical leave after medical leave but sometimes it's worth assessing whether your graduate studies are really being interrupted, or going to have to be deferred more long term, compassionate

11:05:53 leave is typically no more than three times in total. Again, if this looks like an issue that's not going to be resolved in the space of a term or two years sometimes better served withdrawing and reapplying later.

11:06:14 Maybe this turns out not to be the moment that you can perceive a graduate program.

11:06:20 So, so there's no limit on medical leave, there is a limit on compassionately then there is a limit on parental leave which again is three times, but I always interpret that as three times per child rather than three times total.

11:06:34 But otherwise, it seems a bit unfair really anyway. For example, can we leave for two years and continue the program after that, so you may withdraw from your program.

11:06:44 So this is not taking a leave this is actually withdrawing from your program, and returning at some later point, it can be in two years or, or beyond that.

11:06:54 The only question you face when withdrawing for a long period of time is are my courses still current or not. And in some subject particularly courses cease to be current quite fast.

11:07:09 There's a general expectation at the university that courses over 10 years old, and no longer really up to date in the field. But there are some other fields like say nursing, for example, where 10 years is actually too long.

11:07:25 And if you when you apply for readmission to the university so you've left and you you're applying to return, you typically submit a form saying, I would like the following courses retained or counted towards my program that I'm resuming.

11:07:58 point the unit will decide whether or not to support your request for retaining those courses, and in that example of nursing I gave. If you've got a course eight years old they might say I'm sorry. There have been new developments that course just isn't current anymore. And it will have to be

11:08:01 anymore. And it will have to be reconsidered, but basically yes of course you can leave and return. And if you have a health problem, you may absolutely apply for medical leave.

11:08:14 And there is no limit on how long that lasts.

11:08:19 That I hope I've answered that.

11:08:20 Yeah. Good. Excellent. You want to come.

11:08:25 Yeah. Sarah's question for those of us on study permits and international visas would take the leaves of absence cause a lapse in our immigration status.

11:08:32 Okay that is one of those questions. that is,

11:08:38 is very common specific to your visa.

11:08:45 And if ever I receive a request for a leave of absence from someone on a visa, then I say do consult with ISS international students services first and the fine print on your visa to check what you are and are not allowed to do.

11:09:03 I'm sorry if that's not a very clear answer, but sometimes the answer varies, and absolutely the best thing to do is not take that step until you're clear on what the arrangements are, and I strongly recommend if you're ever in that situation to consult

11:09:22 with International Student Services first before making a request to withdraw which might then affect your, your study plan.

11:09:32 Thanks.

11:09:33 Okay.

11:09:35 Thank you for the questions, and over over to kneel now from the graduate students society.

11:09:42 Thank you very much.

11:09:44 So my name is Neil Barney and I'm here to talk to you today about the University of Victoria graduate students society, which is your graduate students society, by virtue of being graduate students I said that were those words a lot at you Vic, you are

11:10:00 automatically members of the graduate students society and we are here to support you and all your studies.

11:10:06 A thing that I want to make really clear before I dive into the PowerPoint that we've prepared, is that we are here to support you however we can and we really encourage graduate students to reach out to us, absolute worst case, we can refer you to someone

11:10:23 who is better able to solve the specific sort of problem that you're having, you know, we direct students to student awards and financial aid we direct students to the faculty of Graduate Studies, fairly frequently, if we're not able to resolve the issue.

11:10:39 But we are always very happy to be your first point of contact if that is something that you feel that you need and you're more comfortable approaching us because we do have a little bit of distance.

11:10:49 We are very happy to fill that role. And I just want to be really explicit about that because the PowerPoint that are about to show you really emphasizes services offered by the graduate students society without.

11:11:03 In my opinion, touching enough upon that very essential feature of our operation.

11:11:10 All that being said, I am now going to go through the experience of trying to share my screen.

11:11:27 So, what, what is the graduate students society. So, the Graduate Student society is a democratic body, run by and for graduate students, our aims are to promote graduate student representation that you Vic, as well as support graduate students in

11:11:52 as less academic aspects of their time at graduate at grad school.

11:12:01 You know, it's the experience of being a graduate student is very varied for different people.

11:12:07 But you can spend quite a lot of time, sort of, in libraries in front of laptops, pushing through, and one of one of the things that we really try and provide for our members is the opportunity to meet with and engage with graduate students both within

11:12:27 their department, and ideally beyond because not only is that important for developing stable social relationships but it can actually be really really helpful to your thought process and your academic career to see ideas that exists beyond your restrictive

11:12:43 sphere of study and engage with them in.

11:12:46 We hope, low pressure non stressful environments.

11:12:53 So that's kind of. That's our jam. Here's a big list of services we offer.

11:13:00 Obviously, some of these services have been impacted by the current pandemic that is going on.

11:13:07 For instance, you'll see if you look at conference travel grants that those have actually been changed to online travel grants.

11:13:15 I highlight conference travel grants, in particular, because this is this is an area where we would actually work more as a referral service, those are administered through the faculty of grad studies, we support them by providing actually have to make

11:13:40 that those flow and we're happy to tell you how to apply. But, you know, actual questions should go through them. I am going to be cognizant of time I'm going to move on it a little bit of a break neck neck face here.

11:13:49 As I said earlier, the graduate students society is you is your graduate students society. There are a lot of ways to participate with the graduate students society.

11:14:01 First of all we have an annual, we have an annual and semi annual general meetings those typically occur in late October and March.

11:14:14 And those are opportunities for every graduate student to attend, and find out what the graduate students society Executive Board and the graduate representative Council have been working on for the past year, our priorities, and our aims and to influence

11:14:33 those priorities and aims to ensure that we are working to best represent the needs of graduate students that you back.

11:14:41 If you are more if you are more interested. If you want to be more engaged.

11:14:46 If you want to be more engaged than attending general meetings. You can also stand for election to that graduate representative Council, each academic unit you Vic has a member on this council, they meet once monthly, and they bring concerns from their

11:15:04 department, and, sort of, you know, discussion with their with their colleagues to that body so that we can ensure that we are actually actively working to address concerns of graduate students in our at you Vic.

11:15:19 I am cognizant of the fact that it says your department will be holding elections in September on this slide.

11:15:25 Well that is largely true.

11:15:28 There are many academic units who do not have a representative on the graduate representative Council.

11:15:35 And there is a list on our website, and if you find that your department that your academic unit is one of those academic units. We strongly encourage you to apply.

11:15:46 You know, we'd love to have that level of participation, because it both allows us to better fulfill our mandate of representing all graduate students that you've met and ensures that your academic unit has that representation.

11:16:00 In addition, just to dangle a bit of a bit of a carrot out there as well.

11:16:05 Having a representative on the graduate representative council allows your department to access departmental grants.

11:16:14 I do not want to provide too much detail on those at this time.

11:16:18 As those were revised due to the current pandemic. And their implementation.

11:16:26 Yeah. And the way that they're going to be implemented has changed a little bit details on that will be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks.

11:16:34 But I am waiting myself to learn them. so I cannot provide details on that right now.

11:16:41 If you're interested in what we are doing, and you just want to see the kind of things that you're doing.

11:16:47 There are a lot of different ways to follow us. We have a website.

11:16:51 We have a electronic bulletin that goes out bi weekly.

11:16:55 We have a variety of social media that always seems to be expanding.

11:17:02 But I know that our Facebook is fairly consistent and our Twitter is reasonably consistent.

11:17:11 All right.

11:17:13 Now I'm going to very quickly cover services that we provide. And the reason that there's an emphasis on this in.

11:17:22 In this sort of orientation presentation is. This is where we find that we received the highest volume of questions at the beginning of every term. And these are the things where graduate students will actually see them reflected in their tuition so they,

11:17:34 you know, they tend to get antsy about that.

11:17:37 So the bus pass. If you are registered in at least 1.0 units of on campus courses, you are automatically enrolled in the bus pass.

11:17:50 If you do not live.

11:17:54 And it will show up on your tuition, like this, you will be able to see it right there.

11:18:00 Okay, they haven't the other way around. If you are not registered as an on campus student but are living in the Victoria area and wish to have the bus pass.

11:18:11 Please contact us, there is a form that you need to fill out the cost is \$81. We are very happy to add you.

11:18:22 You know if you have any that form is available on our website. But, and I feel free to say this because I have the person who edits and maintains our website.

11:18:31 Our website is poorly laid out, so we very much, understand that if you cannot find that form. So please just send us an email at GSS office, and we are happy to talk to you about our Genesis office@uva.ca.

11:18:44 And we are happy to talk through with you how to add the bus pass on the other side of that. If you are registered as an on campus student, and are, do not live in Victoria, we can remove the bus pass fee.

11:19:02 Now, I generally encourage people who are not living in Victoria, to not register as on campus students, but it happens. So, you know, we are happy to, to help you remove that fee.

11:19:17 You will need to send us something that proves your address. In order to do that, and it's on the slide, but it's also worth stating explicitly that this cannot be a driver's license or a similar document and I say that it that broadly because I've had

11:19:34 people try and send me I think it's biometric cards, which is a thing that I'm not intimately familiar with. But, you know, essentially a piece of mail with your name on it doesn't have to be an English, just has to prove that you do not reside in Canada.

11:19:49 I see a question in the chat, but I can't actually see the chat I will take questions at the end.

11:20:00 The bus pass even if I live in Victoria.

11:20:04 There is a list of reasons that you can do it they are governed by our contract in with bc transit. They are currently on the screen.

11:20:12 So if you have a disability that prevents you from using transit.

11:20:16 If you are assessed twice for the past for instance some students are also registered at commotion.

11:20:21 If you are if you have a bus pass already issued by the BC Ministry of Finance.

11:20:28 Or if you're enrolled in a very short course.

11:20:33 I will be super explicit about this. Having a car is not a reason to opt out the reason that we can offer the bus pass at the rate that we do, which is, it is cheaper for a term of bus pass than it is to get a monthly bus pass through bc transit, is because

11:20:50 of of the contract that we have with bc transit, and that governs the parameters that someone is able to opt out.

11:21:00 I don't have wiggle room, you can email me about it, but I will say that in my email reply as well.

11:21:10 Alright, health and mental health and dental is big entities 1120.

11:21:19 The thing I am going to talk about, because I did see that we have a fair number of international students here is where is it ah residing outside of Canada.

11:21:33 So, there are two main reasons that someone can opt out of the health and dental plan all full time students are automatically assess the health and dental plan fees.

11:21:41 So if you look on your tuition, you will see something like this. Those numbers are from September, so it should ideally be a little bit lower for January is that students.

11:21:54 But yes, if your assess those there are two reasons that you can have them removed.

11:22:00 The first one is if you have comparable alternative coverage. So if your spouse, your parent. Your work is providing you with health coverage.

11:22:09 Then you can opt out through us.

11:22:12 Again, there is a form on our website. And at the end of this presentation you will see the email for our health and dental coordinator.

11:22:19 If you have questions about that process. We strongly encourage you to email her as soon as possible.

11:22:26 Because the opt out deadline is February 11.

11:22:32 And if you do not opt out before the deadline.

11:22:36 There is an appeals process but it is, you know, it's an appeals process it's slower, and it's a little bit clunky than what you would expect, or what you would hope.

11:22:45 But the main thing that I want to talk about in my little bit of remaining time is residing outside of Canada.

11:22:53 This is something new that we are doing this, this year because of the pandemic.

11:22:59 So, if you live outside of Canada, and you do not have MSP or equivalent, you can opt out of the plan.

11:23:12 Download a form from our website, fill out all the sections and there's a note section. And please say that you will, you know, not be in Canada.

11:23:22 I can see that I forgot to update the slide, not be in Canada for spring term 2021 scan and attach a piece of mail with your non Canadian address and email those documents to our health and mental coordinator before February 11.

11:23:42 Now, we encourage students who are residing outside of Canada.

11:23:46 To do this, even if you think that you will be able to come to Canada later in the term. So if you think that you'll be able to arrive in. In March, say, we would rather that you opt out, and then OPT back in when you arrive in Canada.

11:24:05 Then, then not basically

11:24:09 cognizant of the fact that it's 1124.

11:24:13 That was a very very quick intro, I am just going to reiterate again, while leaving this screen share up that if you have questions about anything, please feel free to contact us.

11:24:29 Our health and dead the coordinators email is on the screen right now, it is GSOC at U of m.ca.

11:24:37 And my office email. My email is also on the screen, it is GSS office at you, vic.ca.

11:24:47 Yeah, it genuinely like we would always rather hear from you than not. So, please please please contact us, and I am going to stop sharing now and see the floor to either general questions or broader wrap up.

11:25:19 Now looks like there's one question that just popped up in the chat here.

11:25:23 What's the difference between a basic and extended plan. Alright, this, I will admit this was a bit of a dreaded question. Um, so basic insurance or primary insurance in Canada is basic insurance primary insurance is, NBC it would be bc MSP.

11:25:46 It covers, like you're very basic medical needs.

11:25:51 If you are coming to Canada in your first target Vic, this will be provided with through guard me, that is done by ISS.

11:26:02 And I am always very hesitant to ask, answer questions about guard me because it is administered by international student services and not us.

11:26:11 But yeah, and then the difference between, between that basic coverage and our extended coverage is that extended coverage allows you access to things like prescription medication.

11:26:23 Para Para medical services vision care.

11:26:29 Dental is a different thing but dental plan is also included on there.

11:26:35 Basically,

11:26:38 very reductive Lee.

11:26:44 I will deal with that question in a second. Very productively.

11:26:48 If you had a medical emergency and needed to be rushed to the hospital bc MSP would cover you.

11:26:55 But the extended care would cover prescription medication that you need injury recovery or equipment that you know supplemented like if you need knee braces and crutches and things like that.

11:27:08 Students that you need to have both.

11:27:12 Going through I have an online conference on January 15 Will I be able to get the grant approved before that.

11:27:19 That is a question that I would tell you to email FGS about.

11:27:26 Yeah, that.

11:27:31 Yeah,

11:27:31 it's effectively for transit bound to inform you.

11:27:33 And is there a limit to usage.

11:27:49 The past covers the entire Victoria BC transit region.

11:27:41 There is no limit to usage beyond the term limit. so if you have a you pass for this term.

11:27:50 I think the last day that it is effective is April 31, but

11:27:56 April 30 and 31st is not a real day.

11:28:00 But that.

11:28:04 Okay. But yeah, so it's a bus pass, you can take the bus in the Victoria region.

11:28:11 Is there a health insurance card for the GFS extended health. Yes, um, you know more normal year physical cards will be delivered to our office and we would encourage students to show up as it is a very particular year, having past years, having past

11:28:27 January 1 physical cards will still be set to our office and we can mail you one. If that is your preference, or you can get a PDF version of your card through Pacific blue Cross's website.

11:28:47 I'm not sure I understand the question Can we switch between a basic and extended health plan if needed. You need both they do different things.

11:28:59 Thank you Dr little.

11:29:09 Okay, no one else has any questions right now I think that's a good place to wrap up. And if you had any questions that didn't get answered today we are running a q amp a on our Instagram account all day.

11:29:21 So that's at you Vic, your one on Instagram, feel free to send us any questions you have and we'll do our best to either answer you or refer you to the correct source.

11:29:34 We've got a little bit of a break in the schedule now for the next hour but we'll reconvene at 1234 sort of in for formal grad social virtual Hangout.

11:29:55 Neil will be joining us again for that one so we'll see everybody in an hour.