

My name is Deborah Sharpe and I am enthusiastically running to continue my service as Student Senator representing the Faculty of Graduate Studies. I'm a 4th-year PhD student and Mitacs Accelerate Fellow within the Department of Biology, and have and my research explores how growing vessel noise in the Canadian Arctic is affecting marine mammal species.

Trained as an ecologist, I'm a big-picture thinker inherently interested in understanding the nuanced connections that make things work. Accordingly, my interest in running for UVic's Senate stems from a desire to learn more about the functioning of university bureaucracy, with an eye towards injecting more transparency and inclusiveness into UVic's policies, programs, and priorities.

Beyond education, a university's utmost imperative should be fostering collegial partnerships—both inside and outside the university. But while UVic actively engages in building external relationships, poor intra-campus communication has left students—*especially* graduate students—siloeed in their departmental buildings and ignorant of the opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration that exist across the quad. This academic isolation can be particularly disheartening to international students like me, who may already be fighting social isolation as they navigate a new city AND a new culture.

While there are change-makers within the student body working to bridge gaps and build community across campus, such bottom-up efforts can languish when students matriculate; community building needs to also be an intentional component of top-down governance to be sustained.

If re-elected to Senate, I will continue to advocate for 1) better campus-wide communication and 2) university initiatives that actively promote the collaboration of students between UVic's faculties and departments.