

Appointment Committee for the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences (Review of Current Internal Candidate)

Summary Report | 4 December 2025

The Reappointment Committee for the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, unanimously recommends that Dr. Lois Harder, the incumbent Dean, serve a second term as Dean. Aligned with Procedures for the Appointment and Reappointment of Deans (GV0450), the Committee bases its recommendation on a review of the incumbent's CV and self-assessment, the criteria and objectives established by the Committee, the public presentation, interactions with Committee members (including an in-depth interview), feedback from the Vice-President Academic and Provost, consultations with constituent groups, and feedback submitted by faculty, staff, and students.

Dr. Harder moved from the University of Alberta to take up her role as UVic's Dean of Social Sciences in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major issue during Dr. Harder's first year as Dean, and in the subsequent two years she navigated the significant challenge of implementing university-wide budget cuts. Dr. Harder quickly developed close and effective working relationships with her two Associate Deans, decanal support staff, Chairs/Directors of the seven academic units, and then faculty and staff. During her first four years as Dean, and despite budgetary challenges, the Faculty hired 43 new faculty members (and two faculty members transferred from other faculties). In addition, Dr. Harder showed effective decision-making in discontinuing the Human Dimensions of Climate Change program, and in fostering the development of the Transformative Climate Action Certificate in collaboration with Continuing Studies in its place, which has substantially increased enrolments. Dr. Harder also played a major role in the development of the new Faculty of Health, demonstrating great strength as a creative and collaborative leader.

Dr. Harder has been a very strong and effective advocate of Indigenization at UVic, including by serving on the Dean's Advisory Forum on Indigenization and by welcoming

the School of Indigenous Governance (along with the School of Public Administration) into the Faculty of Social Sciences. She works closely and well with her Associate Deans and leadership team, and the Faculty has flourished under her leadership. For example, research income has more than doubled since her first year, and she has contributed to the development of micro-credentials, community-engaged learning options, and several other such initiatives. These are just a few highlights.

Relationship building is one of Dr. Harder's key powers. Her communication style is direct and open; she makes her views clear, and she listens thoughtfully to counterarguments. As a social scientist with deep expertise in citizenship law, social policy, and the social regulation of intimate life, Dr. Harder's approach to collaborative working relationships is well grounded. She is decisive but not mercurial. She has an excellent sense of humour and fun. She is strongly committed to efforts to increase equity and inclusion and to reduce racism and other forms of discrimination.

Faculty members who provided feedback following Dr. Harder's presentation wrote in favour of her reappointment. They commended her for meeting and exceeding the rigorous criteria for the role and noted that she demonstrates exceptional leadership, strategic vision, institutional stewardship, effective communication, democratic approaches and commitment to collegial governance. Respondents highlighted her thorough understanding of the Faculty's challenges and proactive engagement with issues such as research visibility, AI and academic accommodations, as well as her longstanding dedication to leadership development.

Dr. Harder's first four years as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences have been truly remarkable. She faced extraordinarily difficult challenges and responded to them with great resilience, creativity and effectiveness. Considering her performance in relation to the selection criteria developed by this Committee, Dr. Harder's record is superb. Her skills and her commitments align beautifully with the strategic priorities of the University of Victoria and with the needs and ambitions of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The Committee is pleased to unanimously recommend that Dr. Lois Harder be invited to serve a second term as Dean.