

Constitution and Policies

This constitution is a living document.

The Gender Empowerment Centre Constitution

The Gender Empowerment Centre Constitution is a living document, one that requires constant discussion, revisitation, and critical analysis. This document was last updated in March 2019 at our Annual General Meeting.

The Gender Empowerment Centre welcomes your input. If you have any feedback or proposed amendments to this document, please contact the Gender Empowerment Centre Coordinator(s) at gemcentre@uvic.ca or 250-721-8353. Amendments to the Constitution can be made at Annual General Meetings, Semi-Annual General Meetings, and Special General Meetings.

(Constitution Revised March 2019 at AGM)

ARTICLES

Article 1: Name

To be known unofficially as “The Gender Empowerment Centre” and doing business officially as the “University of Victoria Students’ Society Women’s Centre”.

The Centre will hereafter be referred to as the Gender Empowerment Centre in this document.

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose of the Gender Empowerment Centre (Women’s Centre) is:

1. To provide a self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming centered physical space to facilitate networking among campus self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons.

2. To offer programs and promote issues in keeping with the centre's mandate and vision for members and/or general public.
3. To provide a central location for the distribution of information.
4. To maintain a resource library for student and public use.

Article 3: Mission and Vision Statements

Mission: To be a strong, feminist voice on campus.

Vision: To create social change through political action, education and support of University of Victoria self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons.

Article 4: Authority.

Nothing in this Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered in variance with the University of Victoria Students' Society Constitution.

Article 5: Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of the Gender Empowerment Centre, funds and assets remaining after any debts and liabilities are cleared shall be used solely for the establishment and maintenance of a scholarship and/or bursary fund to provide assistance to , non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons enrolled as students at the University of Victoria. Criteria for awarding such scholarships and/or bursaries shall be determined by the Gender Empowerment Centre Collective at the time of dissolution.

BYLAWS

Bylaw 1: Interpretation and Definitions

In the Constitution and Bylaws of the University of Victoria Students' Society Gender Empowerment Centre:

“The Gender Empowerment Centre,” “GEM Centre,” “Gender Empowerment Centre,” “the Centre” means University of Victoria Students’ Society Women’s Centre;

“feminist” means a mode of analysis that recognizes the right of every self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming person to develop to their potential free from oppression;

“Member” means a general member of the Centre, in accordance with Bylaw 2.1;

“Collective” means the Gender Empowerment Centre Collective, in accordance with Bylaw 3;

“General Meeting” means Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

“thirdspace” is an autonomous feminist publication affiliated with and based out of the UVSS Gender Empowerment Centre.

Bylaw 2: Membership

1. General Membership: All people who self-identify as women, non-binary or gender non-conforming and are registered at the University of Victoria, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members at large are considered general members of the Gender Empowerment Centre provided they ascribe to the purposes of the Gender Empowerment Centre.
2. Rights of Members
 - a. All general members (as defined by Bylaw 1) shall have voting privileges at General Meetings of the centre.
 - b. All general members shall be eligible to be on the Collective
 - c. General members shall be entitled, upon request, to a copy of the Constitution of the Gender Empowerment Centre.

Bylaw 3: Gender Empowerment Centre Collective

1. People having met membership requirements as outlined in Bylaw 2.1 who attend two consecutive Collective meetings
2. Committee reps
3. People hired under the Work Study program
4. Gender Empowerment Centre Coordinators

Bylaw 4: Signing Authority

1. The signing authorities for the Gender Empowerment Centre shall be the two Collective Coordinators, two work study positions, and collective members as needed

Bylaw 5: Duties of Collective Members

It is the duty of the Collective to:

1. Uphold the spirit and intent of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Gender Empowerment Centre in matters respecting the Centre;
2. Ensure the mission and vision of the Gender Empowerment Centre are being followed;
3. Ensure minutes and agenda are kept and available to the membership;
4. Liaise with the UVSS Board of Directors on issues of concern to self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons;
5. Hold Collective meetings no less than once a month;
6. Manage, administer and control the space, revenue, business and affairs of the Centre;
7. Supervise Work Studies and unionized staff and ensure that the activities of staff are appropriate to the purposes of the Centre.
8. Appoint standing committees, ad hoc committees and task forces to carry out functions specified by the Collective. The Collective reserves the right to make final and binding decisions in all matters.
9. Develop policies and procedures for the Centre and ensure they are current and practiced;
10. Ensure Organizational Committees are active and each Committee has a representative.

Bylaw 6: Organizational Committees

1. The Organizational Committees of the Gender Empowerment Centre shall be decided by the current collective members and can include Anti-

- discrimination, Finance, Personelle, Organizational Development, Volunteer, Fundraising, Activities, Trans Inclusion, and Library among others.
2. Organizational Committees shall be composed of general members who uphold the spirit and intent of the Gender Empowerment Centre.

Bylaw 7: Duties of Organizational Committee Representatives

- Finance: Support the Finance and Administration Coordinator in the proper keeping of financial records; ensure the preparation and adoption of yearly budget,; sign financial statements when needed.
- Personnel: Act as a liaison between Collective and staff; sit on hiring committee; coordinate staff reviews; ensure staff concerns and/or grievances are addressed. Unionized staff grievances shall follow procedures outlined in the Collective Agreement between UVSS and the United Steelworkers of America, local 2009.
- Organizational Development: Maintain and update policies and procedures manual and constitution; coordinate General Meetings
- Volunteer: Recruit volunteers, maintain an active volunteer list and schedule; ensure new volunteers are trained.
- Fundraising: Maintain a record of past and present donors; coordinate funding proposals for Centre projects and activities.
- Activities: Create and maintain activities calendar; compile list of programming ideas and requests; act as liaison between standing committees and Collective.
- Library: Monitor book loans, maintain inventory, coordinate book and subscription acquisitions; collective current information for resource files, ensure library is user-friendly.
- Anti-discrimination: focus on and act on issues of discrimination within the Gender Empowerment Centre; reflect on the exclusive reality of the history of the feminism practices in the Gender Empowerment Centre; stimulate awareness and educate around the issues of discrimination on campus through alliance building with other organizations on and off campus.
- Outreach: design and implement outreach programs which raise awareness and use of services, increase volunteers programs, network with other Gender Empowerment Centre and Social Justice groups, on and off campus, coordinate Gender Empowerment Centre publicity,

- assist in evaluation component of outreach programs, and raise awareness of Thirdspace.
- Reps from each organizational committee, Thirdspace Editors, and Volunteer Coordinator will make written or oral reports at Collective meetings and at General Meetings.
 - Duties of organizational committees other than those listed above shall be determined by each committee at its onset.
 - An Organizational Committee Rep position may be declared vacant if; the Rep misses meetings that are regularly held in the period of one month without reasonable excuse; the Rep resigns from the position or will be absent for an extended period of time
 - Where a Rep's position has been declared vacant, the Collective shall, through consensus, elect someone to the position until the next General Meeting.

Bylaw 8: Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

1. Position of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the UVSS, a member of the Gender Empowerment Centre shall be selected as a Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors and shall also serve as a voting member of the UVSS Board of Directors, and shall also serve as an *ex officio* member of the Gender Empowerment Centre Collective

2. Term of Position of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

The term of the position of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors shall be in accordance with Bylaw 5, Article 2 (b & d) of the UVSS Constitution and Bylaws.

3. Selection of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

The Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors shall be selected at the Semi-Annual General Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the Gender Empowerment Centre. Candidates for the position of Representative shall meet the same eligibility and conduct requirements as those outlined in Bylaw 2.1 and Articles 2 & 3 (*Purpose, Mission and Vision statements*) of the Gender Empowerment Centre.

4. Duties of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

In addition to fulfilling those duties prescribed by the Bylaws of the UVSS Board of Directors, the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors shall:

1. Represent the interests and concerns of members of the Gender Empowerment Centre
2. Have an understanding of and promote the rights of women, non-binary, gender non-conforming people and other traditionally marginalized persons or groups in the UVSS and in society at large;
3. Attend collective meetings of the Gender Empowerment Centre; and
4. Make a report to the membership at each General Meeting
5. Abandonment of Position and the Removal of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors

The Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors may be removed from the position in accordance with Bylaw 10, Articles 1, 3 and 5 of the UVSS Constitution and Bylaws. As per Bylaw 10, Article 2 of the UVSS Constitution and Bylaws, the Gender Empowerment Centre. Representative shall be permitted to take a leave of absence in order to participate in cooperative education work terms. When there is a vacancy in the position of the Representative on the UVSS Board of Directors, the Gender Empowerment Centre shall hold a by-election at the next General Meeting, or may call a Special General Meeting for the purpose of holding a by-election. The Gender Empowerment Centre Collective may choose to select, by consensus, at a collective meeting, a temporary representative on the UVSS Board of Directors.

Bylaw 9: Collective Meetings

1. The Collective shall meet no less than twice per month between the months of September and April and no less than once per month between May and August. All members are welcome to attend Collective meetings.
2. Quorum for Collective meetings shall be four Collective members.
3. Collective meetings shall use consensus as a decision making process.

Bylaw 10: General Meetings

1. There are three types of General Meetings:
 - a. Annual General Meeting (AGM);
 - b. Special General Meeting;
 - c. Semi-Annual General Meeting

2. There shall be at least seven days notice prior to a General meeting consisting of a minimum of 30 notices posted on campus and an email sent out on the Gender Empowerment Centre listserv.
3. Scheduling of Annual General Meetings:
 - a. The AGM is to be scheduled between the first day of classes in September and November 30 as determined by the Collective
 - b. Special General Meetings may be scheduled as required by the Collective
 - c. The Semi-Annual General Meeting is to be scheduled in March.
4. Quorum for the General Meetings shall be a minimum of seven general members of the Gender Empowerment Centre or 2/3 of active Collective Members.
5. Rules of Order: Gender Empowerment Centre shall use consensus with a fall back of a 75% majority rule in case of irreconcilable differences. Meetings shall be facilitated by an outside resource person, as agreed upon by the Collective, who is practiced in the use of consensus.

Bylaw 11: Policy

1. Gender Empowerment Centre policy shall be established through consensus at Collective Meetings or a General meeting.
2. All policy will remain in effect until it is changed or retracted through consensus.

Bylaw 12: Amendments

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Gender Empowerment Centre may be amended through consensus at a General Meeting in accordance with Bylaw 10.5