Society for Students with a Disability

October 2026

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2025 - APRIL 2026

Latest information and updates about the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS), Society for Students with a Disability (SSD).

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Office Coordinator

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Staff & Council Members







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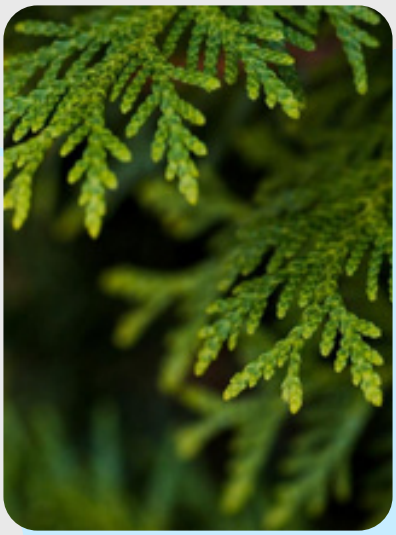
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Territorial Acknowledgement







We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional unceded territory the Society of the Students with a Disability stands and the Songhees, xʷsepsəm and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. We seek to continually decolonize all forms of organizing structures and center Indigenous peoples when considering what accessibility looks like.

2025-2026

Greetings from Council

Operations Director
Hannah Brown

Welcome to our 2025-2026 Annual Report! It has been an incredible year for the SSD, and I am proud to share the accomplishments and milestones we have achieved together. This year, for the first time in a couple of years, we were fortunate to have a stable staff team, which has helped us strengthen our capacity and expand our events, workshops, and programming.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build more community partnerships and create even more opportunities and large-scale events for students. Thank you to everyone who has supported the SSD this year. I hope you enjoy exploring our success though our Annual Report!

Finance Director
Nicole Smith-Payne

It has been a successful year for Council, both financially and in the work we have been able to accomplish. We were grateful to receive additional grants and community funding, which allowed us to further support our programs and initiatives. Looking ahead, we hope to invest in larger projects and events while increasing staff hours so we can continue growing our impact. Thank you to everyone who has supported Council this year. I hope you enjoy exploring our Annual Report and learning more about our work!

International Student Representative
Lauren Wyler

As my first year on Council, I am proud of the work we have accomplished and excited to share it with you. In my role as International Student Representative, I have focused on building connections with the SSD and International Centre for Students, while working to make the SSD Lounge a more welcoming space. It has been wonderful to see the Lounge become a busy and inviting space for students throughout the week. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve on Council and excited for what the next year will bring!







2025-2026

SSD Staff

Office Coordinator



Bella Jacobs (she/her)

As a returning team member who has now been in this position for a year, I am so glad I came back as this community always fills my cup! I previously served as the Communications and Research Coordinator from 2022-2024. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Art History with a Minor in Film Studies and I am completing my Master's Degree in Art History this year. I am an invisibly disabled student and am deeply passionate about disability after finding a sense of community within the SSD during my undergraduate years. I have several years of advocacy and non-profit work at UVic and in the community. I am excited about the SSD's continued growth these last few years and can't wait to continue the momentum.

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my kitties, playing video games, and building miniature models.

Education & Administrative Coordinator



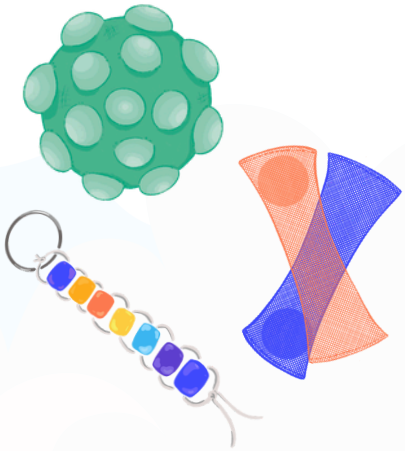
Kai Punt (she/they)

During my studies at UVic, the SSD was a valuable resource and community to me as an Autistic student. After graduating with my BSc in Psychology (minor in Art Education) last spring, I was excited to be back on campus to provide students with the resources and community the SSD once gave to me! Outside of my work at the SSD, I am a TA for the Psychology department and work as a Research Coordinator at the Child Neuropsychology Lab. I am currently working on research on social camouflaging (AKA: masking) in Autistic youth, and I intend to pursue graduate studies in clinical psychology. My inbox is always open if you wish to chat about academic support, accessing resources, and our educational programming!

In my free time, I enjoy making art, playing softball, weight lifting, Pokémon, and probably other things that I have forgotten about!

2025-2026

Work Study
Student Coordinators



Programs & Outreach - (200 Hours)

This position was filled by **Lucy Griffiths**, an undergraduate student in Anthropology. Lucy helped us plan events throughout the year and connect with off-campus resources. She also left us with events and resources to carry into the summer after her time with us. We are incredibly grateful to have worked with Lucy and hope she is enjoying life after graduation!

Media & Marketing - (200 Hours)

This position was filled by **Valentine Anderson,** an SSD Director-at-Large. Valentine helped us create personalized graphics, including our now-famous SSD little logo person! Their artistic abilities taught us to expand our online persona and not be afraid to try something new because people will love it. Valentine is still on our council this year, and we hope they'll stick around!



Grant Writing - (200 Hours)



This position was filled by **Matthew/Mia Gordon**, an undergraduate student in Theatre. They were an important part of our team this year, creating a comprehensive list of grants we can use for years to come. They also developed our comprehensive Accessible Events Guide, and we are so thankful for all their hard work. We hope graduation is treating them well!

SSD Council

2025-2026

Elected February 2025

Chairpersons
Julia Denley & Hannah Brown

Treasurer
Mya Snow (Feb-Oct)

Student Liaison
Valentine Anderson

UVSS SSD Rep
Dacian Filipescu

International Student Rep
Kush Gulati (Feb-Oct)
Lauren Wyler (Oct-Feb)

Grad Student Rep
Jitendra Palaparty

Secretary
Eve Peterson

General Members at Large
Acorn Wasserman
Lola Farago (Feb-Oct)
Kat Taylor-Hood (Feb-Oct)
Gabi Gallego (Feb-Oct)
Margot Wherle
Carolyn Walker
Christina Flores
Nicole Smith-Payne

Elected February 2026

Operations Director
Hannah Brown

Finance Director
Nicole Smith-Payne

Communications Director
Vacant

UVSS SSD Rep
Acorn Wasserman

International Student Rep
Lauren Wyler

Grad Student Rep
Gabriel Pangan

Outreach Director
Julia Denley

Director(s) of Council at Large
Eve Peterson
Arjun VedBrat
Valentine Anderson
Carolyn Walker

In our February AGM we voted to update our Constitution to change the names of our positions

Our council is elected/re-elected every year at our Annual General Meeting held in February. Additionally, at our Semi-Annual General Meeting in October we hold elections to fill our empty positions.

2025-2026

Campus Kick-Off Tabling



The Beacon Hill Petting Zoo



The Bug Zoo



Summary and Highlights

The following pages highlight our events, workshops, programs and campaigns from the past year. It has been a busy and exciting year as our staff settled into their roles, and we are proud to have delivered more than 50 programs and initiatives for our community. With our team now established and looking ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum and make next year even more successful.

Events

2025-2026

Potlucks

From September 2025 to April 2026, we hosted four themed potlucks, with two held each semester. The themes included the **Harvest Potluck** on October 1, **Spud Social Potluck** on November 24, **One Pan Potluck** on January 30, and **Breakfast for Dinner Potluck** on April 2.

All four potlucks were well attended, with very little food left over. The Harvest and Breakfast for Dinner potlucks were particularly successful, with more than 15 people signing up and over 20 attendees at each event.

The potlucks were held in the SSD Lounge (SUB B111), which provided a welcoming space for students to connect and share a meal. While we plan to continue offering potlucks next year, we hope to book larger rooms throughout the SUB to better accommodate attendees and the food being shared.













Events

2025-2026

Crafting

Crafting events continue to be one of the most requested types of programming in our annual survey. This year we hosted five crafting events, providing students with opportunities to get creative, connect with others, and participate in hands-on activities.

Collage & Button Making
July 15, 2025

We hosted a collage and button-making event to create buttons in preparation for the September Campus Kick-off.

Pumpkin Decorating
October 20, 2025

Students decorated plastic pumpkins with paint, gems, and other materials in preparation for the Pride Collective's Hexxed Up Halloween event. This was one of our more successful crafting events of the year.

Colouring for 16 Days of Activism
December 2, 2025

In collaboration with the Gender Empowerment Centre, we hosted a colouring event as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

Holiday Crafting Afternoon
December 15, 2025

Students created small holiday elves using pinecones and other craft materials during a relaxed afternoon of seasonal crafting.

Rock Painting with the Campus Community Garden
April 8, 2026

We partnered with the Campus Community Garden for an outdoor rock-painting event, giving students an opportunity to craft and connect in the Garden.







Looking Ahead

While crafting events remain highly requested, attendance has varied throughout the year. Events such as pumpkin decorating saw stronger participation, while others had lower attendance. Next year, we will focus on choosing more accessible days and times and increasing promotion to improve attendance. Given that crafting events were once again requested in our survey, we will continue offering them while working to make these events more accessible and engaging for students.

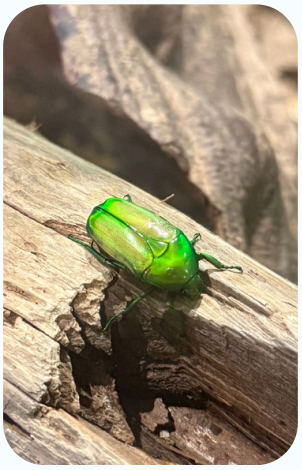
Events

2025-2026

Field Trips

Each year, we look forward to our visits to the Victoria Bug Zoo and the Beacon Hill Children's Farm, and this year was no exception. Both outings were well attended and provided participants with opportunities to connect, explore, and enjoy some of Victoria's unique community attractions. On September 18, 2025, we visited the Beacon Hill Petting Zoo, with 17 people registered and approximately 15 participants attending. Our annual visit to the Victoria Bug Zoo took place on February 9, 2026, and was also a success, with 12 people attending.






Mental Health Resource Fair

On September 12, 2025, we hosted our 3rd Annual Mental Health Resource Fair in the Michele Pujol Room from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event brought together 40 mental health organizations and wellness artists, offering students the opportunity to connect with a diverse range of mental health, wellness, and community resources. To support participating organizations and reduce the costs associated with attending, we provided free parking for all vendors.

This year's fair welcomed twice as many vendors as the previous year and attracted more than 200 student attendees. The event provided a valuable opportunity for students to discover available resources, engage directly with community organizations, and learn about the support services available to them.

Moving forward, we will use feedback gathered through our post-event survey to guide future improvements. For our next fair, we plan to strengthen our collaboration with the UVSS, provide food for participating vendors, and explore additional strategies to increase student attendance and engagement.

Events

2025-2026

One Off Events

Ice Cream Fundae
July 31, 2025

To celebrate Disability Awareness Month in July, we hosted an Ice Cream Fundae outside the Student Union Building! The event featured free ice cream, lawn games, and opportunities to learn about disability. We had a fantastic turnout and even ran out of ice cream before the event ended!

Type 1 Diabetes Dinner
November 20th, 2025

We sponsored a community dinner for Type 1 Diabetes Month, providing a free space for students with Type 1 diabetes to connect and share experiences with peers. The event was well attended, and registration filled up quickly enough that we had to close the form and start a waitlist!

Bake Sale for Mental Health
February 24, 2026

On February 24, we collaborated with the AVP's Men's Circle to host a bake sale supporting WildPlay Nanaimo's Naked Bungee Jump for Mental Health. All proceeds benefited Mental Health Recovery Partners, and we raised over $1,000 for the cause!



Trick or Treating in the SUB
October 31, 2025

We brought back the Student Union Building's trick-or-treating event, a tradition from years past where students visit groups throughout the building to collect candy. The event was a great success, with such a strong turnout that we had to make a last-minute trip to buy more candy!

Bake Sale Fundraiser for Drug User Liberation Front
November 27, 2026

This bakesale fundraiser was in collaboration with GEM, PRIDE, and UVSP. we were raising money for the Drug User Liberation Front (DULF) co-founders who are facing criminal charges under section 5(2) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA).



Workshops

2025-2026

We hosted many workshops throughout the year focused on a variety of different theme. Our goal is a minimum of 8 workshops provided theroughout the school year for students and this year we hosted 8, so we were right on track! Next year we would like to continue collaborating and try our best to host even more workshops. We would also like to work on the attendance at our workshops. with average turnout being low, we will be trying to find ways to get students more excited about workshops.





Disability & Neurodiversity Awareness Training - October 25, 2025

Our Disability and Neurodiversity Awareness Training was the first workshop facilitated by our Education and Administration Coordinator, Kai Punt, with the UVSS! As part of UVic's Five Days of Action, Kai collaborated with Operations Director Hannah Brown to deliver a workshop supporting students and staff in learning about disability, neurodiversity, and putting allyship into practice. The session covered topics including disability in the post-secondary environment, responding to disability disclosures, and writing accessibility statements, with opportunities for meaningful group discussion throughout.

The workshop had a strong turnout, with 11 attendees in person and 27 online. Additionally, more than 11 people requested access to the recording afterward, demonstrating further interest in the training. We were pleased to see such strong engagement and hope this workshop will help build a more informed, inclusive, and accessible campus community.

Fidget Making Workshop December 4, 2025

Organized and facilitated by our Work Study student, Lucy, this workshop taught students how to make marble mesh and beaded keychain fidgets. Designed as a fun, low-pressure activity during the final week of classes, the workshop offered students a chance to unwind from studying. Although attendance was low, with only five participants, we recognize that this is a busy time for students and were happy to provide a creative break.

Accessible Recreation Workshop - January 27, 2026

In collaboration with Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation, we hosted a workshop to help students find accessible recreation opportunities in Victoria. Although attendance was low, with approximately five participants, we recorded the workshop and plan to share it on our website so future students can access this resource.

Workshops

2025-2026

Understanding Burnout
February 12, 2025

In collaboration with Dawn Schell from the Wellness Centre, we hosted a workshop on Understanding Burnout. The workshop had a solid turnout, with 12 attendees, and we received positive feedback from students. The session focused on helping participants recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout while introducing practical skills and strategies for prevention and management. We were pleased to offer a workshop that addressed an important aspect of student well-being and provided attendees with tools they can apply to their academic and personal lives. The positive feedback suggests that students value opportunities to learn about mental health and develop strategies to support their overall wellness.

Zine Making Workshop
March 16, 2026

Our Work Study student, Lucy, organized and facilitated a zine-making workshop where attendees learned about the history of zines before creating their own. Although attendance was relatively small, with approximately 5-10 participants, attendees enjoyed the session. The main feedback was that two hours was not enough time to create their zines. In the future, we would consider extending the workshop to give participants more time to explore their creativity and complete their projects.





Sex & Disability - Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion
March 9, 2026

This workshop featured a screening of the short documentary *Picture This* (2017), which explores sex and disability, followed by a panel discussion with individuals bringing lived experience and expertise in sexuality, consent, and disability. The event was part of the Gender Empowerment Centre's FEMEXPO, and we were pleased to collaborate with the Consent and Care Collective and the Anti-Violence Project. Our panelists were Nicole Shortreed, Alessia Servin, and Katherine Achacoso.

Although attendance was smaller, with approximately five participants, the screening and discussion went well. We were glad to see attendees engage openly with a personal and sometimes difficult topic, creating space for meaningful conversation and reflection. This workshop highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for students to explore the intersections of sexuality, consent, and disability in a supportive environment. We appreciate our panelists and campus partners for helping make this conversation possible.

Workshops

2025-2026

Accessible Events Guide Workshop - April 30, 2026

This workshop marked the culmination of a project that began two years ago but could not be completed at the time: the development of an Accessible Events Guide. Fortunately, this year we had the capacity to bring the project to completion with the support of our Work Study student, Matthew.

The Accessible Events Guide is a comprehensive, research-based resource that walks organizers through the process of creating accessible events from the very beginning. It covers a wide range of considerations, from selecting accessible venues to developing social media content and writing accessibility statements. To celebrate the guide's release, we hosted a workshop where Matthew walked attendees through the resource and discussed how it can be applied to event planning. The workshop was also recorded so it can be made available on our website for future reference.

The event had a great turnout, with approximately 15 attendees in person and more than 30 participating online. We hope this guide will serve as a lasting resource for event organizers across campus and beyond. Moving forward, we look forward to gathering feedback from users and continuing to improve the guide to ensure it remains a practical, accessible, and useful resource for years to come.

Reflecting & Looking Forward

Reflecting on the year overall, we are pleased with the workshops offered, particularly as new staff members stepping into these roles. One of our biggest ongoing challenges has been encouraging participation and achieving sufficient registration. We recognize that students have demanding schedules, and attending additional workshops can be difficult after a full day of classes and coursework.

Several workshops were cancelled due to low registration, including our Tabletop Gardening Workshop and Resume Building Workshop. One workshop was also cancelled because staff were not adequately prepared to facilitate it. These experiences highlighted the importance of assessing student interest, allowing sufficient preparation time, and ensuring staff have the support needed to deliver workshops successfully.

We noticed that the workshops with stronger attendance tended to appeal to both staff and students or offered practical skills that participants could apply to their university experience. Moving forward, we hope to prioritize relevant, engaging workshops with clear benefits for participants. We will also explore ways to promote workshops earlier, gather feedback on student interests, and assess demand before committing resources. Overall, this year provided valuable insight into how we can strengthen our workshop programming and create more accessible and meaningful learning opportunities for our campus community.

Programs

2025-2026

Drop-in Programming

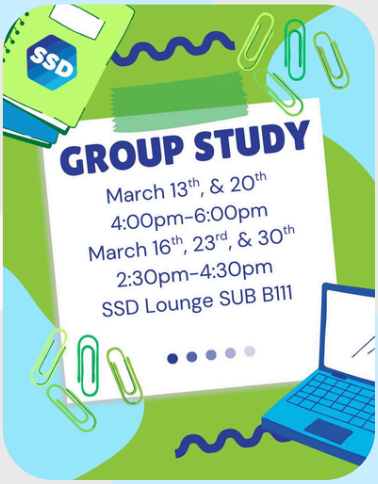
Throughout the year, we hosted Craft Drop-In and Group Study sessions, typically facilitated by our Work Study students.

Craft Drop-In: November 14, 21; December 5, 12; January 12, 26; February 9, 23; March 2, 23, 30

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Group Study: February 6, 13, 27; March 13, 16, 30.

Although these drop-in sessions continue to be requested by students, attendance has remained low for several years. This year, we plan to shift away from regular drop-in sessions and focus on offering more events to encourage student participation and engagement.







Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR)

Each year, we collaborate with AIR, a suite of welcoming, low-barrier, and body-inclusive recreational programs hosted by Vikes at the University of Victoria. Through this partnership, we offer Body-Inclusive Yoga, which emphasizes accessibility, positive movement, and mindfulness. These sessions provide students with a free opportunity to enjoy movement in a welcoming and supportive environment.

Body-Inclusive Yoga Dates: June 18; September 21, 28; October 5, 19, 26; November 2; January 18, 25; February 1, 8, 22; March 1, 8, 15.

Our yoga sessions were generally well attended, and we are grateful for this ongoing partnership. We look forward to continuing to work with AIR to provide accessible and inclusive recreational opportunities for students in the coming years.

#A4A

2025-2026

Access 4 All 2025-2026 Progress

What is #A4A?

#Access4All began in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, sparked by a disabled, bedbound UVic student who feared they wouldn't be able to complete their degree due to the university's sudden return to in-person classes, with little to no online or hybrid options available. They were soon joined by other student advocates who recognized that this lack of flexibility affects a wide range of students: disabled students, international students, students who work part- or full-time, and those with caregiving responsibilities. Since our campaign launched in May 2021, UVic has continued to fall short in providing equitable access to education. #Access4All demands meaningful change. We advocate for accessible, inclusive learning at UVic and challenge the ableist structures that limit who can participate in higher education. We are pro in-person, pro-online, and pro-hybrid. We believe every student deserves the right to learn in the format that best fits their needs. Access isn't optional, it's a right.







What did we achieve this year?

Although #A4A may have seemed quieter from the outside this year, we accomplished a great deal of important work! After years of believing our campaign was a 50% UVSS campaign, we discovered that we were actually an independent campaign endorsed by the UVSS. While this was an unexpected discovery, it gives us greater freedom and flexibility. As a result, we developed our own Constitution and Rules of Order, allowing us to establish a council and delegate tasks more effectively. We plan to hold our first Annual General Meeting in September 2026 to elect our council. We also reviewed and updated all our demands to better reflect our campaign's goals. In addition, we increased our Instagram activity and created a tablecloth and flag to improve our visibility at tabling events. Finally, we have been promised a meeting with the University's incoming president to discuss our demands. We are excited about the progress we have made and what lies ahead for #A4A!

2025-2026

Community Relationships

The SSD has partnered with multiple internal and external organizations this year for events, education, and collaborative efforts. We are excited to continue these partnerships as we expand our outreach capacity over the next year. As can be seen throughout this report we collaborated with many groups, organizations, and people throughout the year. The next pages are reminders of the connections that we made and maintained!

University of Victoria Sustainability Project

#ACCESS 4ALL

pride COLLECTIVE

gem GENDER EMPOWERMENT CENTRE

UVIC CAMPUS COMMUNITY GARDEN

AIR

Native Students Union

SOCC STUDENTS OF COLOUR COLLECTIVE

AVP Anti-Violence Project

UVSS university of victoria students' society

Consent & Care COLLECTIVE

2025-2026

Community Relationships

UVSS

This year, we had the privilege of partnering with a wide range of outstanding internal organizations whose dedication and creativity greatly enriched our programming.
We continued collaborating with these groups on larger events, including Trick-or-Treating in the SUB, Global Village, FEMEXPO, Hexxed Up, the Environmental Roundtable, workshops, and more!

We also continued working with the UVSS Board of Directors to host Puppy Playtime and table at Hot Lunch events, helping us spread awareness about the SSD and #A4A. Additionally, we worked together to put forward a referendum question to increase UVSS fees in line with inflation. We could not have accomplished this without the hard work and dedication of everyone involved! This increase will provide all our organizations with greater resources and opportunities to expand their programming and support students.

Below, we have included the names and contact information of our internal collaborator organizations so that you, too, can connect with them and access the incredible resources they offer.

Native Students Union (NSU)
- SUB B023 & FPH 126
- contact@uvicnsu.ca
- uvicnsu.ca

Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM)
- SUB B107
- gemcentre@uvss.ca
- genderempowermentcentre.ca

Students of Colour Collective (SOCC)
- SUB B120 & B122
- socc@uvss.ca
- socccollective.com

Pride Collective (PRIDE)
- SUB B010
- pride@uvic.ca
- pridecollective.ca

Anti-Violence Project (AVP)
- SUB B027
- info@antiviolenceproject.org
- antiviolenceproject.org

Campus Community Garden (CCG)
- SUB B020
- ccgarden@uvic.ca
- communitygardenuvic.weebly.com

University of Victoria Sustainability Project (UVSP)
- SUB B020
- sustainability@uvic.ca
- uvsp.ca

2025-2026

Community Relationships

UVIC

UVic Co-op and Careers

- This year, we continued to strengthen our relationship with Co-op and Career Services through their Accessibility Coordinator, Niels De-Lamper. Niels facilitated several workshops for our community and has been an invaluable partner in our programming and outreach efforts.

Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

- We also continued our collaboration with CAL, supporting students through one-on-one advocacy and welcoming CAL staff to co-facilitate a workshop with us. We look forward to further strengthening this partnership and creating more opportunities to share knowledge and resources.

Consent and Care Collective

- This year, we collaborated for the first time with the Consent and Care Collective, a student- and survivor-led initiative at UVic focused on harm reduction, consent, and relationship education. Following our initial collaboration at SEXPO, we have continued building our relationship and look forward to working together on future initiatives!

Equity and Human Rights (EQHR)

- This year, as in previous years, we collaborated with EQHR to provide consultation on the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy. We value this ongoing relationship and anticipate continuing this important work in the coming year.

Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation (AIR)

- This year we partnered with AIR to launch our Body Inclusive Yoga program. The sessions were very well attended, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration and expanding inclusive recreation opportunities next year.

Student Wellness Centre

- For our Understanding Burnout workshop, we collaborated with Dawn Schell from the Wellness Centre. We are excited to continue building this relationship so we can connect students with important resources and confidently refer them to the Wellness Centre, knowing they can access appropriate support.



2025-2026

Community Relationships

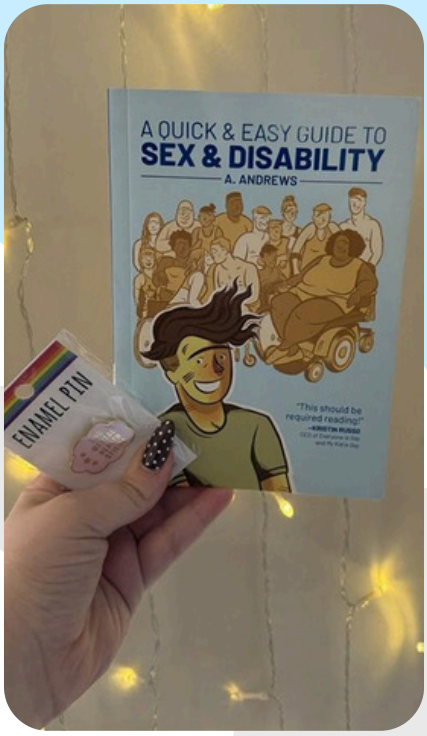
External Organizations

Our biggest opportunity for building external relationships comes through our annual Mental Health Resource Fair, where we connected with over 40 organizations this year! We made a point of personally connecting with each organization, collecting resources to share with students after the fair, and developing plans to stay in touch. We also strengthened our relationship with the Victoria Disability Resource Centre and have been inviting them to participate in more of our events. Additionally, connections with disabled artists at the fair have helped us invite them to table at our upcoming markets and events.

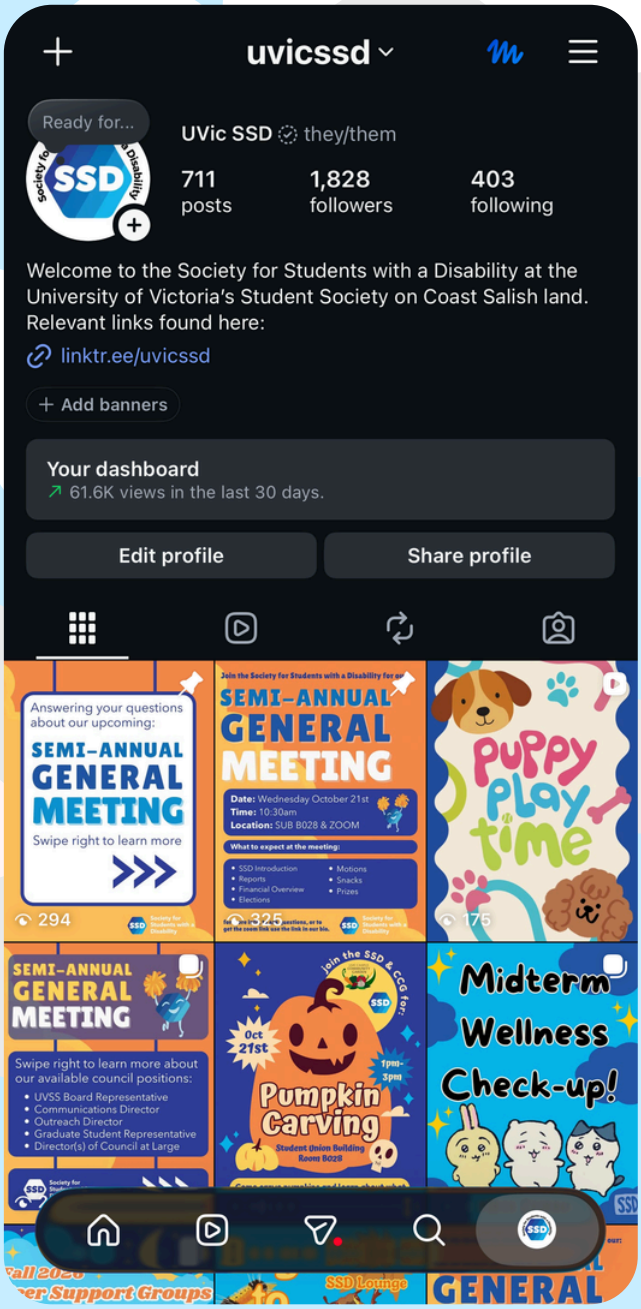
We also connected with Lifetime Networks and hope to organize a campus tour for disabled adults who participate in their programs. Another exciting development was our partnership with Camas Books and Infoshop, which now sells our colouring book! They have become our number-one colouring book seller, with over 30 copies sold. We look forward to continuing to build external relationships, strengthen community connections, and create more opportunities to bring the broader disability community to campus.



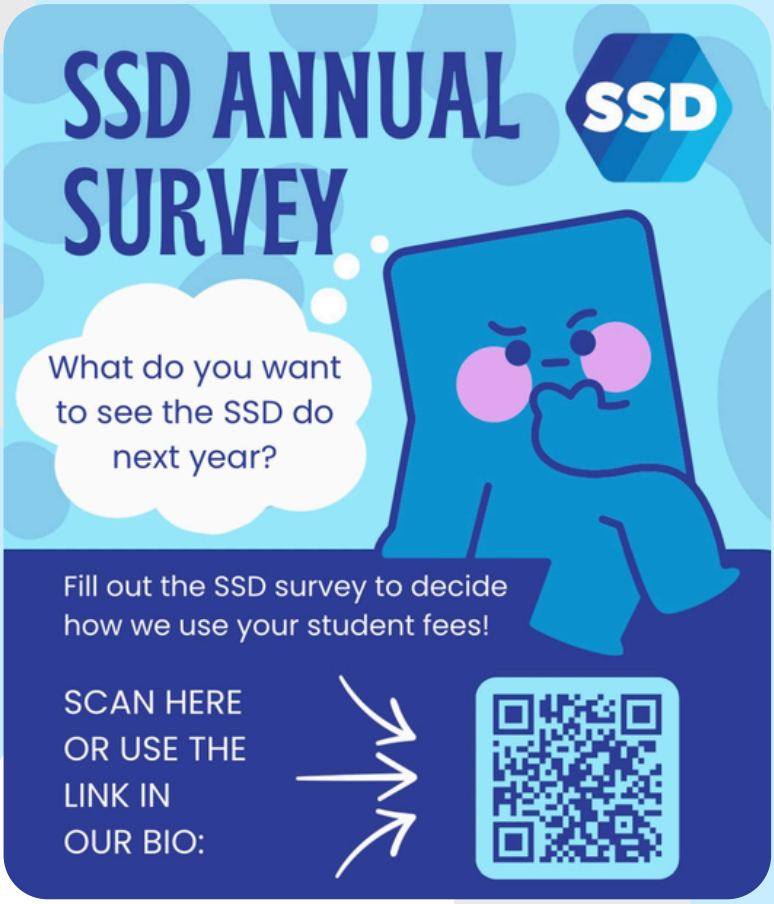




2025-2026





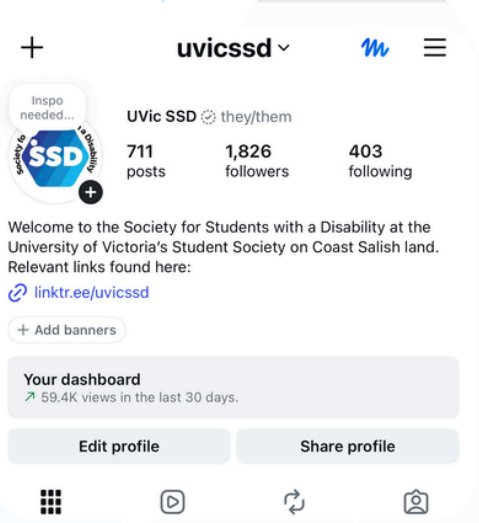


By the Numbers

This section highlights our key metrics from the year, including student engagement, survey responses, and a summary of our annual financials. These numbers help us understand our impact, identify areas for growth, and ensure transparency in how we operate.

Media

2025-2026





Instagram & Facebook

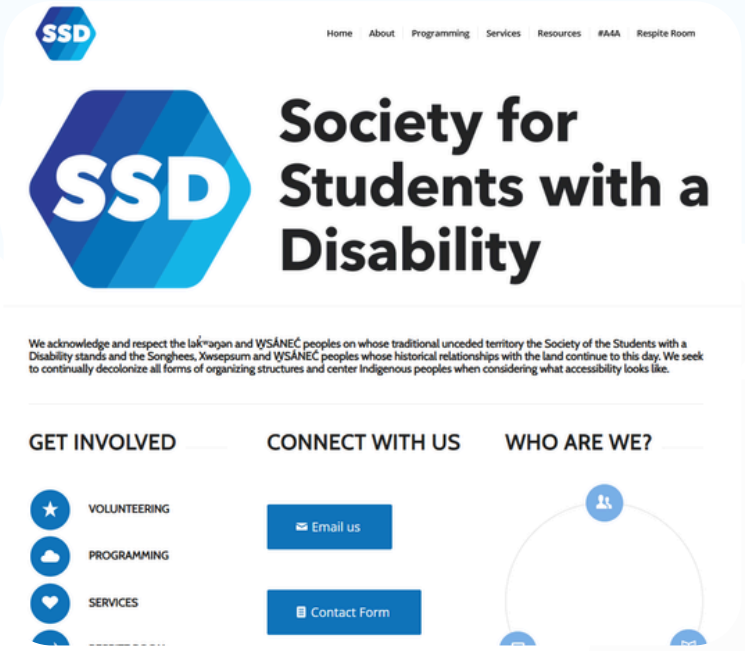
As in previous years, Instagram and Facebook remain our primary platforms for online communication with our community, alongside our newsletter, which has over 200 subscribers. Our Instagram account has grown by 326 followers this year, bringing us closer to our goal of reaching 2,000 followers next year. Although this growth is more modest than last year's, we are pleased to see a steady increase.

While our Facebook audience is less active, we continue to share consistent information across both platforms to ensure our content reaches different community. We recognize that Facebook remains an important communication tool for older community members who use the platform to stay connected with us.

Overall, our posts are generating increasingly consistent engagement, averaging 30 or more likes and over 1,000 views per post. Our most-liked post of the year was "Know Before You Vote: UVSS AGM," which provided our community with information about the UVSS Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the motions being presented.

Website

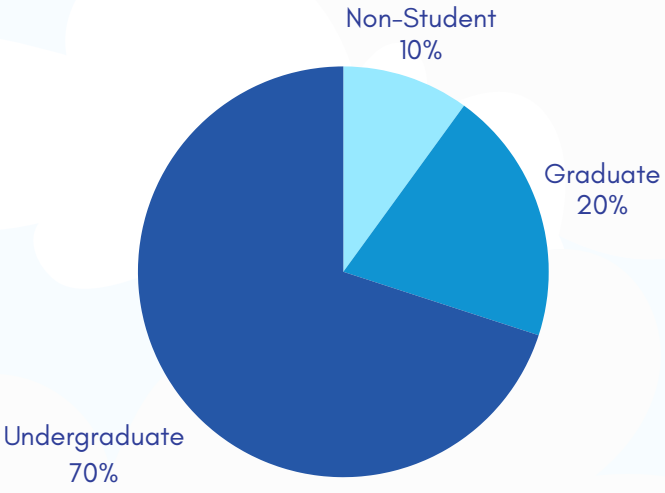
This year, we made significant progress toward fully updating our website, beginning a comprehensive review and refresh of every page. While the project is not yet complete, we have made more progress than we have in several years and are pleased to have dedicated time and resources to improving the website. Next year, our goal is to complete the remaining updates and ensure the website continues to serve as an accessible, up-to-date resource for our community.

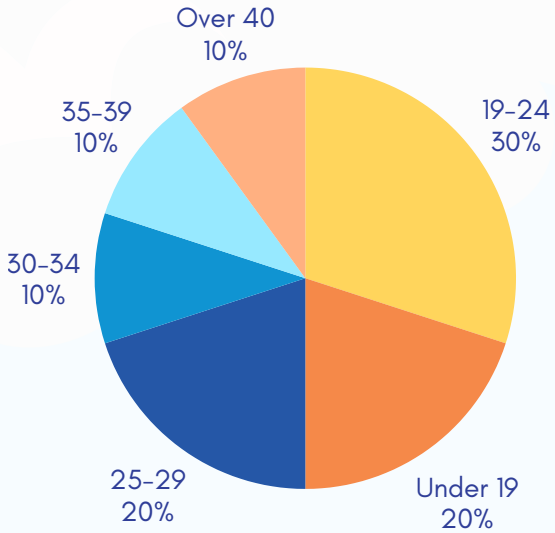


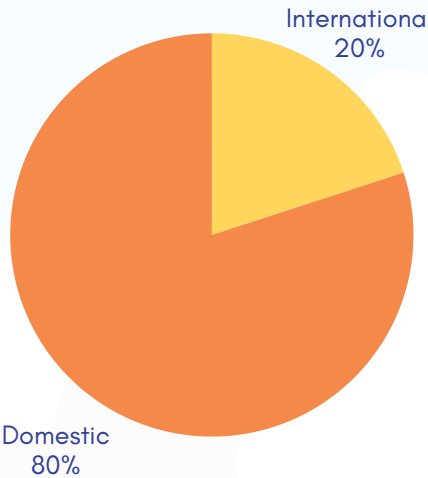
Survey Demographics

2025-2026

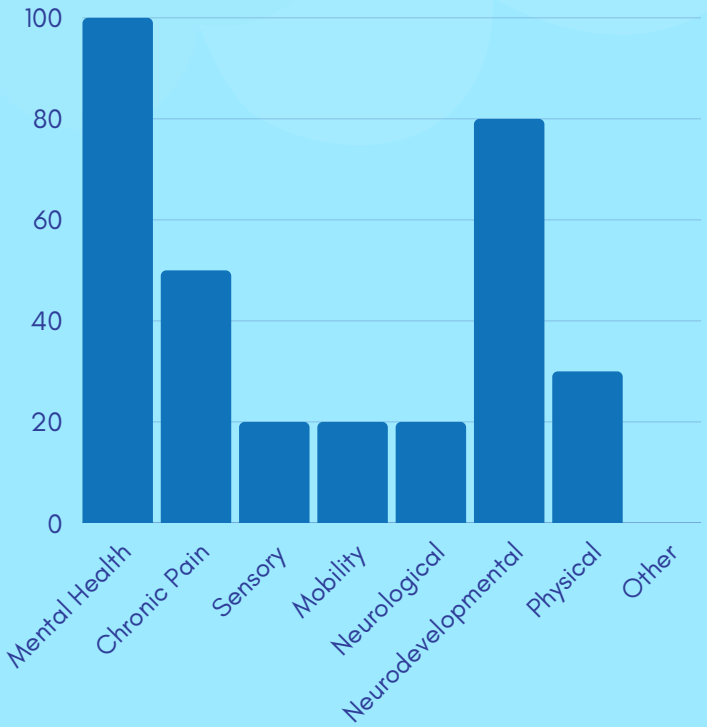
Students Status

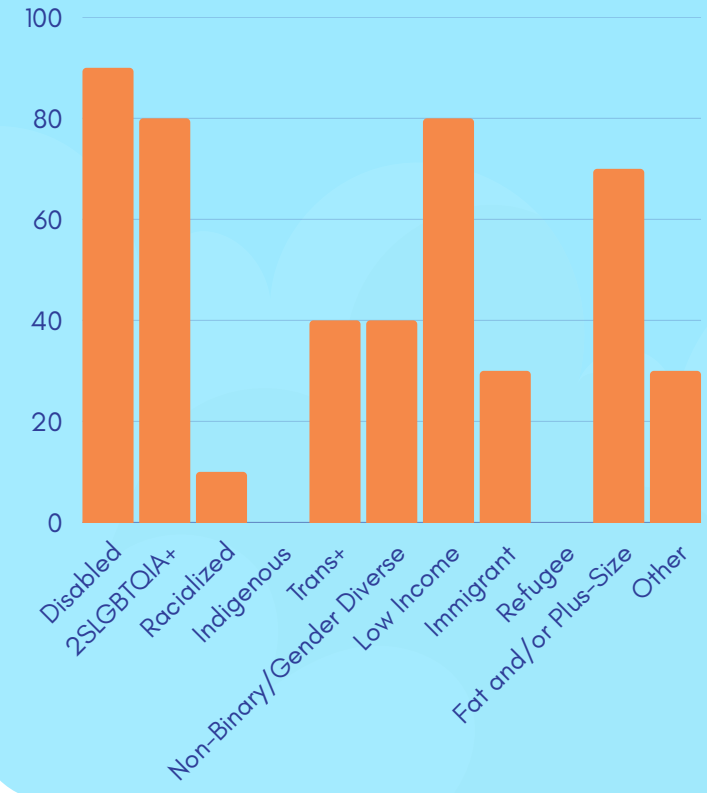






Disability & Intersectionality





Survey

2025-2026

Suggestions, Repeats, and Barriers

On top of collecting demographic data we also collect suggestions for our events, workshops, and programs, what events. workshops, and programs that folks want to see us repeat and the barriers folks face when trying to attend our events.

Suggestions

Events

- Journal Making
- Trivia Night
- Accessible Walks
- Game Night
- Movie Night
- Fundraisers

Workshops

- Self-Advocacy Workshop
- Disability Lectures from Professor and Grad Students
- Financial Literacy Workshop
- Mindfullness Workshop
- Employment Accommodations

Programs

- CARSA Group Workout
- Meditation
- Crafts
- Food Security
- Yoga

Repeats

Events

- Potluck
- Craft Drop-in
- Holiday Craft Night
- Mental Health Resource Fair
- Petting Zoo

Workshops

- Neurodiversity & Disability Awareness Training
- Career Skill Building
- Fidget Making
- Creating an Accessible Event

Programs

- Peer Support Groups
- Puppy Playtime
- AIR Yoga

Barriers to Attending

- Timing
- Disability Flares
- Busy with School
- Transportation
- Mental Block
- Illness
- Spoons
- More Hybridity

Final Thoughts

- Puppy Playtime is goated!
- I love being in the lounge.
- I feel cared for by staff and community.
- Thank you for everything you do!

Survey

2025-2026

Future Planning

Now that we have the information from the survey how do we take this information and put it into practice?

Events, Workshops, & Programs

Community feedback on our events has been positive, and we received a wide range of helpful recommendations through our survey. Moving forward, our goal is to incorporate more of this feedback into our programming to ensure our events reflect the interests and needs of the community we serve.

As outlined in the financial summaries on the following pages, we also have remaining funds that we aim to put toward expanding our programming. We plan to invest more in event advertising to increase awareness and attendance, as well as provide food at more events. Food is a meaningful way to encourage participation while also recognizing the food insecurity many students experience. Additionally, we hope to organize several more large-scale events in the coming year, creating more opportunities for students to connect, access resources, and engage with our community.

Turnout

As discussed throughout this annual report, some of our events experienced lower-than-anticipated attendance. Survey responses provided valuable insight into some of the barriers students face when participating in events. Disability can involve significant fluctuations in energy, symptoms, and capacity, meaning students may need to change their plans to prioritize their health and well-being.

One area we would like to explore is whether our registration process may unintentionally create a barrier to participation. Students may be hesitant to register if they are unsure whether they will be able to attend, potentially leading them to miss out on events they could otherwise participate in. Moving forward, we want to consider more flexible registration practices that allow students to attend without feeling pressured to commit in advance.

We also recognize that hybrid programming is an area we have not prioritized over the past year. Offering more hybrid events could provide students with additional ways to participate, particularly when attending in person is not accessible or feasible. Moving forward, we are committed to exploring more flexible and accessible event formats that better accommodate the diverse and changing needs of our community.

Intersectionality

One area we have consistently identified for growth at the SSD is increasing engagement with racialized students and communities. In the coming year, we hope to build on our existing connections with ICS and our new International Student Board Representative to strengthen these relationships and create more opportunities for meaningful engagement.

We also aim to better recognize and support events and initiatives that are important to racialized communities, while seeking opportunities to collaborate with advocacy groups across campus. Through these efforts, we hope to strengthen our relationships, improve representation within our programming, and ensure our events and services better reflect the diversity of the student community we serve.

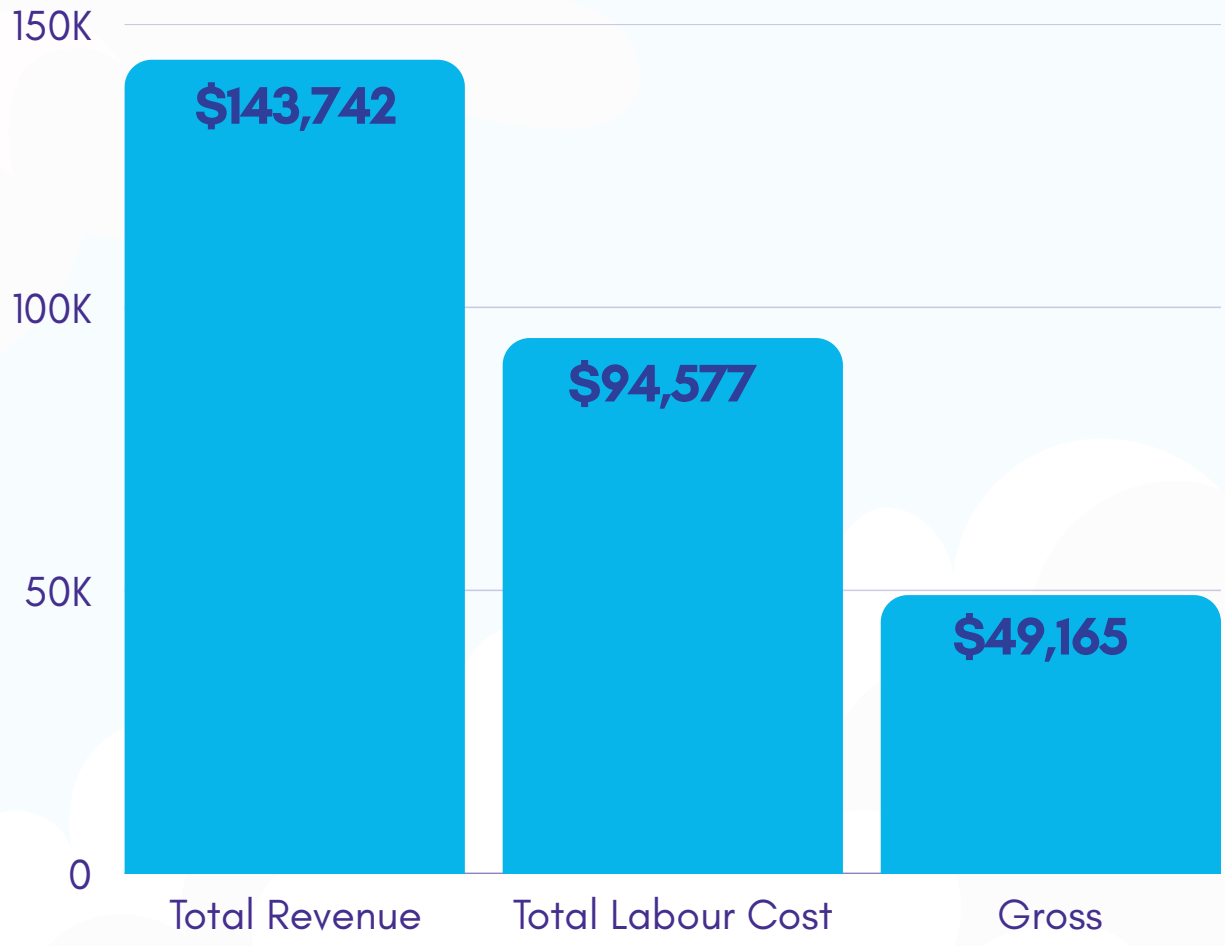
Financials

2025-2026

Overview

The bar graph below and continuing slides illustrate the SSD's total revenue, labour costs, and overall gross for the 2025-2026 fiscal year (May 2025-April 2026). For the first time in recent years, the SSD was able to contribute to its trust fund rather than draw from it. Working toward breaking even or adding to the trust has been a goal in previous years, making this a significant achievement. The following page provides a more detailed breakdown of the factors that contributed to this positive outcome.

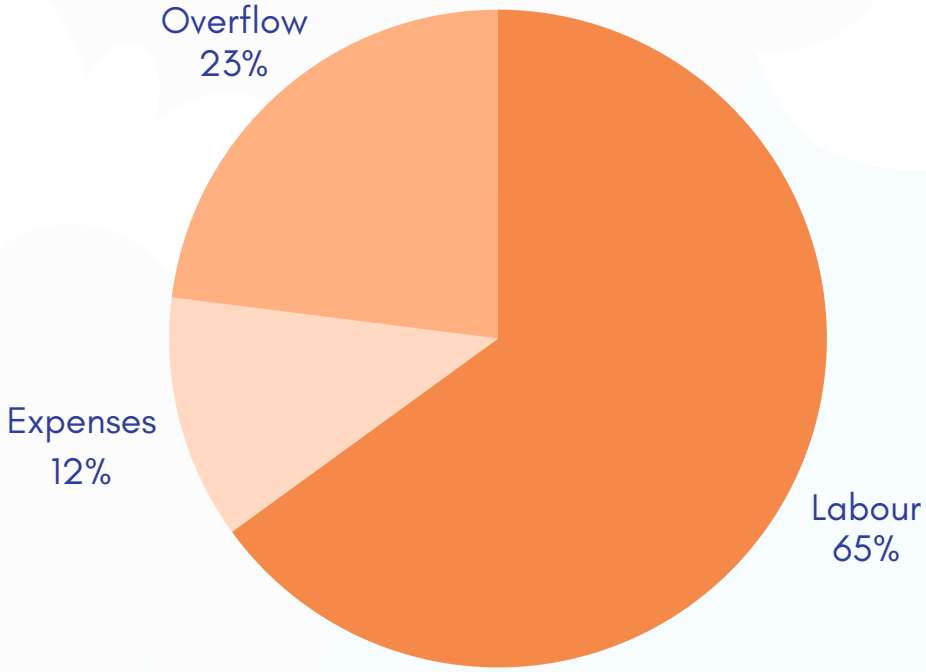
Total revenue includes funding received from undergraduate and graduate students, as well as miscellaneous revenue from grants and other organizations we work with. Total labour costs include staff wages, benefits, training, and food discounts. Gross represents the amount remaining after labour costs are deducted from total revenue.



Financials

2025-2026

Spending Overview



Understanding Our Budget: Labour, Expenses, and Overflow
Labour represents the portion of our budget allocated to staffing costs, expenses reflect our total spending, and overflow is the funding carried forward into the next fiscal year. As a non-profit, our goal is to use our available funding to support students and deliver meaningful programming rather than accumulate a large surplus. So, why did we have so much overflow this year?

Why Did We Have So Much Overflow?
From May to August, we were not fully staffed and did not hire a third staff member, resulting in labour costs that were $23,519 below budget. During this transitional period, limited support from previous staff also meant fewer events and less programming while staff became oriented to their roles. Additionally, many of our workshops were delivered at a low cost thanks to community partnerships and organizations willing to cover event expenses.

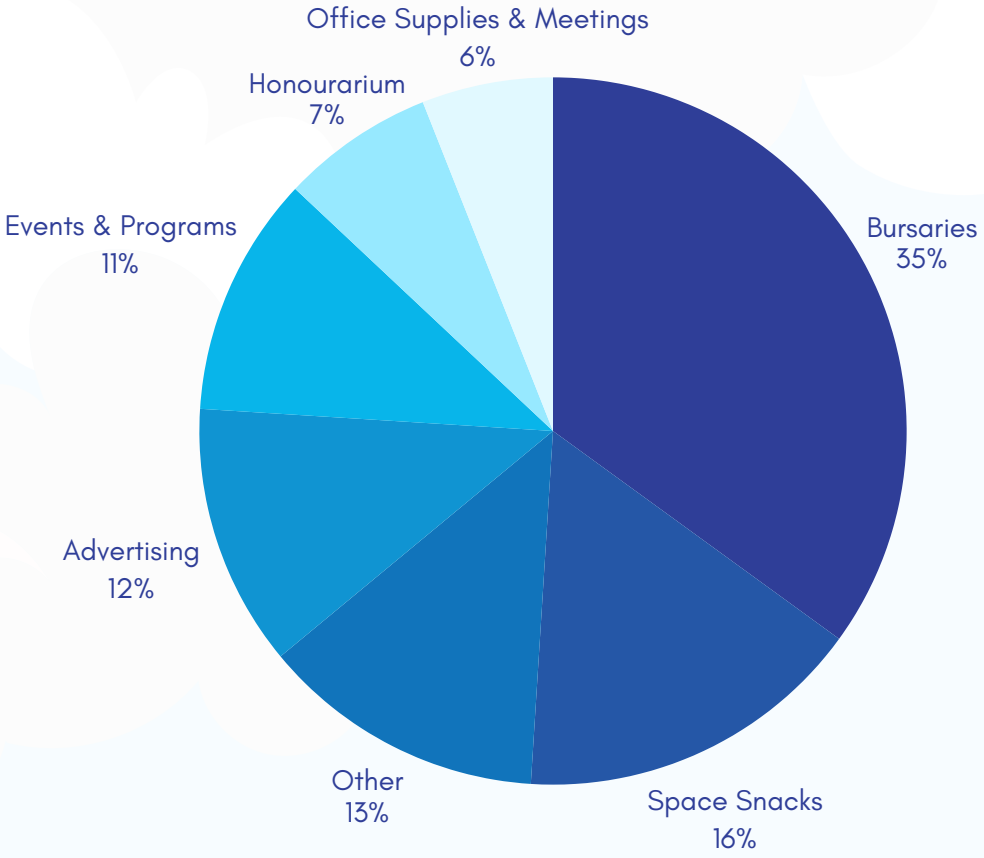
How Will We Address This Next Year?
For 2026-2027, we have adjusted our budget to invest more in larger events, including our Community Care Fair and the Post-Secondary Disability Symposium. We have also expanded our programming, aiming to host approximately three events per month alongside our regular workshops and Peer Support Groups. We are also hoping to offer honoraria to our Peer Support Group volunteers in recognition of their contributions. Our goal is to reduce overflow by investing more of our funding directly into student programming, community initiatives, and volunteer support.

Financials

2025-2026

Expenses Breakdown

The below pie chart details our spending outside of our labour costs.



Bursaries: This bursary supports the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) in providing students with affordable tutoring and learning strategy services. We allocate $5,000 annually to this program. However, due to a delayed payment, the total recorded for this fiscal year was $6,000.

Space Snacks: This budget covers food for the SSD Lounge and Respite Room. Providing accessible snacks and food has always been a priority for us. Of our $3,000 budget, we spent $2,651 this year.

Other: This category includes general operating costs such as building maintenance, telephone, IT services, and special occasions.

Advertising: This budget supports promotional activities, including beginning-of-year swag, online advertisements, and posters.

Events & Programs: This category covers one-time events organized by Council, as well as ongoing programs such as Community Dinner and cooking classes.

Honorarium: This budget is used to compensate individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to support SSD events, serve as panelists, or facilitate Peer Support Groups.

Office Supplies & Meetings: Office supplies funding supports improvements to our spaces, such as new lighting and upgrades to the snack station. The meetings budget covers associated costs, including food for meetings.

Challenges Part 1

2025-2026

Staffing and Council Onboarding

Many of the challenges the SSD has faced over the past year have been discussed throughout this annual report. However, one area we would like to highlight is employee onboarding and transitions, which we are actively working to improve. One of the most significant challenges when stepping into the Coordinator positions has been the lack of overlap between outgoing and incoming staff members. With only two weeks' notice, it can be difficult to recruit and hire a new employee in time to allow for a smooth transition and knowledge transfer. Without this overlap, important information, processes, and institutional knowledge can be difficult to pass along, making it more challenging for incoming staff to get up to speed.

To address this, we have begun developing comprehensive handbooks for both employee positions, as well as a general SSD handbook. These resources will document key responsibilities, recurring tasks, organizational processes, and essential information about the SSD to support continuity and make future transitions smoother. One of these manuals has already been completed, and work is ongoing to finalize the remaining documents.

Council onboarding has also presented challenges, as training previously consisted of a general overview rather than position-specific guidance. To improve this process, we introduced individualized onboarding documents for each council role and held one-on-one meetings with council members to discuss their responsibilities, goals, and priorities. This more personalized approach has proven to be a significant improvement, providing clearer expectations and better support for each member.

Moving forward, we hope these changes will strengthen organizational continuity, improve staff and council transitions, and ensure that incoming team members feel better prepared and supported in their roles.

Challenges Part 2

2025-2026

Capacity, Time Limitations, and Growing Student Demand

One of our ongoing challenges is balancing limited staff capacity and time with the growing needs and expectations of students and council. When both of our new staff members began, they were working only 20-25 hours per week. These limited hours made it difficult to meet student demand while delivering as many events and initiatives as we had hoped.

To help address this, we gradually increased staff hours throughout the academic year. In September, our Office Coordinator's hours increased to 30 per week, followed by a further increase to 35 hours later in the semester. Over the course of the school year, our Education and Administration Coordinator's hours also increased to 25 per week. These adjustments allowed us to accomplish more and better support our community; however, student demand continues to grow and remains greater than our current capacity can comfortably accommodate.

Our workload extends far beyond event planning and delivery. Last year, we hosted more than 50 events while continuing to provide ongoing student advocacy, support students accessing our space, and respond to a wide range of individual needs. Alongside this visible programming, a substantial amount of behind-the-scenes work is required to keep our operations running effectively. This includes maintaining the respite room and lounge, ordering supplies, managing budgets, coordinating both SSD Council and #Access4All (#A4A) Council, keeping resources current, maintaining our websites and social media platforms, and building relationships with students, staff, and community organizations throughout Victoria. These responsibilities, among many others, are essential to our work but require significant and consistent staff and council time.

Moving forward, we hope to address these capacity challenges by exploring opportunities to increase staff hours and potentially introduce a student staff position. At the same time, we recognize the importance of establishing realistic boundaries, reassessing priorities, and becoming more comfortable saying no to projects or commitments when our capacity is limited. While we remain committed to responding to student needs and delivering meaningful programming, sustainable growth will require us to balance demand with the time and resources available. By focusing on our highest-impact priorities and setting more realistic expectations, we hope to create a more manageable workload while continuing to provide meaningful support and opportunities for our community.

Future Outlook

2025-2026

Looking ahead, we have an exciting year of growth, engagement, and new opportunities planned. Guided by the insights gathered through our community survey, as well as valuable input from staff and council, we have developed a workplan that focuses on several key priorities to strengthen our programming, expand our reach, and better serve our community.

A major focus will be delivering four large-scale events: Disability Awareness Month Week of Events, the Community Care Fair, the Post-Secondary Disability Symposium, and Volunteer Bash! These events will feature increased budgets, more ambitious projects, and multi-day programming with multiple components, creating greater opportunities for community engagement, learning, and connection.

Alongside these larger initiatives, we aim to increase our regular programming by hosting approximately three events each month and offering at least one workshop per month. We will also continue to build on our most popular programs and prioritize the activities most requested by community members through our survey, ensuring our offerings remain relevant, accessible, and responsive to community needs. To support these expanded initiatives and ensure we have the capacity to deliver high-quality programming, we will explore opportunities to increase staff hours and potentially introduce a student staff position.

Finally, we look forward to advancing our #Access4All campaign, including hosting our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and building momentum toward the campaign's next phase. This work will help us strengthen community involvement, increase awareness, and continue moving toward a more inclusive and accessible future. Together, these priorities will guide our work in the coming year as we continue to grow our impact, create meaningful opportunities for participation, and respond to the evolving needs of our community.

2025-2026

Acknowledgements

Last year, I found myself stepping into the annual report process without having been part of the SSD for the full year. My acknowledgements focused on thanking those who supported me in bringing the report together. This year, having officially been part of the SSD for the entire year, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people who have supported me, our work, and the SSD community throughout this journey.

First, I want to extend my deepest thanks to Kai, our Education and Administration Coordinator and my wonderful coworker. Kai has been an incredible source of support throughout this year, helping us navigate challenges, strengthen our operations, and build a stronger foundation for the SSD moving forward. Their dedication, collaboration, and commitment to making things better for future students have made an enormous difference, and I am incredibly grateful to have worked alongside them.

I also want to thank our Council and the wider SSD community for everything they have contributed this year. Together, you have helped create an environment in the SSD Lounge that we have not seen in years. The lounge is busy every day, filled with students connecting, sharing experiences, and supporting one another. Seeing this space become such a vibrant and welcoming community has been one of the most fulfilling parts of my time with the SSD. It is a reminder of why this work matters and how much we can accomplish when we build something together.

This year has been incredibly fulfilling, and I am proud of what we have accomplished as a community. As we are already halfway through the next year, I can confidently say that things continue to get better. The SSD is growing, thriving, and building something meaningful for the students who rely on and contribute to this community. Thank you to everyone who has been part of that journey. I am excited to see what we continue to accomplish together.

Bella Jacobs - Office Coordinator

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