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## **UVIC PRO-LIFE STUDENTS SETTLE OUT OF COURT**

VICTORIA, BC - After two and a half months of consultation, the legal conflict between the University of Victoria's pro-life club, Youth Protecting Youth (YPY), and the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS) has come to a conclusion.

The legal conflict was the result of two years of discrimination and censorship, during which YPY was repeatedly denied funding that other clubs received. The situation escalated in the spring of 2010, when the UVSS refused to recognize YPY as a club, and made policy modifications that specifically targeted pro-life advocacy. YPY responded by filing a petition in the BC Supreme Court.

The case has now been settled out of court: the UVSS has recognized YPY as a club, granted it funding for the summer semester, repaid all funds wrongly withheld since fall 2008, and eliminated policy additions that had targeted pro-life advocacy. Having watched other pro-life groups face discrimination and censorship, YPY welcomes these developments that recognize the right to free speech at UVic.

“This is a great victory for YPY,” says club president Anastasia Pearse. “We interpret the UVSS' concessions as an admission of wrongdoing, and we're happy with the new direction it's taking.”

The UVSS has also agreed to an unusual condition that allows YPY to hold the petition in abeyance indefinitely, making the process required to reinstate legal proceedings quicker and easier, should it become necessary – a circumstance that YPY would view as regrettable. It is hoped that holding the UVSS immediately accountable will curb censorial behaviour.

Despite the free speech challenges it has faced recently, YPY remains focused on advocating for the right to life of all human beings at all stages of life, and will continue to boldly exercise its freedom of speech in proclaiming this message.

The club sincerely thanks Joseph Arvay of Arvay Finlay Barristers - who represented YPY - for his exceptional legal representation.

YPY is pleased that the BC Civil Liberties Association, which has generously acted in support of the club's free speech, has been granted intervener status in the lawsuit, and will be intervening should the lawsuit need to be revived under the abeyance agreement.

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