

Victoria College Council
Minutes of meeting of November 25 2019
4-6pm in Alumni Hall

Attendance: A. Esterhammer (Chair), W. Robins, Y. Ali, S. Antebi, D. Cook, R. Davidson, M. Kavalier, J. LeBlanc, A. Motsch, L. Sherlock, M. Solovey, L. Somigli, N. Terpstra, A. Urbancic, I. Wells, D. Wright, C. Bruun, J. Forgie, J. Hamilton-Diabo, A. Sol, K. Samsel, A. Wong, R. Musada, A. Kurtest, A. Pradhan, J. Zhu, and P. Kutasi

Regrets: A. Keith, A. Moritz, D. Benjamin, G. Holtz, E. Jennings, L. Dacome, P. Gooch, N. Rodriguez, L. Magnusson, A. Komaromi, R. Vipond, D. Gilmour, A. Kothari, E. Jagoe, M. C. Cuervo, K. Bartlett, E. Istrate, B. Havercroft, H. Murray, and M. Nyquist.

The meeting was called to order at 4:11pm by Chair, A. Esterhammer

- Principal Esterhammer welcomes the new student representatives.

1. Approval of minutes of the Meeting of September 30, 2019 (attached)

The minutes of September 30, 2019 were accepted.

MOTION – Moved by A. Urbancic, and seconded by B. Davidson. Passed *nem con*.

2. Business arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the previous minutes.

A. Esterhammer acknowledged the important statement read by Aloysius Wong at the last meeting regarding student mental health. This is a very active ongoing conversation across campus and in external media. Consultation and action on mental health resources is being led by the U of T Presidential Task Force on Mental Health; as administrators and other members of Council will be aware, the issue is being addressed very seriously by U of T and its many divisions.

3. Report of the President (W. Robins)

The President reported on several items for the Council:

Strategic Planning about Victoria University - Victoria University is embarking on a strategic planning process for the next five years. The process is at a new stage after the first round of consultations in October. The Phase 3 Consultation Guide is available online at the Victoria University website. The University will be working with consultants in order to create a strategic plan, tentatively for presentation to February's Board of Regents meeting.

- Town Hall meetings for students, staff and faculty: November 27 & 28

Northrop Frye Hall Plans - The building has a rezoning proposal sign outside of it now. There are many possibilities about the future of the building, which depend on the limitations provided by the City. Discussions about plans will occur during the Spring or when the City responds.

4. Report of the Principal (A. Esterhammer)

The Principal reported to the Council:

Course evaluations: Online course evaluations for courses ending this semester are underway until December 6th. Please remind students in class about the importance of completing course evaluations and, if possible, consider offering 10-15 minutes of class time for students to complete their evaluations.

UTQAP reviews: The staff of the Principal's Office and Vic Academic Programs, along with Program Coordinators and faculty, have been putting a lot of time into finalizing the self-study report for the four Minor programs under review in the current UTQAP cycle (Education & Society, Material Culture, Creative Expression & Society, and Semiotics). The self-study will be submitted to the Faculty of Arts & Science in about a week. FAS recently informed us that the visit by external reviewers will take place February 27-28, 2020.

Scholars-in-Residence: The call for faculty supervisors for the May 2020 session of Scholars-in-Residence (SiR) is live and the deadline for faculty to propose research projects is Wednesday 27 November.

The internal review of the SiR program that was requested by the Jackman Humanities Institute has wrapped up; I submitted a report on behalf of the committee to the JHI last week. Even before the review concluded, the Faculty of Arts & Science approved new funding to SiR from its Experiential Learning envelope. These new funds will go toward Undergraduate Research Awards for students admitted to SiR. We are very grateful for this new funding partnership, which makes it possible to continue the program at its current size for the next three years.

VCC committees: A few items have arisen concerning the composition and operation of the Committees of Council that I would like to bring forward for information and discussion.

- The *College Life Committee*, which has representation from teaching staff, students, and administration, did not meet last year pending changes to committees with similar mandates elsewhere at Victoria University – specifically, the former Campus Life Committee of the Board of Regents, which has been replaced by the Dean of Students' Advisory Council. The mandate of our College Life Committee reads:

“The Committee shall serve as a liaison among faculty, students, and administrative staff in order to consider, recommend, and assist in planning activities that enhance the academic and social experience of the Victoria College community, including its cultural and intellectual life, physical environment, and academic support services.”

- A meeting of the committee will be called early in the Winter term in order to review its mandate in light of the new role of the Dean's Advisory Council and any other relevant groups. Anyone who has suggestions on issues that would fall under the purview of this committee is welcome to contact me and/or the Chair of the College Life Committee, Prof. Manuela Scarci.
- The *Fellows Committee* would like to co-opt two new members: The Undergraduate Research Coordinator and a representative of the Junior Fellows. This is in order to promote ways of integrating the research work of Fellows more closely with Vic's initiatives in the area of undergraduate research, and to integrate the new group of (doctoral and post-doctoral) Junior Fellows into the life of the College. Depending on how these initiatives evolve, a more formal change to the By-Laws regarding Fellows Committee membership may be proposed in the future.
- According to VCC By-Laws, the *Awards and Prizes Committee* comprises five members of teaching staff in addition to the Registrar (or designate) and the Principal (or designate). Over the past couple of years, it has become clear that this committee needs more members of teaching staff to help evaluate submissions for student awards and prizes. However, the A&P Committee already does have the power to co-opt members “as needed to assist in evaluating submissions,” so rather than proposing changes to the terms of reference, I will just notify Council that the A&P Committee needs to be larger than foreseen in the By-Laws and encourage teaching staff to respond positively if you are approached to assist this committee with the important task of adjudication.

A. Wong asked what the size of the SiR program will be for next year. A. Esterhammer responded that the program will remain at its current size thanks to the new funding.

5. Report of the Registrar (Y. Ali)

Y. Ali provided an update to the Council. The November 2019 Handbook was circulated (attached):

- Highlights from the Handbook:
 - Vic admitted more students than last year to compensate for the fewer number of students that were admitted last year.
 - Part-time and Full-time enrolment statistics have remained stable.
 - Vic have been trying to increase the number of international students at Vic and have made some progress.
 - Top Ontario Feeder Schools are listed, and this year includes new schools.
 - A guidance counsellor from an Ottawa high school noticed that each graduating class has different preferences, and therefore it is hard to predict how effective recruitment strategies will be.
 - In the top countries of origin for applicants chart. A. Esterhammer asked if the dual-citizenship statistic counts those that have a Canadian citizenship as Canadian, Y. Ali confirmed that it does. W.

Robins asked what countries are included, Y. Ali confirmed that only the top countries are included in this statistic and represent the entering class.

- Inter-College Transfer Admissions statistics also included. A. Ballis asked how these requests are evaluated. Y. Ali described that in general, first or second years are admitted, and we ask them questions about why they want to transfer, what will they bring to Victoria College, etc. We want to understand why they are making the request, and what their motivation is.
- Victoria College academic programs:
 - The Education and Society Minor and Science and Society have grown.
 - Literature and Critical Theory enrolment is down slightly.
- Graduation and Honours statistics are similar to last year, but the Dean's List percentage is higher.

B. Davidson asked how diversity might affect admissions decisions. Y. Ali said that newly admitted students do submit a profile, and we consider students from diverse backgrounds. However, sometimes it is difficult to consider diverse students, because we don't collect certain information about students. There are new scholarships and bursaries available to students from different backgrounds. We also make sure to do recruitment at high priority schools. B. Davidson pointed out that students are also applying to other colleges and we don't have their statistics. Y. Ali agreed, and said that while Victoria College cannot admit students which the University of Toronto does not admit, if a student does not fit the Victoria College profile but shows promise, they will be considered.

6. Report of the Dean of Students (Y. Ali on behalf of K. Castle)

Y. Ali gave an update to the Council:

- The Alcohol Reduction Conference last week went well.
- The office has been working on the Vic Ready program, which has been successful so far.
- Upcoming Events:
 - National Day of Remembrance for violence against women is on December 6
 - Dean's Advisory committee has one more meeting. Student Choice Initiative will be discussed.
 - The festive dinners will be on Weds & Thurs.
 - The office is busy helping students moving out of residence.

7. Report of the Research Committee (N. Terpstra)

The Chair reported the findings of the Research Committee to the Council.

Victoria College Grants - Fall 2019

Conference Travel Grants	
Grants Requested	10
Grants Awarded	10
Amount Requested	\$ 15,000.00
Amount Awarded	\$ 13,500.00

TOTAL GRANTS Fall 2019	
Total Requested	23
Total Awarded	19
Total Requested	\$ 69,913.00
Total Awarded	\$ 38,261.00

Research Grants	
Grants Requested	8
Grants Awarded	6
Amount Requested	\$ 22,123.00
Amount Awarded	\$ 11,311.00

TOTAL GRANTS Remaining 2019-20	
Conference and Research Grants	
Amount available	\$ 45,000.00
Amount Granted	\$ 24,811.00
Amount Remaining	\$ 20,189.00
Research Publication Grants	
Amount available	\$ 50,000.00
Amount Granted	\$ 13,450.00
Amount Remaining	\$ 36,550.00

Research Publication Grants	
Grants Requested	5
Grants Awarded	3
Amount Requested	\$ 32,790.00
Amount Awarded	\$ 13,450.00

8. Report of the Academic Committee (I. Wells)

The Chair updated the Council that the three courses that Victoria College proposed in the most recent governance cycle at the Faculty of Arts and Science have progressed through governance.

Those courses include a new First Year Foundation course on Posters & Propaganda, and a 200-level creative writing course called Writing for the Stage and Screen, in our Creative Expression & Society Minor. The third is a 300-level course called Multiple Literacies in Education, in our Education & Society Minor.

Those courses have now successfully cleared that governance hurdle and will appear in the 2020-21 Academic Calendar.

The Academic Committee has also recently reviewed a number of program modifications intended to enhance students' experience and ensure the ongoing success of our Academic Programs. I will briefly present these three minor modifications now for the information of Council.

- 1) The first modification will allow select first-year courses related to Renaissance Studies, Material Culture, and Literature and Critical Theory to be included as course options in existing programs in order to create clear "pathways" between FYF, Vic One, and Vic One Hundred Courses and our academic programs.
- 2) To reweight two 1.0 FCE "Y" courses—specifically, VIC241Y1 Renaissance Icons and Afterlives, and VIC343Y1 Sex and Gender—as "H" (0.5FCE) courses to make them more accessible to students, allow more flexibility in students' timetables, and allow them to be taught with greater frequency in the future given the availability of faculty.
- 3) To add two new Special Topics courses in Science and Society (one at the 200-level, the other at the 300-level) in order to allow for greater flexibility of offerings in the Program and to allow faculty to pilot new course ideas.

9. Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies update (M. Kavalier)

The CRRS Annual Report was distributed to the Council previously.

Upcoming event:

- Next Thursday is a research day, which includes short talks and a reception. All are invited.

10. Northrop Frye Centre Update (R. Davidson)

The Chair gave an update to the Council:

- The Brian Merilees Lecture (Prof Christopher Baswell – Columbia) went well
- Nov. 26 talk is the last one for the year
- Notice: March 5 is the Annual NFC lecture – Prof Homi Bhabha (Harvard), as well March 13th is a Symposium on Taste. More details to follow.

11. VUSAC activities and initiatives update (A. Ballis)

The VUSAC President A. Ballis gave an update:

Fall Elections

Fall elections concluded on Saturday, October 5th, and there are new Victoria College Council student representatives: Rinato Masuda, Alexandra Kurtesi, Agrata Pradhan, Jessy Zhu, and Mehr Mukhtar.

Federal Elections

The Sustainability Co-Chair, Leila Tjiang, and Equity Commissioner, Massoma Kisob, spearheaded VUSAC's programming for the federal election. Students voted on the issues that mattered most to them. According to these polls, 49.1% of our students ranked climate change as the issue that mattered most to them which was the highest by far.

Student Choice Initiative

The second opt-out period will end January 20 for students. The student society Presidents met with UofT committee to ask about the unusually long opt-out period. It was explained that due to the tri-campus, there are a lot of deadlines. They are considering a shorter period in the future, as well other issues that VUSAC brought forward such as having two opt-out periods instead of one like other universities. However, this past Thursday, Ontario's Divisional Court ruled that the Student Choice Initiative is unlawful. We will be reaching out to OVPS

soon to learn about how they will be approaching this news.

Academic Co-Chair

VUSAC will be adding a fourth co-chair position, the Academic Co-Chair position, to council. Interviews have concluded and a candidate will be selected.

Fall Caucus

Thank you to P. Kutasi and C. Alcena for attending Fall Caucus on Friday, November 15. Students enjoyed the presentations. Caucus is an opportunity for students to ask VUSAC, clubs, and levies questions about their finances and operations to hold them accountable, as we are using their student fees. Thanks to our incredible Vice-President External, Vibhuti Kacholia, our Caucus was the most engaging it has been in years. The Communications Coordinator, Holly Johnstone, also prepared a beautiful VUSAC Semi-Annual Report that summarizes all the work everyone has done. The [report can be found here](#).

Menstrual Products

Free menstrual product dispensers have been added to the Goldring Student Centre. This was an initiative brought forward by my predecessor, Jayde Jones. Vibhuti and Scott Johnston worked together to bring the menstrual product dispensers to all single-user and women's washrooms in Goldring. The Dean's Office and VUSAC have partnered up to split the funding equally for the products next year.

Climate Strike

VUSAC will be participating in the second global climate strike on Friday, November 29. The VUSAC office will be closed for the day, and we will be attending the strike at Queen's Park at 11am.

Events

VUSAC has been very busy with events and initiatives this past semester. The Mental Wellness Commissioner put on a DIY Stress Kit event, as well as an Open Canvas event for students to de-stress. The Sustainability Commission put together a fantastic waste sorting pop-up, introduced composting into our office, and has held many informative Doc n' Talks. The VUSAC Equity Commission held their first ever Literacy Week to highlight amazing authors from underrepresented communities. In addition, they held a fantastic Inclusion in Governance panel. Mic the Change, the Equity Commission's annual fundraiser for HIV/AIDS awareness, is Nov. 26th in the Cat's Eye. The Arts and Culture Commissioner hosted an awesome Literary Journal Meet and Greet, and they produced the Bob Sketch Comedy Revue this past weekend. The Academic Commissioner has hosted Language Learning Cafes, coordinated Study Hubs, and is partnering up with the College Diabetes Network at UofT for a clothing drive. Along with their infamous weekly pancakes, The Commuter Commissioner, or the Victoria Off-Campus Association, has collaborated with the Commuter Dons on two successful Trivia and Tacos nights. Their keystone event, Home for the Holidays, is taking place this Friday in Old Vic! Finally, VUSAC participated in UofT's Corncoming in October.

R. Davidson asked when the therapy dogs be on campus. A. Ballis said near exam time. A. Wong said that students would appreciate any flexibility regarding the second climate strike, and support from faculty would be welcome. L. Sherlock said that since the library staff see student mental health issues firsthand, they are open to helping. As well, the library could have a therapy dog in the student lounge of the library. A. Ballis will follow up.

12. Other Business

W. Robins noted a few items for the Council:

- Gillian Pearson, the assistant to the President and Curator of the University Art Collection, will be retiring at the end of the year.
- Laura McCann will become the Administrative Assistant to the President and Lindy Chan, the new Director.
- All are welcome to the President's Christmas Tea on December 4.

The meeting ended at 5:18pm. Moved by I. Wells; adjourned.