

Victoria College Council
Minutes of meeting of September 30 2019
4-6pm in Alumni Hall

Attendance: A. Esterhammer (Chair), W. Robins, Y. Ali, S. Antebi, A. Baines, K. Castle, D. Cook, E. Istrate, M. Kavalier, S. Lee, A. Moritz, M. Solovey, A. Urbancic, M. Vicedo, I. Wells, D. Wright, J. Forgie, J. Hamilton-Diabo, R. Kijima, S. Ross, A. Ballis, L. Faria, A. Kothari, K. Samsel, A. Wong, and P. Kutasi

Regrets: R. Sarabia, C. Fraser, L. Magnusson, A. Komaromi, L. Dacome, E. Jagoe, D. Benjamin, K. Bartlett, H. Murray, L. Colantoni, N. Rodriguez, E. Jennings, P. Gooch, R. LaHuenen, A. Perez-Leroux, B. Havercroft, L. Somigli, L. Sherlock, R. Davidson, R. Vipond, and G. Holtz

Guests: E. Abrams (Stanford University), and R. Mosuda

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 pm by Chair, A. Esterhammer

1. Approval of minutes of the Meeting of April 29, 2019 (attached)

The minutes of April 29, 2019 were accepted.

MOTION – Moved by Urbancic, and seconded by Istrate. Passed *nem con*.

2. Business arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the previous minutes.

3. Guest speakers – Diversity and inclusion - Eric Abrams – Chief Inclusion Officer, Graduate School of Education, Stanford University & Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo – Victoria University

E. Abrams spoke to the Council about his experience in higher education and his role at Stanford about diversity and inclusion. Starting out as an Admissions Officer, he is now tasked to diversify and implement initiatives for Stanford's School of Education.

A question that arises is 'what is diversity?' E Abrams wants universities to move from the word diversity to inclusion. Inclusion, by definition, includes everyone. His issue with the word diversity is that it can be taken as excluding certain groups.

- At Stanford, E. Abrams organized field trips for the Graduate School of Education to visit certain community centres (e.g. women's centre, black community service centre).
- Why is it important to create environments for everyone to learn about different cultures during these trips? It creates inclusion.
- College campuses are excellent places to learn about these topics because it is a safe environment.

J. Hamilton-Diabo spoke about his experience in universities as well. He started as a recruiter, later becoming the Director of Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Toronto. He is now a faculty member at Victoria University and Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Matters. Since the 1980s, the UofT has been making progress (e.g. adding programs, services, faculty members and students). To work together, there must be a relationship between groups.

- For example, on September 30 is Orange Shirt Day, to recognize the effects of Residential Schools.
- A key point is understanding and participating in history and seeing the different viewpoints of indigenous peoples.
- College campuses are excellent places to learn and become involved in the conversation (e.g. the University of Toronto's First Nations House).
- Both sides need to shift towards each other to close the gap on disparity.

A. Urbancic asked as students graduate and apply for teaching jobs, they are asked for a diversity statement; what is a diversity statement? E. Abrams said to speak from the heart, and what they have learned through university and in life.

K. Castle mentioned that the opposite of diversity is homogeneity, whereas the opposite of inclusion is exclusion. Diversity and inclusion are both important, but they are both necessary. E. Abrams agreed, but while universities are starting to understand diversity, we have work to do on inclusion.

W. Robins asked how can we think about diversity and inclusion within the admissions process. E. Abrams said universities should tell the truth and let students define themselves. Perhaps having more transparency in statistics of minorities. J. Hamilton-Diabo added how are we as an institution responding? From a UofT perspective, how do we appear to minority groups? Admissions-wise, how do we listen to stories? For example, how do we evaluate people from high school as well as mature students? E. Abrams added how do we define quality and excellence? Be careful of affirmative action when reviewing applications.

4. Statement on recent suicide on campus (A. Wong)

Thank you, Principal Esterhammer for accommodating this unusual request to speak to this council - and allowing a student to address this first.

My name is Aloysius Wong, I am a third-year student pursuing a specialist in Peace, Conflict and Justice Studies and a minor in Computer Science. I am one of the student representatives at this council, as well as a member of the How Many Lives movement and the U of T Mental Health Policy Council.

I'm speaking to you rather unconventionally to ask for your help.

As many of you are aware, Friday evening saw another U of T student take their life at the Bahen Centre for Information Technology. This is the third suicide in that space - and the fourth reported suicide on-campus - in the last 16 months.

My message to you today is brief: You are all members of the faculty or administration at this college - through your various roles as the Principal, the President, the Dean, the Registrar, Professors, and heads of other bodies at this college.

I urge you to be extra supportive of all your students in the coming days and weeks - and indeed, always - especially given the recent events. Please give extra notice to members of the Computer Science and Engineering communities that have connections to you or this college given how connected the suicides have been in the spaces where they have many of their lectures, workshops, labs, tutorials, and social spaces. Please also be accommodating of students such as myself who are involved in advocacy for whom academic deadlines or other commitments related to you may not be their priority at the moment.

Furthermore, you might want to be aware of this symbol: #. People are using this symbol as a symbol of solidarity. The logo - to come - will consist of three distinct ### and will symbolize the three suicides in the same building - in the same spot, without of course discounting the other suicides and suicide attempts, such as the one in January.

The # represents how many students feel like a number. It's intended to represent how you can call a number - a help line, a distress line, another student, a parent, a friend, a mentor, a teacher, and a professor - to get the support that you need. Again, three of them represent how there have been three suicides in the Bahen Centre, and the way that each will be distinct - indeed, many of these are hand-made right now in various colours - is intended to represent how every student number - and, critically, the student behind that number - is unique and has a unique story and unique struggles just below that number. Finally, given its prevalence in computer programming, the ### calls in those experiences of students that have used this symbol in their coursework and otherwise.

Finally, you might also want to be aware that, as I'm speaking, people are gathering on Vic campus - across the street in the Cat's Eye - to meet in the second in a series of emergency community meetings of students to discuss the mental health crisis on campus. Vic is already and has the opportunity to continue to be a leader in mental health advocacy, and I invite you all to be a part of this solution in every way that you can.

I must take my leave now to go to the Cat's Eye to ensure that the community meeting has begun and is alright and then to Bahen where there are students helping others by providing resources and a place to talk and grieve.

However, if anyone has any pressing questions, I can take a few minutes now as well to take them and attempt to answer them.

I urge you to continue this conversation and - once again - to support students in every way that you can at every time that you can.

Thank you for your time, and I will speak with you all further soon.

Y. Ali said the Registrar is aware of the situation, and the Registrar urges students in distress to contact them. A Wong asked if all registrars are offering this response? Y. Ali said she can only speak for Victoria College, but registrars prioritize students. I hope students are not discouraged by wait times.

K. Castle said it is important to make contact with someone at the University, and all problems are important, not just emergencies. A. Wong said that faculty can provide support in many ways.

5. Report of the President (W. Robins)

The President reported on several items for the Council:

Strategic Planning - Victoria University is embarking on a strategic planning process for the next 5 years. There will be a variety of focus groups and town halls around Oct- Nov.

- First Round of consultations: Oct 3 has two staff town halls. Oct 9 is a town hall for students. Oct 7 and 10 are town halls for faculty and retirees
- Second Round of consultations is in November

Vic Ready - Last week was the launch of the Vic Ready program—a program that supports students as they prepare to graduate. There are 100 students in the program, in 4 groups—2 groups are humanities, 2 groups are for science students.

Communications - New position of a Director of Communications, Meghan Kilty. She started in August and if you have stories about Vic, please contact Meghan.

- New Victoria University Website launched September 30

Northrop Frye Hall Plans – A proposal is being reviewed by the City Council to rezone the area and no plans have been approved yet. We are waiting on the city's decision, and hopefully, by the Spring there will be a discussion about plans.

6. Report of the Principal (A. Esterhammer)

The Principal reported to the Council:

Scholars-in-Residence had another successful run during the month of May, thanks to the participation of excellent students and faculty supervisors and thanks especially to Ira Wells, the main on-the-ground organizer of the program. Since the 2019 session marked the end of a 3-year planned expansion cycle, SiR is now in the midst of a review requested by the Jackman Humanities Institute, which together with Victoria College is a major stakeholder in the program. As Director of the SiR program, I am coordinating the review. Its purpose is to recommend a sustainable model to continue the program at its present size, and to recommend any adjustments based on experience to date. Your feedback on the SiR program is welcome, whether or not you have been directly involved; please contact me or Ira directly.

UTQAP reviews: The process of writing and assembling the combined self-study document for the Education & Society, Material Culture, Creative Expression & Society, and Semiotics programs is continuing with the help of the Program Coordinators, who are consulting with program faculty in these four programs. The self-study will be submitted in the next few weeks and the site visit by external reviewers will take place during the Winter 2020 semester.

The last steps in the UTQAP review of Renaissance Studies, for which the site visit took place a year ago, are also underway and we hope this cycle will be wrapped up shortly.

Research Centre Directors: The current terms of the directors of both Victoria College research centres, the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies and the Northrop Frye Centre, end on 30 June 2020. Matt Kavalier and Bob Davidson (respectively) are eligible for reappointment. I will be forming committees shortly to review the

activities of the research centres and advise on the appointment of directors; there will be an opportunity for anyone who wishes to provide input.

The 2018-19 annual report of the NFC was circulated with the agenda.

7. Report of the Dean of Students (K. Castle)

K. Castle gave an update to the Council:

- UofT Presidential Task Force for Mental Health—there is an online form, open until Oct 15 with a link circulated
- Some of our Residence issues at the start of the semester have been resolved and we are working on a strategy for next year.

Dean's Office updates:

- Vic Ready Program has started and is successful so far.
- International Students Orientation in September went very well with over 100 students attending
- Commuter Orientation was successful too

Upcoming Dean's Office Events:

- The 4th annual (Re)Conciliations Conference, more details to come later
- Winter Term conference on Racism on Campus

D. Wright asked what students is Vic Ready targeting? K. Castle said this is a pilot year is targeting second and third-year students. Y. Ali added we started small, our goal was 100 students, had 150 express interest. Worries of including busy first years, but Castle suggests it might relieve student anxiety early. D. Wright followed up on a question about fourth-year students. K Castle said first and fourth-year students have different goals. Y. Ali said that focusing on second and third allows them time to consider courses.

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

The Chair brought forward several new course proposals via the Academic Committee meeting in the previous week (minutes attached to the agenda):

MOTION to approve the following three new courses: VIC198H1: Posters and Propaganda; VIC276H1: Writing for the Stage and Screen; VIC356H1: Multiple Literacies in Education; moved by I. Wells and seconded by E. Istrate. Passed *nem con*.

The Chair noted that we will retire one course: VIC220H1 - Post-Structuralism/Post-Modernism

9. Report of the Fellows Committee (A. Esterhammer)

New nominees and renewals for Junior Fellows status to be approved.

A. Esterhammer presented the slate of nominations from the Fellows Committee to the Council for approval. A. Esterhammer. The first item is a housekeeping issue only; Ken Derry was nominated in Spring 2019 for Associate status (5-year term) but was accidentally left out of VCC records.

Ken Derry	Department of Historical Studies, UTM
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The current Junior Fellows list below will be renewed for the one year term:

Name	Department	Nominator	Status
Kate Brennan	Centre for Comparative Literature	Ann Komaromi	Doctoral
Judith Brunton	Department for the Study of Religion	Pamela Klassen	Doctoral
Jessica Copley	Comparative Literature	Eric Cazdyn	Doctoral
Amy Fox	Department of Anthropology	Michael Chazan	Doctoral
Emily Gilbert	Department of Anthropology	Self-Nominated	Doctoral

Shelbie Sutherland	Department of Psychology	Angela Esterhammer	Post-Doc
Hillary Walker Gugan	Faculty of Information	Cara Krmpotich	Doctoral

MOTION – to accept the following as new Junior Fellows of Victoria College for a one-year term (renewable), moved by A Esterhammer and seconded by M. Kavalier. Passed *nem con*.

Name	Department	Nominator	Status
Victoria Fisher	IHPST	Rebecca Woods	Doctoral
Paul Patton	IHPST	Brian Baigrie	Doctoral
Gary Graham	IHPST	Brian Baigrie	Doctoral
Angela Nyhout	OISE	Angela Esterhammer	Post-Doc
Joel Vaughan	Department of English	Angela Esterhammer	Doctoral
Kyle Derkson	Department for the Study of Religion	Ken Derry	Doctoral
Catia Dignard	Spanish & Portuguese	Nestor Rodriguez	Doctoral

- Fellows Lunch Colloquia - every 2 weeks, Mondays 12-1pm. Today was E. Istrate and K. Derry is next week.

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

The Chair gave an update to the Council:

- Oct 2 – Erasmus Lecture with Prof Francesca Trivellato (Princeton) – Alumni Hall
- Oct 4 & 5 - Symposium on Epic Worlds, Prof Martinez-Osorio (York) and Prof Restrepo (Arkansas)
- Nov 1-3- Conference on Making Stories in the Early Modern World (York University & University of Toronto)
- CRRS welcomes some exciting rare books to the library.

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

The VUSAC President Alexa Ballis gave an update:

- Fall elections underway and the selection for VUSAC is happening. Online voting is happening now with results posted next Monday.
- Last Friday was the Town Hall meeting.
- Student Choice Initiative:
 - Some VUSAC fees were divided into essential and non-essential
 - VUSAC involved in the movement to campaign for students to opt-in to fees
 - The total average of students to opt-out: 23.7 %. Average across campus around 20%
 - Budget planning is ongoing
 - Winter opt-out is Nov 1 to Jan 20 (U of T has an unusually long opt-out period)
- Major Events:
 - Back to School Pub Night, over 200 students attended
 - Friday, Sept 27 - VUSAC participated in the Climate Strike. VUSAC hopes to further this conversation.
- Questions
 - K. Castle reported that the results of the opt-out were anticipated to be around 80%. It was considerably lower than expected. A. Ballis was glad to see the student support.

12. Other Business

The meeting ended at 5:43pm. Moved by A. Urbancic; adjourned.