VUSAC Meeting Agenda

**Call to order:** 5:37 pm EST, September 16, 2022

**Land Acknowledgement:**

*Sooyeon*

*The quick reason on why we do this is because we still want to understand our positionalities, our privileges, and recognize that we benefit off of the ongoing process of colonization.*

*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we should be extremely grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

*Doing this land acknowledgement allows us to acknowledge our due process etc*

**Official Regrets:** Diana Vink (proxy: Amy Mann), Cam Miranda-Radbord, Vincent Espenida, Kate Haberl (proxy: Sooyeon Lee)

**Absent:**

**Approval of minutes:**

*Motion by Jackson Leslie to approve the minutes for Month Day, Seconded by Maarib Haseeb*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

**Additions to the agenda:**

*Update from VOCA by Maarib Haseeb (2 mins)*

**Approval of the agenda:**

*Motion by Sooyeon Lee to approve the agenda for September 17, Seconded by Shane Joy*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

Sooyeon: I’ll be reading this verbatim from Ali. Hi Everyone! Happy Friday! You’ve made it through the first full week of classes! Congratulations! I know for some of you, this may be your first in-person VUSAC Meeting. I’m sorry I can’t be here to join you as I have so many great memories from past VUSAC Meetings, in this very room! Now, whether this is being read by Anne or Soo – I should probably introduce myself! For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Ali Kehl, I’m the Campus Life Coordinator in the Office of the Dean of Students, and I’m a former Vic student! If that’s not enough information, I have blonde hair and bangs, I love Reese Witherspoon movies, and my favourite colour is pink, obviously. I sit in on VUSAC Meetings as a liaison between the Dean’s Office and VUSAC, providing information, training and support to our student leaders. You’ll get used to my updates – as I go first literally every week! For now, I want to remind everyone that our weekly Commuter Don programming, bi-weekly TM programming, and 1-on-1 meetings with staff are back! Please email us, stop by our events, and get to know the DOSO team. I won’t take up too much more of your time – but I want to end by saying a final congratulations! It may not feel monumental right now but making it through the last two weeks is huge! You came back to campus, some of you welcomed our brand-new class of students to Vic, you attended new classes, made new friends and made time to focus on VUSAC. Being a student leader is a lot of work – give yourself a break, treat yourself, and be kind to one another.

ACTION ITEMS:

*Motion: Jackson Leslie to release the President's $8,000 honorarium for duties of summer Office Manager, seconded by Shane Joy (5 mins)*

Jackson: This is more official. We’ve already budgeted for this in our summer budget, and we’ll just take a quick look at Soo’s office hours. So as it’s outlined, it required a minimum of thirty hours a week, and allowed two weeks of vacation. As you can see, there is going to be a dip in some weeks, which is totally okay. As you can see, things amped up as Orientation Week and events started preparing, so Soo made up for it. This is more of an official release and it’s already been budgeted for. I think she definitely deserves this honorarium, and I highly vote in favor of that we release this.

*All in favour. None opposed. One abstaining. Motion passes.*

*Motion: Amy Mann to pass a statement in support of the September 23rd Climate Strike as seen in Appendix A, seconded by Jackson Leslie (5 mins)*

Rebecca: It’s a statement that we agree on what the strike stands for. Amy and I have been working pretty hard on the strike, and I believe that this aligns very well with what VUSAC stands for as well.

Jerico: It’s more of a question-was there anything planned for prior to the strike?

Rebecca: We have a poster making session on Thursday.

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

*Motion: Kate Haberl to ratify the VUSAC meal & snack policy as seen in Appendix C, seconded by Jackson Leslie (5 mins)*

Sooyeon: I’ll be speaking on behalf of Kate, as she wrote the policy. I’m not sure if everyone has had the chance to read the policy, but a quick recap is that there’s no alcohol, only events over five hours qualify for reimbursement, and they must provide a rationale as to why. There is a limit of $25 per person. And there has to be reason for why the meal is provided–the meal can’t be a ‘bonding event’ because that might be flagged as being exclusionary. Exceptions can be made for these events like VUSAC retreats.

Jerico: I think that policy should provide more clarity than confusion and I feel that this adds more confusion than nothing at all. Is the finance chair, the President, going to be looking at the budget lines? I mean, I understand the first part with group meals, but it comes off as VUSAC events are an exclusion to this line. Also, what is the difference between bonding and training events? I don’t understand if the cost is per person attending, or is it for the people who organized the event? I think that this should be a guideline approach, and that there should be flags, and if you notice a group is requesting a lot of money for food then that would be in our power to investigate you and ask you why you’re asking for so much.

Jackson: The reason the budget is due earlier is because the budget steering committee will be getting together to review any issues that would violate this policy. This is why we have the budget steering committee get together, so if there are any issues then we can send it back to the respective parties. To clarify the cost per person aspect, what we were trying to do was make an average guess that would still be a comfortable amount, so that just in the event that if things add up there’s still a grace period, and it places a limit to the excessive use of student funds.

Sooyeon: I must say that this is an ill time to be in passing of budget, so that’s a mistake on our part. I guess, what I’d like to ask is, what would you propose instead? How could we incorporate the policy to make it more clear or to clarify things instead of making it somehow more confusing?

Jerico: I understand how different policy passing can be, it’s hard. I don’t know what I like, and I think this is something that should be a guideline that the Finance Chair, the VPSO, and President should watch. Just looking at Chapter 4, Article 1, my first concern would be VOCA’s Home for the Holidays, how much did that add up to, was that in the same range of cost per person?

Jackson: I wanted to comment on Cat’s Eye doing training, and we both agree, I think that’s what’s outlined in the policy here, that something we’re trying to prevent is that we don’t want different bodies getting together just for the sake of using funds. I think that there should be some sort of productivity aspect to it. And relating to Home for the Holidays, I think that limiting the amount that is spent would be a big help in the long run. Unfortunately, our funds are not going to be as loose as last year, and we know that it takes quite a large portion of our funding. So we do have to limit the spending that gets done the rest of the year, passing this snack policy would ensure that every dollar that gets spent is added to different things.

Julie: I’d just like to clarify, if a club is meeting for the very first time or if they have a showcase, and if it isn’t five hours long, would you then not be able to purchase any snacks? I just wanted to make a clarification on the five hours, and where that applies.

Jerico: Maybe some examples would help–I think it would be useful to go back and what common events VUSAC does, and probably classify the events into different archetypes. Training, people deserve meals, but again, the issues that have been raised in the past was not due to just bonding events. They were productive meetings, but then they got food after. They just have a lot of productive meetings a lot, so they just got food a lot after. These weren’t created in the black and white, they were created in the grey. So I think it would be helpful to have archetypes and considerations for each of these archetypes.

*Motion: Jackson Leslie to extend the discussion of the Meal and Snack Policy, seconded by Shane Joy (5 mins)*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

Shane: While I agree that we shouldn’t be supporting things that aren’t productive like bonding events or alcohol, I do think that the policy does complicate it. I mean, you’ve discussed them but I think this is something that needs to be discussed more, put through some more deliberation. I also think it’s odd to have a list of people who partook in the event just to provide reimbursement. VUSAC also already reserves the right to investigate the abnormal use of funds so I don’t think there is a need to add that to the policy.

Jerico: I think it would also be more effective if we were more proactive, show that these are our expectations when you budget for food.

Sooyeon: This is the first time VUSAC has ever attempted to create policy on meals because it had been such an issue of contention in the past. And oftentimes we’ll have policies and then decide that it isn’t working so well. I think if it is then ratified then this is something that we could see if it’s productive and if it works as something that helps structure and making decisions over food and meals. In the past few years there hasn’t been much example to bring up but now that we’re in this new state, this can serve as a guideline that might help serve as a structure to budget, and if we find that in some time down the line we can always revisit the conversation and modify it later on.

Shane: If we’re going to pass this it should be as a guideline and not so rigid. VUSAC has dealt with this well enough in the past, and we’re going to have to investigate anyways and go in the same process, so we’re just adding policies that complicates things.

*Motion: Shane Joy to extend the discussion of the Meal and Snack Policy, seconded by Sooyeon Lee (10 mins)*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

Jerico: Yes, I agree, we can upgrade it as long as it’s something we follow up on. We need to ensure that it’s checked, I expect this to be one of those that we might forget about. Make the policy a living document that we go over and over again, I want people to be aware of the policy.

Jackson: I agree with Shane and Jerico’s points on using this as a guideline. But I would want to disagree with Shane and say that while we’ve had some instances where we’ve had a group violate their use of student funds, at the end of the day we are students and we don’t want to put that financial burden on the students. Most of the time it either gets cut down from another event but if that’s their only event then it’s just a loss of VUSAC because we don’t want it to fall on students. This policy is a preventative measure so that students and us are not put in a difficult position.

Shane: I think that’s a good point but this doesn’t prevent this in any way, because I don’t think this will be followed, a lot of people won’t notice it. And in that event we’ll just be put in the same position. Maybe it’s preventative in intention but people won’t follow it.

Jackson: I think that’s the whole reason we want to make sure that the Budget Committee gets together before anything happens because if this does get passed then everyone on the committee will get together and everyone is in accordance with the policy before it’s passed, and send it back to the party to make adjustments. It might be an extra hassle but I think it would be a good preventative measure.

*3 in favour. 2 opposed. 3 abstaining. Motion failed.*

*Motion: Kate Haberl to ratify the VUSAC transportation policy as seen in Appendix B, seconded by Jackson Leslie (5 mins)*

Sooyeon: In order for reimbursement to happen, it should be either because you’re going somewhere justifiable off campus or you’re carrying supplies that can’t be done on foot. It can’t be a reason like you were late to class or late to the event. Whether you’re on time or not it is not VUSAC’s discretion on that. And generally commuting is not a reasonable ground for reimbursement. Ideally you should use other forms of transportation, like the subway, or for some reason you can’t then that would mean you would be reimbursed. And for fuel, there’s a formula to determine reimbursement. We are thinking of implementing a transportation policy because we’ve run into situations in the past where we’ve had some students take ubers for personal reason, and we can’t justify that. This sets in those guidelines, and it’s there to serve as a reference policy as well when we think about reimbursement.

Julie: If there are events like everyone going to Distillery District, are students expected to pay out of pocket for their transportation?

Sooyeon: I think in that case it would be a form of transportation to somewhere super far, so with discretion it would be something we would reimburse. Oftentimes people will buy tokens and hand those out to the people attending the event.

Jerico: Are there considerations for late night transportation?

Sooyeon: At the end of the day, if it’s a safety concern and you need to get home safely, then that would be taken into consideration and that’s reasonable. It would be unreasonable and inappropriate if we denied someone reimbursement for getting home safely.

Jerico: Can there be a section on that in writing? A section on justifying and what’s justifiable? I can operate with what I think is reasonable, but if someone wasn’t aware they might not know the bounds, and if someone is approaching the policy I think there needs to be substance and specifics as to what’s allowed.

*Motion: Shane Joy to extend the discussion of the VUSAC transportation policy, seconded by Amy Mann (10 mins)*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passed.*

Maarib: I’m pretty sure that part is outlined in Chapter 2. First it has to be passed in the budget ratification, and we have the budget steering committee ensuring that it’s justifiable. This just came up because of transportation costs that weren’t budgeted before, and this Chapter outlines what would be reasonable and what would not be. I think it’s clear and I don’t think there’s anything that would fall outside.

Amy: I agree on ubers, taxis, and putting that in clear guidelines. I’m a little concerned about equating the TTC to ubers, in the sense that you need to show why you can’t use a cheaper form of transit. I don’t think that’s good on our part to put more burden on other people for taking the TTC. We’re talking 2.25 a person, and it’s not an unreasonable cost. So I don’t see the motivation behind that.

Jackson: I think this might be my interpretation, but the TTC is the baseline for the cheapest cost, and if they could have taken the TTC instead of the uber then they should have. I think for us, we’re just trying to prevent any costs that are well beyond reason like an uber when a ttc would have been more than okay.

Amy: I definitely agree, but if we look at Chapter 4, it says that “additionally, the reimbursement requester must be able to show why they could not use a free or cheaper form of transportation (walking, etc.).” I’m just judging based off of that.

Sooyeon: If we’re here at Museum and we’re trying to go to St. George, you could technically take the TTC, but this policy states that it’s unreasonable because it’s a three minute subway ride vs. a five minute walk.

Shane: An additional cause for concern is what if someone is disabled and cant get where they need to go on foot, for example that three minute distance, I don’t think they should prove why it’s justifiable or reasonable. I understand that this policy is reactive, and I know that the intention is not to be exclusionary to disabled people, but I think that that could possibly be the result, and I don’t want to be putting people in that situation.

Rebecca: I know that this is a reactionary policy, I just wanted to know have there been issues with people taking the TTC unnecessarily? It doesn’t seem like there’s been anything like that.

I don't think we need to make the policy over 2.20 per person, if it hasn't been an issue in the past. And I don’t think it’s very likely to be an issue in the future.

Jackson: This is a direct to Shane and Amy. Chapter IV Article 2 essentially says that if you say I have a disability, the policy doesn’t mean that you’ll be automatically denied just cause there was a cheaper option, the policy is saying you just need to show why. If a budget request came in and requested additional reimbursement, then they would just need to justify with their accessibility request.

Sooyeon: In response to Rebecca, a lot of the policies we’re trying to pass today are reactionary but the TTC part is not an issue we have run into in the past but it could be, so it’s us trying to be more proactive. This is just so people can refer to the policy on answering questions on how to get to and from places. On one hand, there’s a fine line between taking an uber for the sake of taking an uber, but people shouldn’t have to disclose their disability for accommodations to be provided.

Shane: This is in response to what Jackson said, I do understand someone discussing it with us and that’s fine, but I don’t feel comfortable with the idea of having someone with a disability make their case as to why they had to use transportation. And I think that any uncomfortability is reasonable, especially in that case.

Amy: In terms of the ubers and taxis, have we considered putting a line saying that any accessibility aspects you would automatically receive it. But going back to the TTC, what was odd to me while reading this was that we were treating ubers as the same to the TTC. It seems like something we should be encouraging, but when I’m reading this it felt like I should try not to use ubers and try not to use the TTC.

Shane: I don’t think we necessarily have to do away with this entire policy, I just think there are some things that need to be added in. Such as, safety precautions, inclusivity to disabled people–we can add in articles that explicitly mention that. And I think that the reason this is being brought up because it’s a really complicated thing, you’re walking a fine line with forcing someone to make their case to you and them being uncomfortable but us having to find out their reason. I think it’s very hard to navigate and just adjust the policy accordingly.

Jerico: I think that before it’s passed it needs to go through a UI experience. Experiment with it, like imagine planning a budget and see where the hiccups are, and ask these what if questions and address them. You know, if a student who is budgeting and they’re more confused than they would’ve been initially, then the policy needs a rework.

*Motion: Maarib Haseeb to extend the discussion of the VUSAC Transportation Policy by 5 minutes, seconded by Amy Mann*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passed.*

Rebecca: I just wanted to touch on late night transportation, I wanted to see what this document says on ubers vs TTC late at night. Because personally I wouldn’t feel safe taking the TTC at night, so I wanted to figure out where we stand on that and if we can make it explicit.

Sooyeon: I think that would fall under what is reasonable and justifiable. There have been a lot of great comments today on things that could be tweaked, and a good thing from that is like done into what is reasonable and what’s the decent thing to do. I think that going home late at night would definitely fall under reasonable, and would be hopefully very clear to those on the budget steering committee on council. But, just incase it isn’t clear that is also something we could make explicit in the policy.

Jackson: A lot of really good comments have been coming up. I think that the reason we’re trying to have this discussion and having this policy come up is because it can be really difficult when you’re presented with a lot of cases. For the budget steering committee it can be quite an issue when it’s up to the discretion of the people on the committee. It’s hard to put that on them and expect them to discern without biases. I think it’s a good starting preventative measure just to eliminate any bias or grey area.

Jerico: I definitely agree. I support the fact you want to be more fiscally responsible. But caution on exact numbers, if you’re not updating it every year. And, there should be bigger amounts for numerical considerations. There should also be encouragements of structural considerations for their event. I also think that there needs to be a cultural shift and expectations within VUSAC, the policy is helpful but it’s going to need more than a policy to change it.

*One in favour. Five opposed. Two abstaining. Motion failed.*

*Motion: Kate Haberl to ratify Jiwoo Oh as Student Projects chair for the 2022-2023 school year, seconded by Jackson Leslie (3 mins)*

Sooyeon: This is being done now because Student Projects’s hiring happened later than other levies. We’ve had a number of highly qualified applicants and she was chosen after a lot of deliberation. She had a lot of great ideas and initiatives now that we’re shifting to in person. I highly recommend her to be ratified.

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

*Motion: Kate Haberl to ratify MEDiversity as a VUSAC-recognized club for the 2022-2023 school year, seconded by Jackson Leslie (3 mins)*

Sooyeon: So MEDiversity has applied for club status. I assume that under Kate’s discretion as VPSO they have submitted a good application and have met all club requirements.

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

*Motion: Kate Haberl to ratify Vic Fantasties as a VUSAC-recognized club for the 2022-2023 school year, seconded by Jackson Leslie (3 mins)*

Sooyeon: So Vic Fantasies is a returning club this year and we’re really excited to have them back.

Tianyu: I actually requested for ratification last year, and fortunately VUSAC did pass it. I was a first year, and everyone was also a first year, and it was COVID, so the club fell in the middle of the year. So our main activity is writing passages for books, and maybe cards for Christmas seasons. We also plan to have a collection of short stories or longer stories. By the way, did VUSAC receive a code of conduct in our application? I sent it to Kate, I just want to make sure VUSAC received it.

Sooyeon: If it was given to Kate then it was most likely received.

Tianyu: There is also another issue, I only have three members on my Exec team, and one of them is a non-Vic student. I’m not sure if there’s any policy related to that.

Sooyeon: Three members of the exec including yourself?

Tianyu: Yes.

Jerico: This happens frequently with clubs, it has been discussed before where the fractions get tighter, and some clubs have passed with 66%.

*Motion: Maarib Haseeb to extend the discussion of Vic Fantasies by 5 minutes, seconded by Amy Mann.*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

Tianyu: I just want to be transparent, we are at 66%. Kate suggested to look for a first year representative, and I’m trying to do that.

Jackson: Lara just informed me that it’s supposed to be a minimum of 70%, but we trust the discretion of the VPSO, so we think that it’s fine. We would still encourage you to get someone else on the club or a first-year exec. But Jerico is right there’s a lot of ambiguity if 66% rounds up to 70%. But if Kate brought this forward then she thinks it’s okay.

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

COMMISSION REPORTS:

*Commuter (Maarib): 5 mins*

Maarib: VOCA has had a good start to this year, we had our first Pancakes, and 160 people showed up. We’ll be having Pancakes weekly now, back in the Cat’s Eye. We have a Tote Bag Painting Event, Tuesday evening on the Quad. And we have a Trivia Night planned with the dons at the end of the month. We’re also hiring first year execs right now.

*Sustainability (Amy & Rebecca): 5 mins*

Amy: Sustainability has been having a busy month organizing the climate strike. It’s going really well, we’ve been emailing departments, working with the UTMSU to get UTM students here, and Scarborough students, I’m really excited and hopefully we get a lot of students out.

Rebecca: We have a Meet and Greet next week, where we’re giving kits out for the strike. We’ve heard back from a lot of different departments on their support, so you can tell your professor that their department said you could be there.

Maarib: What time is your poster making on the Quad?

Amy: It’s from 6-8, and there’ll be pizza.

Maarib: Okay, the only thing is that you have to book the quad using the VSEF form, and we had booked it for the VOCA Tote Bag Painting Night.

Amy: It’s not us organizing it, it’s Climate Justice that’s organizing it, so I will email them now to let them know.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

*VPE: Shane Joy (3 mins)*

Shane: Over the summer, I’ve been conducting research on the presidency of former President Robbins, and his goals and priorities, and if he lived up to those. And for your information, he kind of did. I’ve also been conducting research on President McEwen, as well as the admirable priorities promoting inclusion at UTM. You might’ve seen the Black Research Network event that she’s carried over here from UTM. I’ve also looked at the meal plan policies of UofT, particularly the fee breakdowns and how they’ve changed over the years, as well as cultural and religious accommodations. Finally, I’ve been meeting with Erin from Climate Justice UofT, and seeing how we can better support their advocacy for divesting fossil fuels from Vic. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Climate Justice UofT is a grassroots organization with the principle goal to divest fossil fuels. Following UofT’s announcement last year of divesting by 2030, Climate Justice has also been getting Vic, St. Mikes, and Trinity to divest. This year, Climate Justice is taking a number of actions to work towards divestment, and I encourage you all to learn from their Divest 101 event on the Quad. And I will continue to support them on behalf of VUSAC.

*VPI: Jackson Leslie (3 mins)*

Jackson: I’m just doing some quick updates, this is a reminder that budgets are due on the 19th, Soo and I had an event over the summer on budgeting but feel free to reach out over the weekend. We just want to make sure you have that down on your calendars. Just as a reminder that you should be checking emails at least once a day. If I have to reach out to you more than once, there have been some instances where it happens multiple times. You are fully in this position and we expect that you’re checking your email at least once a day. If you’re going to be out of office and you see an email, it takes a few seconds to say that you’re out for the day. The retreat is on the 15th and 16th, planning has started for that and Soo and I have a lot of interesting workshops planned for you. For the First Aid and CPR training we’re organizing, that is scheduled for Oct 30th. If you haven’t responded to my email about which member of your commission will be participating, please do so as soon as possible. I’m really excited about all of your events. Checkins will start in the month of October. I’ll also be asking you about the jackets. If anyone prefers the quarter zip or regular hoodie, I’ll be taking a vote now. It looks like the quarter zips have it.

Julie: Just wanted to clarify, what time is the retreat going to happen?

Jackson: It’s happening from 9-4 or 9-5.

*President: Sooyeon Lee (5 mins)*

Sooyeon: A lot of my time lately has been spent working on elections, and we’ve had a really great turnout so far. Typically people submit their nominations form very last minute, but we’ve had a couple of package submissions already. Please encourage your friends to get involved and get their packages in. I’ve also been meeting regularly with Tri-Council and President McEwen, talking about divestment, revitalizing student life on campus. Please let me know if there’s anything you’d like to pass on to them. Just a note on election neutrality, because we are all on council, our voice matters a lot if we endorse someone. Being neutral is necessary. We can’t do any public endorsements, including comments on social media, or being in promotional material. There will be more information out on that next week. I’m sure you all know this already, so please use the VSEF form to book your events. Book space on campus and it’s up and free to use.

*Motion: Shane Joy motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jackson Leslie*

*All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

*Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.*