



## VUSAC Meeting Agenda

**Call to order:** 5:35 pm EST, September 30, 2022

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

*Shane Joy*

*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 are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. And since it's the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, I wanted to say a few extra things. While land acknowledgements like these are important, to indicate one's support, I'd like us all to keep in mind that these things are by no means a checklist for items to complete to demonstrate that we're good people. It should not come to substitute for more meaningful actions that we can do as a more fundamental part of the helping Indigenous people. And actually doing the work of learning and unlearning, as well as calling out racism when you see it. I'm also saying it here, because I believe you all will be receptive to my words and I've been actually hopeful that you would keep these things in mind next time it's your turn to deliver a land acknowledgement, or that you should do more if you can.*

**Official Regrets:** Tariq Harney, Amelia Collet, Amy Mann, Luca Carnegie

**Absent:**

### **Approval of the agenda:**

*Motion by Jackson Leslie to approve the agenda for Month Day, Seconded by Shane Joy  
All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

### **EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:**

*Motion: Shane Joy motions to grant Ali Kehl speaking rights, seconded by Sooyeon Lee.  
All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

Ali: I wanted to give a huge congratulations to our new members. It can be very nerve wracking and I hope you're all being kind to yourself. For everyone else, we are wrapping up orientation, if you're a first year hopefully you've filled out our feedback survey. We are giving out ten Vic merchandise prizes, as well as \$25 Indigo gift cards. We're also updating our applications for Co-Chair, Executive, TM, and Leader, so if you want to start thinking about what you want to do next year, I would encourage you to do so. Also, Student Leader Day is coming up on October 14th. And when you're a new leader, it is mandatory that you come. Of course if you have class,



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then you do not have to come, we understand class comes first. And it's optional for returning leaders to maybe just want a little bit of a refresher on planning events in person, budgeting, marketing, anything like that. Free lunch, so sign up. It's not available yet, but next week you will have that. And last, but not least, I did just want everyone to know that the Iranian Association is in partnership with the Multi-Faith center and the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office to officially denounce all forms of gender based violence and repression of women's rights and are inviting all members of the community as well as allies, to a space of shared reflection. So I just did want to highlight that, Monday October 3 from 7-9PM in the Multi-Faith Center. The room number is K9208. That's for anyone who wants to be in a space of shared reflection and remembrance, and if you do need more information that's on their website. Congratulations once again to everyone and to the members on this side for working so hard on the election.

### STAFF REPORTS

*CRO: Pooja (5 minutes)*

Pooja: There was great voter turnout this year. On average, about 10% abstained. There were also a great amount of candidates especially for beginner level positions but not so much for the upper level positions. I think in the future I can maybe have a person with that experience come on and say what the job is from their perspective so it's not too intimidating. Everyone followed campaign and poster rules, so overall it went really well and it was good.

### ACTION ITEMS:

*Motion: Motion by Sooyeon Lee to ratify the results of the 2022 Fall VUSAC Elections, seconded by Jackson Leslie (5 minutes)*

Sooyeon: So we just heard the report from the CRO, we've had our highest voting engagement in a really long time. Now that we have a full council and all our positions are filled, we have all the members we need to jumpstart the year.

Jackson: I agree, it's a pretty high rate, as it normally averages about 7-8%. We definitely saw better engagement this year. To all the elected members, reflect on your experience, think about what you enjoyed and what you didn't enjoy, and send your feedback back to Pooja. It's always helpful with the process since you've experienced that firsthand, cause we always want to strive for greater. Maybe next elections we'll have an even greater turnout.



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

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

*Direction of VUSAC, put forth by Sooyeon Lee (15 minutes)*

Sooyeon: I know we have a lot of new faces, and we've been looking at your campaign materials. I kind of want to give people the opportunity to start tossing out ideas on what you want to accomplish and changes you want to see. Jackson and I will be doing onboarding in the next two weeks. In the meantime, I want to open the floor for you to speak on anything you have planned.

Zoe: I just wanted to share the things I wanted to get done this year so if you want to connect and come to me, please feel free to do so. I want to look at the affordability of Vic, as this came out in town hall and on other people's platforms too. And there are ways to improve that would be to have carry over of remaining meal dollars, meal plan opt out, and Vic also used to have more affordable housing. Another thing in the broader community sense is trying to put pressure on Vic to divest from fossil fuels. So if you did not know, UofT committed to divesting from fossil fuels by the end of 2030. However, Vic is a federate college and has a separate pension plan and endowment that has not been divested. The endowment is \$500 million, 5% of which is directly in fossil fuels. Last year we saw the first point of progress with the BoR. Additionally, I want to work on the response to mental health crises. The relationship of UofT with policing and armed cops responding to mental health calls. I want them to take more of a trauma and student-centred approach with it. If anyone would like to connect on that, then please contact me.

Shane: I think affordability is really important especially with meal plans, which have seemingly increased in prices. I think there should be carry over, and I want to push for the lengthening of hours of places like Burwash to serve students. And when it comes to divestment, BoR is a great place to push for that, but I think that it's really important to have student awareness as a part of it. I think that that's something that we can contribute to in various ways.

Diana: I just wanted to add, there have been a lot of successful initiatives and I agree with what's been said about Burwash dining hall. There are a ton of great resources on VUSAC and we're here to support you.

Rebecca: I agree, please come to use we want to help you as much as possible. Especially with working with the sustainability commission towards divestment, and it's really important to give



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people information on that. If you have any other ideas about how we can keep people informed on that, then that would be great.

Zoe: Just to add, I think a lot of people don't know that Vic is a federate college. They're really concerned about their reputation and being seen as progressive, so they're scared that it'll tarnish their reputation that Vic hasn't divested. So I know it seems trivial, but definitely just strike up a conversation about it.

Shane: I think speaking with students and getting those testimonies and experiences regarding these things are really helpful to make these various cases to the BoR.

Rebecca: I read a report detailing student feedback and the response was great, a lot of people were angered that the publication was on our social media. So we need as much student feedback as possible, and show people that this is how students actually feel and have that data. If anyone who wants to work on that please let me know.

Diana: I'm pretty sure that there's a Divest Vic petition, and it's just another way of getting people talking about it and having people sign it.

Zoe: Just to provide some historical context, there was also another divestment petition that had 300 signatures and it didn't sway the BoR. But I think the climate is different now, so if we could double that or keep going past that. If anyone doesn't have access to that then I can just send the link.

Sooyeon: Something that I want to do is in terms of the use of student space in the Goldring Student Centre. If people haven't had the chance to read our BoR handbook, it details what they're planning to do with Vic for the next couple of years, including reconstructing Northrop Frye. And if that's unavailable, are they going to move the staff there to the student centre? We already have very limited student space, some levies don't have a separate office space, but we have the word 'Student' in the name of the building. I'm interested in conducting an audit on how Vic uses its spaces. I want to look at our classrooms, where the spaces are being under-utilized, the different buildings at Vic and how we can make sure that students have space on campus to have meetings and hold events, now that the demand for space is higher than ever.

Rebecca: You could also go to the VUSAC website for the divestment petition.



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Charlie: I wanted to look into having EJ Pratt extend their hours. There are issues with the hours being so limited, so I wanted to push on that, and for them to possibly open during the weekend.

### STAFF REPORTS:

*Office Manager: Lara Reyes (5 minutes)*

Lara: Hi everyone, I'm just going to cover a few things that are relevant now that we're welcoming new members onto council. The form for Office Hours has been resent, and if you haven't accomplished it or have, but need to make edits, then please do so. This is due over the weekend, and should take no more than five minutes to accomplish. Next, there have been inquiries regarding non-VUSAC bookings of the meeting room in the office. I'd like to note that I've opened the meeting room to commissions' meetings because they are constituents of VUSAC. We wanted to keep the meeting room mostly open so that we encourage students to come in and study. With regular meetings or bookings from other groups, students may not feel like they can come in as spontaneously anymore. Lastly, some fun stuff—you may have noticed this week that we've started some new activities for the Office, so we have our bingo giveaway, you can decorate a pumpkin and leaf, put up your media recommendations. Also adding this to the office hours guide—the POS system and tap need to be plugged in before the last person leaves office.

### COMMISSION REPORTS:

*Academic: Amanda (3 minutes)*

Amanda: Last week we had two events, the first being a promotional collaboration to get more engagement. We also have a learning strategy session, usually on Thursdays with free pizza. It's great to learn new resources. And we have the Return to In-Person Testing workshop sessions, where the academic team comes to teach test strategist. We also have an academic commissioner now so that's great that we have a full team. We're also planning an anti-procrastination study night, where you won't technically leave until you get a task done.

*Equity: Diana and Cameron (3 minutes)*

Diana: We have general member applications for equity commission open, and we accept everyone, but we do the application to get to know you and what you're interested in. Our meetings are open door so you're free to come. It's every other Monday evening, but that needs to be finalized. We want to work on having residence accommodate students over the holidays.



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There was an article in the Innis Herald about a student who was left homeless over the holidays because they couldn't stay in residence. I want to see how we can create supports at Vic or what there are existing. We're also looking into Burwash safety and accessibility, including holding David Gilmour and Vic accountable. We also really want to bring back events slowly. If you're interested in that, then please contact me.

*Mental Wellness: Julie and Vincent (5 minutes)*

Julie: Now that the budget is ratified, we can proceed with our planned events. We had our plant giveaway today, with over 100 students that showed up, so that was really exciting. We also have World Mental Health Day coming up, which falls on Thanksgiving day, so we're going to push it by a day. We're going to have a social media campaign. We want to have more of an active part from students, so we want it to be us listening rather than us talking. We want to do their activities too, like a biweekly drop in session, where you can hangout with other students, have a quiet, safe environment. We want students to take an active charge for their mental health, a lot of the time its the individual and not just the institution.

Vincent: We're going to be having journaling events and we're still finalizing the date for exam sessions. If you notice, our biggest goals is transitioning from an online experience to in-person events. We're trying to make sure that we still keep our success. So we'll still be having events online to accommodate those that can't make it. I hope everyone is following our Instagram as well.

Julie: We're also looking into wider Vic issues like mental health support. If that's something you would like to work on, then contact me.

Ali: I just wanted to bring it up, but Vic's annual mental health conference. It's very pertinent and there's usually a VUSAC presence. Once you have the whole commission then I'll coordinate with you on that.

### EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

*VPI: Jackson Leslie (5 minutes)*

Jackson: Congratulations once again to everyone, I'm super excited to work with you all. We'll be having onboarding in the next week or two, it's just a super relaxed meeting with Soo and I to get to know you better, as well as an introduction to what VUSAC is. There's a lot of ins and



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outs that you might not know, I myself am constantly learning. Also, look into what you would consider with your portfolio, so how that works is you would be assigned to different commissions to work alongside them. So think about what you really want to do, reflect on your campaign foundation and hold that as best as you can, what you need to change, add, or remove after taking everything into consideration. We'll also be getting other aspects set up, like your VUSAC email domain, and Office Hours. How that works is it's a recurring two hour weekly shift, some of you will be paired, so you guys don't feel too overwhelmed with what's going on. It's fairly chill and not very demanding. We did just have budget ratification, but there's one upcoming on October 14th, so if you'd like to add anything to that, that's your time. I would also recommend reading our constitution, it's a great way to know and see what's expected of you. Also, see what VUSAC offers, you can go through our website. The retreat is happening on October 15th and 16th, for those of you who are joining, it's here in Goldring, and there are different workshops and we're so excited for that. There will be food on Saturday and a Pizza Social bonding on the end of Sunday. If you haven't sent your regrets already then please do so. I know we've already introduced ourselves, I just wanted to say that we have different commissions, and you're more than welcome to reach out to us. I've really enjoyed being here, VUSAC is like my second family. I really want to see how you grow in this role, so don't hesitate to reach out, I'm more than happy to support you. Congratulations once again, super excited to have a full council.

*President: Sooyeon Lee (5 minutes)*

Sooyeon: There are two different events that I wanted to bring up. So the first is Minding our Minds mental health conference. VUSAC has a presence on it, so if you'd like to be involved with it, it's on Friday, October 21 at Alumni Hall. The second thing is the PEARS Protest. The reason they're protesting is because UofT recently reviewed its sexual violence policy, but it had none of the suggestions that PEARS wanted them to implement. It's at 11:30 at Philosopher's Walk on Friday, October 7. So I'm putting this events on the council's radar, so if you can promote it on social media and all of that, because I think it's really important.

*Motion: Shane Joy motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sooyeon Lee*

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

*Meeting adjourned at 6:17 PM.*