Elections Report – Spring 2021 VUSAC Elections
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Dates of the Elections Events

- **VUSAC Spring Elections Q&A Sessions – ROUND 1:**
  - February 16, 2021
  - February 17, 2021
  - February 18, 2021

- **VUSAC Spring Elections Q&A Sessions – ROUND 2:**
  - March 9, 2021
  - March 11, 2021
  - March 17, 2021

- **Nominations Period:**
  - February 26, 2021 to March 19, 2021 (first round of nominees)
  - March 20, 2021 to March 22, 2021 (second round of nominees)

- **All-Candidates Meetings:**
  - March 19, 2021 (first round of nominees)
  - March 22, 2021 (second round of nominees)

- **Campaigning Period:**
  - March 19, 2021 to March 26, 2021 (first round of nominees)
  - March 23, 2021 to March 26, 2021 (second round of nominees + any uncontested positions)

- **Town Hall**: March 26, 2021

- **Elections results:**
  - Announced to candidates only: March 31, 2021
  - Announced to public: April 2, 2021

Spring 2021 EAC Members

- Michelle Zhao (VUSAC President)
- Lauren Allison
- Julie Seeger
- Leanna Lui
- Sofia Tiu
- Charlotte Allison
- Jocelyn Nurtano

The Official Results

There was a total of 259 votes that had been acquired throughout the voting period. This makes up 7.2% of the VCU that had voted, including both Part-time and Full-time students that were included in the voting lists. There was also a low spoil rate, but 3 commissioner positions and 1 ex-officio pool were empty, while 5 positions were uncontested. Here is the position breakdown:

Contested	Uncontested/Partially Contested	Empty
Vice-President External	President	Arts & Culture Commissioner
Vice-President Student Org.	Vice-President Internal	Equity Commissioner
Academic Commissioner	Sustainability Commissioner	Mental Wellness Commissioner
Commuter Commissioner	Board of Regents	Victoria University Senate
Scarlet & Gold Commissioner		
UTSU Victoria College Directors	Victoria College Council	

Elections Events – Overview

General Thoughts…

I want to be very candid in this report and say that this elections cycle was, for a lack of better words, a little bit disappointing. However, because it is the pandemic this year, this level of interaction was expected and with all of these adversities, there were still many feats to celebrate.

Namely, we were able to fill the executive positions for the upcoming council and also had numerous contested positions. A few individuals who ran this semester were also not a part of the "Vic Bubble" and felt comfortable to participate. This made me very happy, but I think we have *ways* to go in ensuring a shift from the insular nature of Spring elections.

I also thought that the ERC was very well-organized and beautifully written this year. I did not really get a chance to sit through the entire ERC re-vamping process because (from my knowledge) the ERC committee had started editing it before I was even hired. Therefore, I only got to attend one or two of the meetings. I feel that it would have given me an even more in-depth look at the logistics and would have allowed me to "know the ERC inside-out" a little more. I highly encourage the next CRO to stay updated on what the ERC committee is doing and also ask questions whenever needed.

That being said, there were times where I felt a hostile/rude response to certain mistakes that I made along the way, I felt a tad bit micro-managed, and also felt that some of

my questions were going unanswered. It was to a point where I did not feel like asking questions or clarifications and made *even more mistakes*. I want the new CRO to know that while these things may not be a part of your journey (and I really hope it isn't), you are only a human being and you should never be hard on yourself. You are doing the best you can, and you recognizing your own struggles is what matters most. The way to handle situations like these is to take a break, do what you love to do, and prioritize what you think is important in the moment.

Pre-nominations period:

I had created a full schedule of what advertisement we want to do throughout the entire elections cycle, especially for the 2-month period before the nominations opened up. This included creating a multitude of picture posts and info-photosets on VUSAC IG and FB, and scheduling Q&A Sessions during the pre-nominations period through Zoom. However, we did not have much turnout for the first set of Q&A Sessions.

I had also been very open about my email, cro@vusac.ca, and was very happy to receive questions about the elections process. Whether they were general or specific, I would make sure to answer them within the hour so they could get a quick and effective response on time. However, I was also bombarded with questions on my personal social media (e.g. FB Messenger, IG DMs, etc.) which was very hard to keep up with. While it is important to answer everyone's questions, I would definitely recommend redirect individuals reaching out to you on social media towards your email instead; this would also help to keep up with the internal records.

After having planned out the advertisement schedule for the months of February and March, I had also thought out some ways to make the engagement a lot more effective than how it was this semester. For example, the Q&A Sessions that we had arranged for the VCU were mainly empty until about the very last two Q&A Sessions, when it got a little busier. I would suggest, if you and your team are comfortable, to make such Q&A Sessions happen on a more public level (e.g. using the IG and FB live options rather than a closed Zoom link). Not only does using Zoom invite the possibility of getting Zoom-bombed, but it will also give anyone who *wasn't aware of the Q&A Sessions* a chance to jump-in to the conversation and be motivated to run, as well. Unfortunately, my team was not comfortable with doing a Live option, so I did not want to push it, but sometimes getting out of one's comfort zone is all it takes to make the dream work!

I had also taken on a little project that was suggested by the ACRO, where I created a video compilation of individuals who were not running in the elections but wanted to give a positive account of what it is like to be on VUSAC. This was quite a hit, and I was really happy with how my little video turned out. I suggest you to be creative and use your toolbox wisely!

Nominations Period:

We had held another set of Q&A Sessions that were more spaced apart. Again, while the first round of Q&A Sessions did not go so well, the second round was very busy and we got lots of prospective council members come by and ask wonderful questions.

An event that I had organized during this time, and that I thought was *really* amazing, was the Instagram Executive Takeover that I had organized with the VUSAC Execs. This idea was suggested by President Michelle Zhao as she had seen other organizations on campus do this, and I had added a takeover into our schedule very last minute. This was a great way to give the VCU a more inside-look into the lives of the execs, and also gave them a chance to ask the execs questions in light of the pandemic we are facing. I think this event was also able to clear up a lot of the fear surrounding the exec positions (e.g. the exec positions being too time-consuming, confusing, etc.). I encourage the next CRO to really make this idea happen again, and also plan a takeover with the REST OF THE MEMBERS TOO! Since we have 3 commissioner positions completely empty, it would be cool to have the co-chairs for each respective commission give an inside-look into their role.

We also had a little bit of a confusion with the nominations package, as we had to re-open the nominations period due to a plethora of uncontested positions. I found it very difficult to go about this process as we had to change the wording in the nominations package last minute. For the next CRO, I would encourage accounting for the possibility of re-opening the nominations period and creating 2 versions of the nominations package before sending them to the EAC and Execs for review. This would really clear up a lot of your time.

All-Candidates Meeting(s)

There were two sets of ACMs that I had conducted: one was on March 19, 2021, and the other was on March 22, 2021. The second ACM was for individuals who had handed their nominations forms in after the re-opening of nominations period.

Both of them went very well! Lots of good questions were asked and a lot of clarifications were given. However, I would like to suggest the same thing as I did in the last section and say that if you are making a second set of nominations packages with potential dates for re-opening, you should also make a separate presentation for the ACM after re-opening.

I had also organized the ACM so that I would take breaks in between the presentation and ask the attendees questions about things they wanted clarification on about what I had said so far (the break were ranging around every 5 minutes). I felt that the ACMs had a very friendly and informative atmosphere, and I was very happy to have been able to answer everyone's inquiries. What helped the most was having the ACRO, Maggie Zhang, monitor the

Zoom chat while I was presenting and having her also answer some of the questions that came up as I went along. That's 1 point for technology!

One very big pointer, however: PLEASE BE ASSERTIVE! One of the biggest issues I had noticed is that I was trying to be nice to everyone and was not able to make a point of how important it is to hand in their statements to me by a certain date and time. *Please make it your priority to be assertive! It is ok to be firm sometimes!*

Campaigning Period

The campaigning period this semester was quite interesting as we had to have some candidates start their campaigning a little later than the other due to the re-opening of nominations period. This had the potential to cause quite a confusion amongst the candidates, but I am glad that we were able to communicate it well.

Furthermore, we had shifted the Elections Forum to an Instagram base instead of Facebook, and I believe this served to be quite a success! It was 10X more organized and was very easy to follow, and even though we had a rough time gaining traction at the beginning of campaigning period, it picked up very nicely by the end. We received many questions and responses from the VCU and also from current leaders! I urge the next CRO to continue using the IG-based Elections Forum ☺

Voting Period

This was the point in the elections cycle where a big blunder happened, and I had created the voting ballot without having included the Scarlet & Gold Commissioner voting area. While it was a mere mistake that was not caught earlier on, it garnered a ton of angry emails from candidates. It really was not a fun time.

I had to close the elections ballot and re-make it within the next 2 hours so I could have it posted up on the VUSAC social media, along with voting.utoronto.ca. My biggest supporters during this time were Veronica (Communications Coordinator), Michelle (President), Tran (Vice-President Internal) and Maggie (ACRO)! Had it not been for their consistent support, I would not have been able to make it through that night, or the elections period in general.

One tip that I would give to the next CRO is to be keen on U-Elect Training dates and get your application in as soon as possible. I had been advised by my predecessors to make this a priority and was able to create, and later re-create, the voting ballots with ease because of the overview I received from my training.

Once again, there was a total of 259 votes that had been acquired throughout the voting period. This makes up 7.2% of the VCU that had voted, including both Part-time and Full-time

students that were included in the voting lists. There was also a low spoil rate. However, I did not think that the participation from the VCU was adequate, and this wasn't because of a potential lack of social media interaction we were having. One thing that I would stress for the new CRO is to have the current members of the council (execs, commissioners, etc.) participate in the outreach as well. This is not a one person job, and to get people riled up about elections, you will need individuals in the positions *right now* to give a positive account.

Results

When emailing the candidates their results, make sure to email them separately and do not give all of the candidates the full breakdown. This is to avoid making anyone feel uncomfortable about the results or its overall outcome.

Feedback on the Spring Elections…

Here are some very cool pointers from the individuals that ran in this semester's elections. Make sure to put-out the feedback form during/right after the silent period so you can get more responses. You can also check out more of the responses [here](#):

- In terms of the nominations form, I think it would've been easier to do a Google form/other submission system kind of like the UTSU did. Sending your friends a PDF/word doc was a bit clunky.

- In terms of the ACM, it was a bit disorganized. The CRO and VUSAC executives were contradicting each other and I think it would've been better if everyone was on the same page before the meeting. Or, if someone wasn't sure about something, they could refer to someone else or check the rules before answering candidate questions.

- For *Town Hall*, the first part went very long. I think there should be set discussion times for each of the positions (i.e. commissioners 10 min max, execs 15-20 max, or something like that) just because at the end it felt like everything was very rushed so we could finish on time.

There were a total of 2 referenda that were put forth this elections season. Here are the questions.

1) **Vic Black**
   o **Are you in favour granting the Victoria Black Student Network (hereafter referred to as Vic Black) Levy status and in doing so, creating a new levy fee of $1.53/year ($0.77/semester) for full-time students and $0.51/year ($0.26/semester) for part-time students?** The full-time annual VUSAC and levy fee is $64.98, and the part-time annual VUSAC and levy fee is $35.54; given the Levy status in accordance with the requested budget, full-time incidental fees will be increased to $66.51 and part-time incidental fees will be increased to $36.05. We are pursuing Levy status in order to gain more autonomy over our programming, as well as better be able to service the black community at Victoria College. For more information, please refer to our referendum plan which will be advertised during the allotted campaigning period.

Referendum Question – Victoria Black Student Network (Vic Black)
- Yes, I am in favour: 180 Votes (69.0%)
- No, I am not in favour: 52 Votes (20.0%)
- Abstain: 27 Votes (10.0%)

Referendum Question – Victoria Black Student Network (Vic Black)
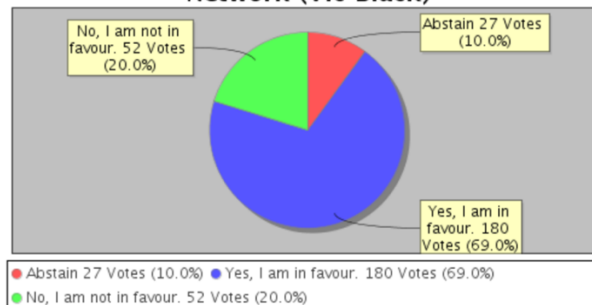
2) **VicXposure**
   o **Are you in favour of increasing the annual levy for VicXposure from $2.00 for full-time students and $0.50 for part-time students to $3.00 for full-time students and $1.00 for part-time students?** VicXposure is the photography Levy at Victoria College dedicated to providing event and portrait photography, tutorials, darkroom services, and free gear rentals to Victoria College students. There are two reasons for this levy fee increase. Equipment costs are rising and it will be difficult in the coming years to maintain and update their inventory

without compromising other services. They will also award honoraria to all exec members in recognition of their hard work supporting the community. This would increase the total VUSAC fee from $64.98 for full-time students and $35.54 for part-time students to $65.98 for full-time students and $36.04 for part-time students.

Referendum Question – VicXposure
- Yes, I am in favour: 99 Votes (38.0%)
- <mark>No, I am not in favour: 104 Votes (40.0%)</mark>
- Abstain: 56 Votes (22.0%)

Referendum Question – VicXposure

Penalties Issued
- Warnings: 1
    - Individual had started campaigning before their allotted campaigning time but had stopped immediately after we had warned them. They were confused about the different campaigning times that arose after the re-opening of nominations period.

- Strikes: 1
    - Individual was unable to attend Town Hall due to work.

- Immediate disqualifications: 0

Appendix
- Elections and Referenda Code
- Nominations Package
- Sample Budget
- Appeals Form