



VUSAC 2019 Fall Elections

CRO REPORT

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Preface

This is the Report of the CRO for the Victoria University Student Administrative Council's 2019 Fall Elections. This will be shared with members of VUSAC, candidates, and members of the Elections and Appeals Committee. It will also be made available for the use of the next CRO.

I would not have been able to have survived the end of this elections season without the help of every candidate and every member of VUSAC. The patience of the candidates and their feedback is much appreciated. Secondly, thank you to VUSAC members! Thank you for your help navigating around Vic, promoting elections and sharing your contacts with the Dean's Office.

I want to especially thank Alexa, Katie and Vibhuti who were there every step of the way! This was a real team effort, and I appreciate it.

I would also like to thank Christina Alcena, the Campus Life Coordinator, and everybody else at the Dean's Office for your generosity. Thank you for making space and tables available for voting, and for your help with the Town Hall and with answering all of my frantic emails!

Finally, without Rachel Bannerman and Michael Mejia of the Cat's Eye, the Fall Town Hall would not have happened. Thank you for making your space available and for setting up the mikes and tech so candidates could share their platforms.

Pre-Nomination Period

Hiring and Transition

I was hired early May 2019. One of the major goals that I discussed in my first meetings with Alexa and Katie was boosting participation in the elections both in terms of participants putting their names forward and students voting in the elections. We hoped to achieve this through frequent communication with the student body through email and social media.

Preparing for Nominations

We set the dates for the nomination period and elections and advertised them on social media. I put together the nominations package, mostly unchanged from last year except for some positions left over from Spring Elections. I find that this period of time went smoothly although, for the next CRO, I would recommend contacting the voting system staff at the Extracurriculars Office ahead of time and learn about how the system works on a technical level. That way, we would have been able to advertise to voters early how to set up their computers.

Nomination Period

The nomination period was largely smooth. Communicating with potential candidates at the Back-to-School pub night was a great opportunity to introduce the process and ensure the participation of students. Getting information out early meant students were less stressed about running and becoming familiar with members of VUSAC made the elections less intimidating. The nominations forms were easy to find by the VUSAC and Dean's offices. All of the printed copies were taken by students interested in running.

All the candidates submitted their nomination forms on time, although I would recommend either changing the location where they should be handed in, or marking the CRO mailbox so that it is more visible. This could be done either with tape or a sign. This would make it easier for students, some of whom had to return to the office several times to find the exact spot more easily.

The All-Candidates meeting went well, however the lounge area in front of the VUSAC office was not the best space for it to take place. Students said the area was loud and there was not enough seating. The CRO should remember to book spaces much in advance for more privacy and space. Most students appreciated having two meeting times earlier and later in the evening. Maybe having an online sign up sheet would help in determining the specific times.

The biggest concern for most candidates at the meeting was the lack of clarity on social media campaigning rules. The language should be changed on the Election Code. I would recommend more general language so that the Code does not have to be strictly updated for new, ever-changing platforms.

Campaigning

Postering

The pestering process needs some amending. The CRO is sometimes in the difficult position of having candidates with legitimate reasons for not handing in posters on time but requiring the CRO to place posters on campus several times. I would recommend having several due dates for posters, or having candidates sign up for times to put posters up themselves under the supervision of the CRO.

Another concern was miscommunication between the CRO, Dean's Office, and cleaning services. This elections season, cleaning staff took down posters on multiple occasions, despite the CRO contacting the Dean's Office about the elections. In the future, it would be a good idea for the CRO to communicate with caretaking staff directly.

Social Media

Students found social media campaigning difficult and confusing. In addition, some found the emphasis on Facebook as limiting their campaigns, which mostly took place on more popular platforms such as Instagram. The rules in the Code need to be amended to offer more clarity and empower candidates' campaign effectively. Doing this will also help the student body become more interested in the elections and voting themselves.

Town Hall

The Town Hall was largely successful. In order to further encourage participation from beyond VUSAC, promoting the event and providing dinner and dessert are reasonable incentives. Additionally, assigning a DRO or VUSAC members to livestream the event would allow the CRO to be singularly focused on directing the event. Furthermore, booking the rooms ahead of time is a good way of securing the space at a time that works for everybody. Additionally, in this Town Hall the CRO and VUSAC team were successful in accommodating scheduling challenges for particular students.

Voting

Promotion

Promotion of the elections needed to have been better. The CRO ought to schedule specific posts over a tight deadline in order to increase interest in the candidates and elections. Additionally, tabling was a good idea that could have been better executed. Making a schedule and committing VUSAC members to a tabling session on each of the three days of voting would require the minimum time commitment from VUSAC. This schedule should be created during the nomination period at the latest. Also, communicating with the VUSAC members responsible for the social media accounts better, or even better, getting access to those accounts directly would also be beneficial. Finally, the CRO should take advantage of the help from the Dean's Office and advertise the election dates directly to students.

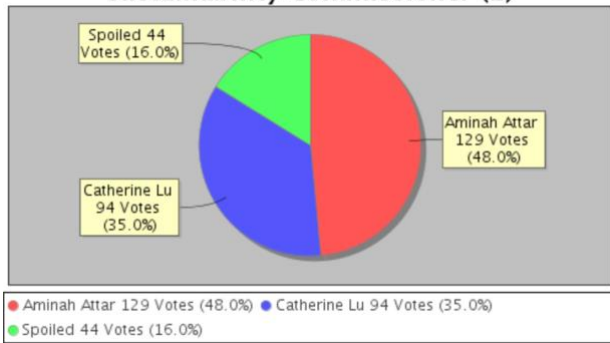
Voting System

This year, voting was repeatedly delayed because of technical difficulties voters experienced in using the U of T voting system (voting.utoronto.ca).

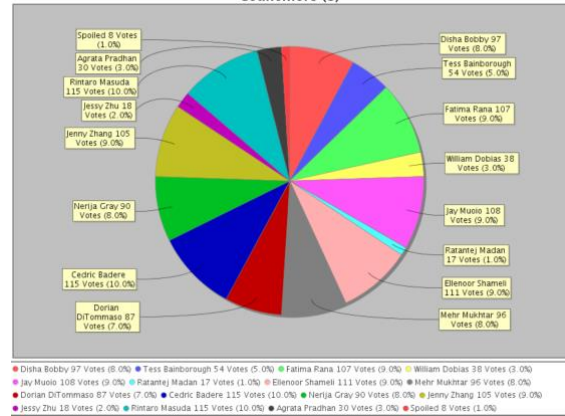
The U of T voting system is outdated for many operating systems and web browsers. As such, voters experienced difficulties accessing the system. It is important for the CRO to become educated with the system early by visiting the Extra-Curriculars office. Until the system is updated or VUSAC adopts a new one, elections promotion will have to include instructions for students for accessing the voting system from their computers. Additionally, tabling would also be beneficial for addressing this difficulty. In the long run, it would be beneficial to follow the example of Trinity College, and consult with the Victoria IT staff to create an original voting system. This would be beneficial in advertising the election through email, obtaining more data about results, and bringing the voting process up-to-date.

Election Results

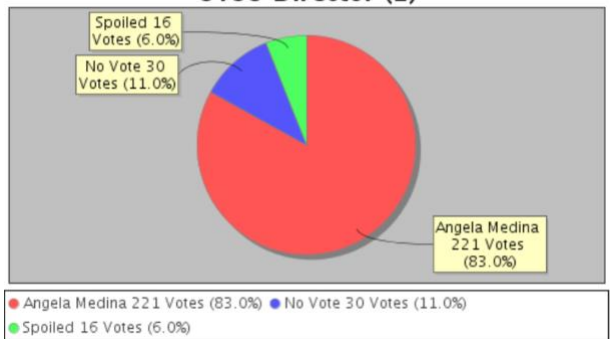
Sustainability Commissioner (1)



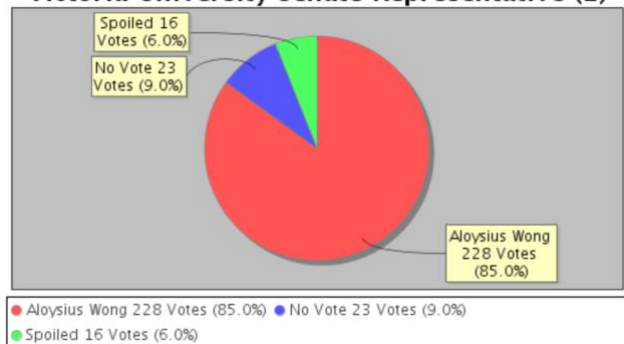
Councillors (8)



UTSU Director (1)



Victoria University Senate Representative (1)



Victoria College Council Representatives (6)

