



VUSAC Meeting Minutes

Call to order: 5:30 PM, January 15th 2021

Land Acknowledgement: Vedika Jha

Vedika: 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 most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. 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

Official Regrets:

Approval of minutes: *Motion by Jay to approve the minutes from December 4th, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Additions to the agenda:

Approval of the agenda: *Motion by Maggie to approve the agenda for January 15th, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Meeting link: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/97176254249>

Meeting ID: 971 7625 4249

[Meeting Procedures Infographic](#) **[VUSAC's Guide to Robert's Rules](#)**

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

President of Victoria University:

Dean's Office:

Board of Regents (Aminah): 5 minutes

Aminah: The BoR is a body that looks over admin to keep them accountable and is comprised of alumni and other notable community members. I sit on the Governance and University Affairs Committee. At the moment, The President's Office is very much leaning on Ontario updates to decide how to respond to COVID-19, but I personally think they should be a bit more proactive on this front. Over the summer, Vic's residences are usually used for summer camps and there was a question whether or not this could be used for affordable housing this summer but there hasn't been any movement on that. The Registrar and the Alumni Office are doing incredible work so far

this semester. The Registrar's Office responded to over 100 emails in a single day last semester from students so that shows the kind of dedication they have. In the data provided, you can see that a lot of students have reached out for help, so you are not alone if you yourself are needing support. The Alumni Office has been doing a lot of work fundraising and they have met their fundraising goal this year. A lot of the money that funds Vic's 'bougie' image comes from alumni. The President's Office has been doing a ton of work, but there is still room for student advocacy so please speak out if you feel that something needs addressing. They are here to address your concerns. Alumni are very impressed by Michelle's leadership around the BIPOC scholarship and they have a lot of respect for the work that student leaders are doing. This is such a good note to enter 2021 on and you are all doing such a good job in light of the circumstances. There has also been a lot of dialogue over the last year and a bit regarding the Caffiends space negotiations and renovations on campus. There's been a pattern in the past of the Dean's Office taking away space from students which is why the Property Committee is so important. Renovations have been paused due to COVID but the Caffiends space renegotiations are still running. The Finance Committee has been working on budgeting and salaries for the university and they have been running smoothly based on what I have seen. As a Vic student, you are more than welcome to attend a general board meeting if you are interested in seeing the governance behind some of Vic's most important bodies. Also please contact me if you have any questions!

Victoria College Council:

Victoria University Senate:

Campus Life Coordinator (Alero): 10 minutes

Alero: Don hiring is now open until January 31st and so are the Theater for Thought mentors; the applications for both can now be found on the Vic website. We also have a new BIPOC counsellor and her name is Shawnette! I will give you more information as she gets settled into the position, but I'll tell you right now that she's awesome and really welcoming. We've put Goldring Access on pause because of lockdown at the moment, so Goldring can only be accessed for absolutely necessary reasons. You can let me and Shiny know if you need the space and we'll try and sort something out. The Career Counsellor is holding a series coming up on career advising called the "Thinking Forward" series and more information can be found on the Vic Careers & Transition Out or Student Involvement & Success page. Something else I wanted to bring up is The Dream Job Academy, which is an art-based experimental career program for students with arts degrees. If that's something that you are interested in, it's open to all undergrad students and recently graduated students. We also hired a new Orientation Co-Chair! Hopefully we will have some more orientation updates throughout the semester.

ACTION ITEMS:

Motion by Tran Thai to ratify Erin Hill as the Orientation 2021 Co-Chair, seconded by Michelle Zhao. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Tran: In early December, I met with the Orientation committee and after the interview, we selected Erin as the new Orientation Co-Chair for 2021! We are excited to see what she will accomplish!

Alero: There was a very lucrative pool this year and it was very competitive, and Erin was a very compassionate and has a lot of great ideas about how to approach orientation in these unprecedented times. I am excited to work with her!

Motion by Tran Thai to ratify Tabina Ahmed as the Chief Returning Officer for Winter 2021, seconded by Michelle Zhao. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Tran: Over the winter break, we underwent hiring for two of our staff positions—Finance Chair and CRO—and we selected Tabina to be our new CRO. We believe that her personality and passion for the position makes her a great fit for the role! Additionally, we went through the redacted hiring process as we do with all staff members.

Tabina: I wanted to thank Tran for giving that speech! I am very excited to be here this year and work with the team! I hope that this semester is great!

Motion by Tran Thai to ratify Faye Tan as the Finance Chair for Winter 2021, seconded by Michelle Zhao. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Tran: We also did redacted hiring for this position and had multiple interviews. Faye is very accomplished and will make a great addition to the team this year!

Motion by Dorian DiTommaso to ratify Rachel Leggett as the 2020-2021 Mental Wellness Co-Chair seconded by Mehr (2 minutes). Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Dorian: All that Tran said about the redacted hiring process, we went through. We had 7 or 8 applicants that we interviewed, and Rachel's stood out due to her dedication to the role and her experience. I am very happy to have her on the team.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Questions for the BIPOC professional panel, put forth by Alexandra Kurtesi (6 minutes)

Alex; I wanted to ask you all some questions for the BIPOC professional panel that we have coming up. The Academic and Equity commissions are going to be hosting a BIPOC professional

panel and we already have two participants from prominent fields which is really exciting. This panel will be exploring important and prestigious professions and how they interconnect with BIPOC identity. I wanted to open this up to you to see if you have any questions that you would like these professionals to answer or if you had any suggestions about people who would be a good fit for joining the panel.

Alero: One of the things that I think is really important to talk about is something around the pressure of tokenization and feeling like you need to be the spokesperson for your identity. How they manage those feelings would be interesting to hear.

Vedika: I think that it should be a mix of positive questions too, like what do they feel are their biggest accomplishments or whether or not they've seen an improvement in workplace equity over the course of their careers.

Jerico: What are their professional fields?

Alex: One individual is a doctor and the other is a lawyer. We are still waiting on the other two.

Mehr: I am so excited about this panel! I think starting off with some 'negative' questions would be good but also talking about how racial inequality manifests in academia is another important discussion that I think should be had; rolling this into a discussion based around stigmas and affirmative action would also be interesting. I also think you should also ask about how students can find support within the academic community of BIPOC scholars.

Aminah: I think one thing that I would like to see is allyships within BIPOC academia and how to recruit non-BIPOC allies. I also have some people in mind about suggestions for scholars.

Alex: Sure, you can email me!

Jerico: It would be great to hear about their experience specifically as doctors and lawyers because those are degrees that BIPOC people have historically struggled to obtain due to structural inequities. It would be interesting to glean their insight from that.

Alero: Dr. Chika Stacy was the only black student in the medical class of 2020, and she was named Valedictorian so that's one of the reasons why she's coming. If that gives context.

Leila: I would be interested in hearing from people who are in different stages of their career. Talking to freshly graduated students and people who are in the early stages of their career is totally different than talking to someone who is well-established and I think it would be interesting to see the differences.

Tabina: Like what Leila said, I think it would be interesting to hear about how people have developed throughout their career and some of the beneficial events and experiences they've had in their career that have brought them to this point.

Alex: Thank you! That was really insightful! One of the two individuals we have coming to the panel is currently in a psychiatry residence and the other is a very experienced lawyer, but we will keep this discussion in mind!

ASSESSOR MEMBER REPORTS:

Vic UTSU Directors (Ava & Radhika):

Orientation Co-Chairs:

Victoria College Dons:

Constituent Organizations:

Cat's Eye: no report

Acta Victoriana: no report

Caffiends: no report

Student Projects: no report

The Strand: no report

VicXposure: no report

VicPride!: no report

VISA: no report

VCAA: no report

VCDS: no report

WUSC: no report

STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Returning Officer (Tabina):

Communications (Veronica):

Finance (Faye):

Office Manager (Holly):

Chair (Zoe):

COMMISSION REPORTS:

Academic (Nerija & Cathy): 5 minutes

Nerija: You may already know this but in less than two weeks, we will be having our biggest event of the year: Networking Night! This is an hour and a half long event, and we have lots and lots of different careers represented. We also are going to be having a panel at the end of the night with some of the professionals who will be joining us. It is difficult to encompass everyone's dream job in only 19 alumni, but these alumni went into a lot of different fields than the degree that they got so it's also a lesson in flexibility. Also, tell your friends we are going to have a draw for 15 \$30 Uber Eats gift cards! Cathy might mention this, but we are also going to be posting infographics about how to network on our Instagram in the weeks leading up to the event.

Tran: When and where is the event again?

Nerija: It is Wednesday January 27th from 5-7:30pm! It's a beautiful day to come meet some industry professionals

Cathy: I wanted to add that there are going to be multiple breakout rooms that you can freely move between so you can talk to as many people as you want!

Arts & Culture (Jenny):

Equity (Lulu & Sooyeon):

Mental Wellness (Dorian & Rachel):

Scarlet & Gold (Fatima): 5 minutes

Fatima: Next week we are hosting 2021 Winterfest, and this is the first time since 2019 that we've hosted it! I have been inviting you to all the events so please click 'Going' if you can. Essentially, the events run from Monday to Friday and they all start at 7pm except for the Arcade Night which starts at 7:30 because of the VUSAC meeting that same night. Monday is a Comedy Night, Tuesday is a Movie Night, Wednesday is Trivia Night, Thursday is Dress Your Pet Day, and Friday is Arcade Night. Arcade Night was really successful in the fall and it was really fun. I would ask for you all to share and invite people and your friends to the event page! We are also going to need help with Trivia Night and Arcade Night so let us know if you can help with that.

Nathan: I just wanted to say congrats to Fatima with all the planning on this! It took a lot of hard work!

Fatima: Thank you! Also, if you don't have a pet, you can dress up anything... like vegetables.

Sustainability (Leila & Jerico): 5 minutes

Leila: We've extended the deadline for the event collaboration that we are going to be having with Emmanuel. We are accepting artwork around the theme of Eco Greif and we are going to have a panel of interfaith leaders to provide feedback and talk about general theme. The deadline is January 20th and students who submit will receive an honorarium. We are planning an Environmental Equity week with the Equity Committee which will be held from the end of February to the beginning of March. We're going to have a few speaker events and then some more hands-on events that might be asynchronous or synchronous. The sustainability policy is coming and updates on that will come soon. We are also going to be working more on divestment campaigns and I've been working with some groups from around U of T to create a policy that student groups can incorporate into their constitutions. There has also been quite a bit of progress around Vic Zero. We closed signatures a few weeks ago and we have been meeting with various heads of administration to discuss this and figure out what's going on with the project. We had around 130 individual signatures and a few endorsements from student groups like ASSU and the UTSU. You can also still sign it if you want to!

Jerico: Sign Vic Zero please! Some of the other authors aren't here but it is a really well-done report that deserves recognition.

Motion by Tran to recess for 5 minutes, seconded by Maggie. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Commuter (Rheannon & Aya):

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

VP External (Mehr): 5 minutes

Mehr: Congrats to all the new members of council! I am so excited to work with you all and to see all the work that's been done on council so far. The International Counsellor couldn't give an update, so I'll give you her updates. She worked really hard to set up the International Student Survey which was aiming at compiling data specifically about international students at Vic that we can use for advocacy work. We are also planning for her to do an Instagram takeover soon and she's been having meetings with Brigita, the International Student Dean. I am also hoping to increase student engagement this year with a monthly VUSAC Town Hall after feedback we got from Caucus. I've been talking about this idea with the UCLIT who does town hall-style meetings very frequently. Alero and I have also been talking about dates for Crescam awards, again, more details for that later but nominations will come up in February. The dates for Caucus or Town Hall haven't been set yet. Also, I put together a Caucus Survey but very few people filled it out so there wasn't much information that I was able to implement from that. The Internal Equity survey is going to be finalized soon and will be sent out to this year's council first. I've also been working on the Mapping Project with Aloysius. I've also been trying to increase transparency within the different governing bodies at Vic and improve dissemination of information. I also want to make DSC meetings more transparent. Caffiends space negotiations are underway and I'll be having a meeting about that later this month. If you have the means to donate to the BIPOC scholarship, please do or share it with friends who might be able to!

VP Internal (Tran): 3 minutes

Tran: Winter Office Hours will be beginning next week so please send me your schedule if you haven't already. Please be there at your first slot next week! Retreat for the winter semester will only be one day. I'm considering two possible dates for that, but I will let you know later what I decide. Retreat is an internal VUSAC workshop that helps train members and increase bonding between students to help empower them to be good student leaders. The Governing Documents are undergoing review for the second year in a row! Thank you to everyone who is working on that! We will be bringing up amendments starting in the next couple weeks so keep an eye out for that. VUSAC meetings and dates have been posted on Facebook so please click 'Going' and put them all in your calendar. Also, all our commissioners and co-chairs has been putting in such excellent work this year so please attend those events if you can! Please reach out to me if you need anything!

VP Student Organizations (Jay):

President (Michelle): 10 minutes

Michelle: The BIPOC Student Leadership Award page is open! If you are able to donate, please do! Any contribution is welcome. Right now, our fundraising goal is \$25,000 and we have already raised \$1,275. We have received information that we have a very generous Vic alumnus who has said that they will match donations up to \$12,500. We are also being matched by Victoria University so a donation of \$1 is equivalent to \$4! I was informed by Louise Yearwood that she

has been contacted by two separate donors who are interested in creating scholarships in their own names for BIPOC students. As some of you might know, the fall cheque requisitions are due tonight by midnight so please get those in ASAP. We also have a Fall 2020 Reflection Survey out now and we only have one response so far so please fill it out and share with your friends! I think it would be awesome for us to have Vic-specific data for the pandemic response. The BIPOC award fundraiser is going to need your help to get that off the ground. We have a very exciting collab coming your way so stay tuned for that. Also, we are going to be working on a Vic College Student Leader Handbook in the next couple months. The idea is that this will be an online document for incoming and current leaders and will be a guide for how governance at Vic and U of T works. I'm expecting it to be a very chill commitment but if you're interested please let me know! There are some other projects that I'll talk about later in the semester. We have a budget ratification meeting next week on the 22nd at 5:30 so please be there. The final budget will be posted on Monday so be sure look through that before the meeting. I will also be hosting my internal office hours just like last semester and my dates will be week-by-week. Please come hangout with me! If you have any ideas or questions, please let me know!

Motion by Tran to add a Board of Regents update for 5 minutes, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

(Read report above)

Motion by Tran to adjourn, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.

- Favour: all
- Opposed: none
- Abstained: none

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM.