VUSAC Meeting Agenda

**Call to order:** 5:40 pm EST, October 29th, 2021

**Land Acknowledgement:**

*Shane*

*We would like to acknowledge that Toronto and the land on which the University of Toronto operates is the traditional territories of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. This place is now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and is also home to a diverse population of people including settlers, immigrants and refugees. It is our duty to honour these treaties of the territories we live in and work with the original stewards of this land in good faith to care for this land we now share.*

**Official Regrets:**

*Kayla Man(Proxied by Jerico Raguindin), Malhaar Moharir, Dixshant Shreemal(Proxied by Tabina Ahmed) Kate Haberl(Proxied by Sooyeon Lee)*

**Absent:**

**Approval of minutes:**

*Motion by Sooyeon Lee to approve the minutes for October 15th, Seconded by Tabina Ahmed*

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

**Additions to the agenda:**

**Approval of the agenda:**

*Motion by Sooyeon Lee to approve the agenda for October 29th, Seconded by Tabina Ahmed*

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

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to grant Ali Kehl speaking rights, seconded by Tabina Ahmed*

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

*Campus Life Coordinator, put forth by Ali Kehl (3 minutes)*

Ali: I have a couple of updates today. For those who don’t know, our VSEF is up and live. This form will allow you to hold in-person events, meetings, initiatives etc. It is a super easy process to which some of your fellow VUSAC members have gone through. We also have our December 6th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women coming up. This is something I plan in collaboration with the VPE and the Equity Commission. If any of you are interested please let me know as we would love to have you involved. We had Student Leader Day this week, so thank you to those who came. For those of you who were not able to attend, I highly encourage you to review the PowerPoint presentation I sent out. Orientation Co-Chair applications are coming out next week. This year you cannot hold two positions at once, but if you know anyone interested, I will be having information sessions. Finally, a reminder to please take care of yourselves with this being such a busy time for you student leaders.

ACTION ITEMS:

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to ratify MEDiversity as a VUSAC-recognized club for the 2021-2022 school year as it appears in Appendix A, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Jerico: I am filling in for Kate today as she has sent in her regrets. MEDiversity was a club last year and Kate has read their application and has put them forward for ratification.

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

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to ratify MEDiversity’s Fall 2021 budget as it appears in Appendix B, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Jerico: We are ratifying budgets for clubs and commissions for those who did not meet the deadline last meeting. Please do look at the appendix where you can see their budget. If you have any questions or concerns, we can raise them, make amendments etc; otherwise, we can just ratify the budget.

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

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to ratify the Fall VUSAC Budget as it appears in Appendix C, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (15 minutes)*

Jerico: This is a different motion but the same budget ratification. For some a club, some additional executive budgets and the additional budget for the event that just got approved today. We also have some commissions because their commissioners had not yet been elected. Since this is a large budget, I will share my screen so that we can review any additions that have been made.

*Victoria Environmental Fashion Show*

Jerico: For those who don’t know VEFS is a longstanding club that hosts a fashion show modelled by students, designed by students to promote sustainability, reusing and creativity.

Helen: Compared to last year, we do have a larger budget request because we are having an in-person show if circumstances allow and I would love it if you would consider our budget.

*Equity Commission*

Cam: I think that the budget does speak for itself. I am excited to get started on our events for this year and just the overall redistribution because our spending will be going directly back to students.

Psalm: Some of the bigger things that we have allocated money for are things like an Independent Projects Fund to allow members to conduct their own equity consultations/projects if they would like to. We have a large amount for student consultations specifically, so that would be interacting with students and getting their thoughts on equity-related issues while honouring the time and labour being put in.

*Arts and Culture Commission*

Alyssa: It is known that we put on the production of The Bob, so a lot of the budget items are allocated for that. There are other budget items for the commission are for an event we hope to host in December and to get feedback from students on the type of programming they would be interested in.

*President*

Jerico: I have added the budget for the event that we will be having on November 5th, which we titled “Vic Paints A Mural.” I budgeted under my position since it was a VUSAC-wide event that we collaborated on.

*VPI*

Tabina: The budget that we have is for the trainers that came to retreat. We initially thought that it would be $100 each, but it is now $200 each.

Jerico: For context, last year’s honoraria was $500 for all the training that we had. This year’s amount is around the same and is for the benefit of VUSAC members to get trained on equity-related sources and mental wellness advocacy.

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

*UofT Divestment and Administration Accountability, put forth by Jerico Raguindin (10 minutes)*

Jerico: I wanted to allow people to have the opportunity to speak on the matter if they would like to. President Gertler announced that UofT will be divesting all direct fossil fuel funds investments within the year and any fossil fuel investments within their endowment rate upwards of $4 billion by 2030. You can read the letter that he sent out to the student body or the summarized article published by The Varsity. He does say that the evidence for climate change is now incontrovertible; however, I wanted to let the record show that it has been for fifty years. I wanted to extend this conversation to bigger administrative accountability as divestment work on this campus traces back decades. If we had divested back in 2016 with the coalition of students, faculty, staff and professors we would be halfway done. If anyone wants to work with me on drafting a letter, please say so now or you can reach out to me whenever.

Cam: I wanted to say thank you to Jerico and everyone that has done a lot of work to get this to happen. I think it’s important to remember that because Vic is a federated college, we continue to invest in fossil fuels. I hope that this is a sign for the BOR that if university administration can do it, then so can we.

Jerico: Yes, since we are a federated college we do have investments, endowments, pension plans, and assets that are not controlled by the University of Toronto Asset Management (UTAM).

*Burwash Dining Hall, put forth by Jerico Raguindin (15 minutes)*

Jerico: A lot of issues have been taken up with Burwash and I wanted to take this time to highlight the issues that students are identifying. It is quite multifaceted and requires a lot of teamwork or commissions. I know the equity commission is doing consultations as well as the cultural implications to the food being served. A news article was released on The Strand about the implications of how Burwash is being served this year and the sustainability concerns.

Psalm: Thank you for opening up the floor. Cam and I were inspired by The Strand article that discussed the ways that Burwash and residence meal plans enable disordered eating. We originally wanted to gather students together with the presence of a group therapist/active listener to voice their concerns. We shifted this to start off with a feedback form so students can quantify the effects that the meal plan has had on their eating habits. We would include a resource list of eating disorder-specific resources. At the end of the survey, we would gauge first-year students’ interests in a peer support program for eating disorders. We’re open to folks who are interested in collaborating or folks that have concerns/interests that they think we should be addressing/adding to the way we roll out this specific form of support.

Tazneen: I have been living on residence for three years now. The food before was good, not great but good. This year there has been a significant decline in taste and the amount of food that is being given. Some people find that not enough food is being given and others find that it is too much. A lot of students, not only international students, are not finding it worthwhile to go to Burwash to eat since the food is bad. Maybe we could suggest spices to have on-site for students to use? There are quite a few issues that we need to discuss, especially with the ticketing system.

Rebecca: I wanted to touch on the sustainability front of this all. The amount of waste that Burwash is generating is a huge issue. Even if you are eating in the dining hall, there is no compost bin so everyone is throwing away all of the packagings into the garbage. There is a lot of waste from the packaging and the food since there is no compost been and even the ticketing system since the tickets aren’t being reused. I think there can be a lot of improvement with the waste being accumulated and the extra food that remains at the end.

Cam: I wanted to ask everyone who has spoken to please fill out the survey when it is released. From speaking to students, one of the other concerns raised was the hours of Burwash. Students who don’t eat during conventional times are spending a lot of money getting food elsewhere and I have also heard of instances where students are being kicked out of line who lined up before 7:30 PM. Thank you for sharing that because I think it has illustrated the faults and that there is a lot for us to work on.

Rebecca: I do agree that the hours are a huge issue, particularly for students who have late classes/practice as they are being forced to spend money on food outside of Burwash.

Julie: I also have been living on Rez for the past three years. Last year there was always someone at the checkout for you to get extra sides or extra food and you could spend your Vic Dollars on that. However, there is no one outside this year to do that. I think that there is a lot of guilt that they will say no about certain things. I loved living on Rez my first year, especially for the food. If I didn’t want to eat a ridiculous amount of rice I didn’t have to and I could get more dumplings instead. I think there is a lot of fear by customization because they will say no and the fact that students aren’t allowed to order extra food. I think that a lot could be done, especially where mental health is considered.

Jackson: I just wanted to reiterate what other students were saying. With regards to the ticketing system, I think it is very inconvenient. For myself, I prefer to eat more during lunch and less at night, but the tickets give me more during lunch and less at night. I now have a lot of extra dinner tickets that are stockpiling in my drawer that I can’t use during any other time throughout the day. The same thing with the time inconvenience. Sometimes I am running through Queens Park late at night to try and make the dinner time cutoff. The biggest issue I want to say is sustainability i.e. the amount of trash that’s being built up. The inside dining is a bit of a joke because everything is still plastic so there’s no benefit to dining inside other than the in-person interactions. One good thing that I do want to say is that they do “try” to do their part. Any salads that are leftover from the week/previous day will be available as sides instead of as a full meal.

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to extend the discussion, seconded by Sooyeon Lee (5 minutes)*

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

Jerico: Thank you everyone for your contributions. I think we should consult with other resident students, particularly building presidents, to speak to them about their experiences. We can formalize this more with formal consultation meetings and accessible surveys to try to gather student feedback. For the Equity Commission, I love that you’re considering the mental wellness of the students. I don’t live on Rez, but I would love to help facilitate your work so we can see this through.

*Calendar and Postering, put forth by Jerico Raguindin (10 minutes)*

Jerico: We want to create a calendar where it is a central resource for students to be able to see. One will be on the website, which will be more up-to-date, but we would also like printed copies around campus. To make sure that everything is on there, please send any events, meetings etc that you are hosting to Anne.

Anne: I wanted to say that I sent out an email on Wednesday containing the link for the form. You can also find it on the first page of the VUSAC website under the calendar.

STAFF REPORTS:

*Update, put forth by Anne Huynh (3 minutes)*

Anne: I had two quick updates. I sent out an email to everyone on the council about semi-annual reports. It is super important that you read the email and submit it by the deadline on November 12th. I have included the word limits, what you can write about and links to past reports if you need some inspiration. My second announcement is that Kayla and I are planning a listening party for Taylor Swifts’ new rerecorded album. We are hoping to collaborate with Vic Records and have it online sometime throughout the week after reading week. We will just be listening to the album and having Kahoot games with prizes for the winners.

COMMISSION REPORTS:

*VOCA Update, put forth by Mary Cortiñas (5 minutes)*

Mary: The commuter commission is in the midst of planning an in-person Home for the Holidays. Our request is under process right now and it is a take on the Toronto Christmas Market. It would be on November 25th from 4-7 pm if it gets approved. We wanted to invite all the Commissions and Levies to collaborate with us where we would give you a table at the event and you could promote your own activities, events etc. We will be sending out a formal email asking for collaboration within the next few days.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

*VPI: Tabina Ahmed (10 minutes)*

Tabina: My first update is regarding policy reviews. We have three documents that need to be reviewed: The ERC, The Council Policies and The Consitution. I will want to assign a few individuals to sit on each of the respective review committees. If you are interested, please email me and let me know how you would like to join. The Consitution is like our mission statement. It is a thorough summary of the responsibilities of VUSAC members to better represent the VCU and improve their student experiences. The Council Policies are all the policies that VUSAC members should follow in accordance with The Constitution. The ERC is the guide for the CRO and EAC. It serves as an encyclopedia to future candidates from the VCU on how to act and conduct everything appropriately during the elections period. I highly encourage people to come forth and participate in the review committees. My next update regards Councillor assignments which we want to make happen shortly. I know that the Commissions could use the extra set of hands with event planning and initiative planning. Jerico and I have acquired all your responses regarding preferred portfolios. Keep a lookout for an email from me within the next week. I also want to hold check-ins in the upcoming November month. I would like for every council member to dedicate 20-30 minutes of their time to talk to me during that time, so keep a lookout for that. My last update regards the Discord server and how one of our members was unable to join the server. I was wondering if anyone else is having this issue?

Jerico: The link does expire after a few days for security measures.

Ali: You can set a discord link to never expire in your settings.

Tabina: Okay well thank you for that and I will look into it.

Jerico: I just wanted to touch on the document review, that you don’t need to know anything about the documents. You will all get together, deconstruct it, rebuild it back, and learn as you go.

*President: Jerico Raguindin (5 minutes)*

Jerico: I wanted to talk about the event that we’re hosting on November 5th. If anyone has any questions on how to fill out the form and things to be aware of, you can talk to me, Ali or even Mary.

Mary: Just to add on, you can reach out to me. Ali is a great help and it’s not too bad once you get started.

*Motion: Sooyeon Lee motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded Tabina Ahmed*

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

*Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.*