



Victoria University Students' Administrative Council

150 Charles St. West, Room 127

(416)585-4473

www.vusac.ca | fb.com/vusacuoft

VUSAC Meeting Minutes

Call to order: 5:30 PM, September 18th, 2020

Land Acknowledgement: Mehr

Mehr: 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 and learn on this land. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Official Regrets: --

Approval of minutes: Motion by Tran, seconded by Nerija

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

Additions to the agenda: Board of Regents (Aminah Attar)

Approval of the agenda: Motion by Michelle, seconded by Jay

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

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

Campus Life Coordinator (Alero): --

Dean of Students: --

President of Victoria University: --

Vic UTSU Directors (Ava & Radhika): --

ACTION ITEMS:

Motion: Hannah Ahamed motions to ratify the Student Projects Fund advisory board, seconded by Jenny (5 minutes) [Appendix A]

Jay: Hannah couldn't be here so I will speak on this motion for her. Hannah is the student projects chair and therefore has a right to move motions at VUSAC meetings. This advisory board is within student projects as a levy, it is responsible for student applications from students who would like to fund projects that will benefit the entire Vic community. They hire students as part of the commission. Scott Johnson is the representative from the Dean of Students. There is explanation as to why each appointee was chosen.

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

Motion: Jay Muoio motions to ratify Art for Awareness as a VUSAC recognized club for the 2020-21 school year, seconded by Mehr (3 minutes) [Appendix B]

Jay: Art for Awareness applied for VUSAC club recognition and they meet all VUSAC requirements. They are brand new club. In the appendix you can see what they included in their application; they also have a website where you can read a bit more about them artsforawareness.org. They also want to raise money for Black Lives Matter and COVID relief issues. I recommend them as a VUSAC recognized club for the year.

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

Motion: Jay Muoio motions to ratify the 2020-21 Budget Steering Policy as it appears in Appendix C, seconded by Leila (10 minutes) [Appendix C]

Jay: The Budget Steering Policy has to be ratified by council annually and it guides how we accept budget requests and how VUSAC goes about budgeting. This policy was based off of past policies and was brought to the committee to draft. This is not a governing document because it was not ratified by the whole council yet, but it will be an official policy. It's a policy that VUSAC ratifies for budgeting purposes. I hope all members have read the policy.

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

Motion: Nerija Gray motions to ratify Cathy Guan as Academic Co-Chair, seconded by Tran Thai (3 minutes)

Nerija: So basically, we did hiring for the academic co-chair in June. We had lots of candidates and we had several interviews. We settled with Cathy; she was an outstanding candidate. She's a great choice, she's been great for this position.

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

Motion: Tran Thai motions to ratify Sooyeon Lee as Equity Co-Chair, seconded by Michelle Zhao (3 minutes)

Tran: Hello everyone, we have an equity co-chair, Soo! The hiring panel consisted of myself, Michelle, Vibhuti, a Vic residence member and a Vic commuter. The residence and commuter reps were added to this year's panel because we want to make our hiring equitable. We elected Soo and we're going to ratify her now!

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

Motion: Tran Thai motions to release the presidential honoraria of \$8000, seconded by Mehr Mukhtar (3 minutes) [Appendix D]

Tran: Michelle has been working very hard this past summer. You can see her working hours in the appendix if you're curious. I'll pass it over to Michelle for her to speak on what she has done over this summer.

Michelle: Much of this summer was meetings with senior admin at U of T, council members, and exec meetings every single week. A lot of this was about COVID and the university/VUSAC response to COVID. The reason why we had so many meetings was because the information we had around the COVID response was constantly changing. I hope that the work that we've done and the deliverables that we've been able to impose can really speak to that work.

All in favour. Michelle abstains. None opposed. Motion passes.

Motion: Michelle Zhao motions to approve the addition of VUSAC's signature on the Statement on the University of Toronto's COVID Response, Student Supports, and Fall 2020 Semester Plans, seconded by Jay (10 minutes) [Appendix E]

Michelle: One of the things I've been working on is crafting this statement to the U of T and the Vice Provost Office regarding the response/lack of response that the university has had for students regarding issues upcoming this fall. We also made other demands and suggestions that will hopefully make student life better. You can find this in appendix E. We want to add VUSAC's signatures, so we'll need council to vote on it. Once we collect our signatures, we will bring it to the St. George Round Table (SGRT) and ask them to support it as well. The plan is to bring this all to the Vice Provost's Office in a meeting with the International Students Advocacy Network, ISA. We hope to bring all these demands for change.

Jay: I also want to say that it is extremely important that you've read through the statement. Because if VUSAC signs this, it means that the wording of the statement is something that you support. As an elected member, it is something you should read.

Leila: I have two questions about this. The first one is that some of the demands are asking for fee and tuition reductions. If this is being presented to admin after we have paid, will these be "refunds"? Secondly, does the SGRT also support... there was a survey of the workers' union that was being circulated, it was asking for the start of the semester to be delayed and better workers'

protection. Do you know anything about that since this seems to be centered around student-specific support?

Michelle: Yes, it is a little late for the statement to be coming out because we spent the last three or so weeks writing it. For every group that signs on to it, we need to go through the constitutional process and that takes time. What we're hoping is that the university and the Vice Provost Office will look at our concerns and make changes retroactively. For the second question, I'm not sure, but it is something that we can explore.

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

Motion: Mehr Mukhtar motions to approve the Climate Strike Statement by VUSAC, seconded by Leila (5 minutes) [Appendix F]

Mehr: This is the statement that we came up with regarding the Global Climate Strike on September 25, 2020 to demonstrate VUSAC's commitment to climate justice and initiating conversation within the community. Jerico worked on this statement along with Aminah Attar. I want to acknowledge all the work Jerico did. We are choosing not to endorse the in-person strike, but we will be supporting the virtual strike activities. We are prioritizing the safety of all Vic students, as well as accessibility. If you have any questions, please ask.

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Open space for online office concerns, put forth by Michelle Zhao (10 minutes)

Michelle: As a lot of you know, the VUSAC office will be closed for the fall semester. This was a difficult decision to make. Unfortunately, we felt that the danger to our community was too much and we want to prioritize safety but not sacrifice student life and events. I know there may be some concerns, so this is a space for anyone to bring up any concerns.

Leila: The only question I have is, are there going to be any opportunities to hold sales? For example, at the start of second semester last year, we did a Diva cup sale. If there are any giveaways or sales, is there a way to do this on campus, or will this have to be shipped and mailed?

Rheannon: Just adding on to Leila's question, what is the safest way for VUSAC to give away any Vic products and merch?

Tran: Basically, right now we have to go through Shiny who works at the Dean's Office because she is monitoring access to the Goldring. Any VUSAC members who want to go into the office should email me and we'll work it out with Shiny.

Michelle: With in-person sales or merch giveaways, and just accessing the VUSAC office, any answer I give right now may change in the next two or so weeks. The safest way to do that right now is to not have in-person sales. We are having discussions with the Dean's Office, student levy

heads, and clubs to see what the best way is to continue their operations without putting other students at risk.

Dorian: Planning my budget is kind of a nightmare because I can't foresee costs for certain things. I don't know how to budget for most of my events this year because many of the events that I was planning on hosting relied on giveaways and that kind of thing. The Dean's Office been an abomination in terms of its communication with student leaders and it's not helpful.

Michelle: Regarding the mailing cost, I have included shipping in the Presidential budget. We can arrange for that. The situation is definitely evolving so we will see what we can do about that.

Divestment Canada Letter of Support, put forth by Mehr Mukhtar (10 minutes)

Mehr: This is an open letter; I will pass it on to Leila if you'd like to add a bit more to that.

Leila: Divest Canada Coalition is a Canada-wide coalition of universities calling on our institutions to divest. It includes most big Canadian universities, including universities have already divested. This letter calls for three things: (1) to divest from the past, (2) to reject false solutions, (3) to invest in the future (the "just recovery" framework). The website that I linked allows individuals to sign the letter. There are about 500 signatures currently. I think it's important for VUSAC to start supporting movements that call for divestment because Vic has a large endowment and the last divestment movement sort of fizzled. I think if any further calls to action on the Board of Regents to genuinely divest from fossil fuels, I think it's important that VUSAC start to demonstrate support for broader initiatives such as this. Both of the commission we are connected to that ESG have not made concrete moves to divestment. We are thinking of writing an endorsement letter to bring up to the next VUSAC meeting.

Mehr: I just wanted to add something about the ESG framework. Like Leila mentioned, this is not operating under the proper frameworks and they don't actually lead to greater standards. I just wanted to express my support for VUSAC coming out with a divestment platform and support for this letter.

Leila: To quickly add on to that, if you open that link, you'll see a list of signatories. Right now, at Divestment and Beyond, which is a student and faculty lead team calling for divestment, and numerous other groups at U of T have all signed on to this letter. We are actually part of the drafting team as well which is another good reason for VUSAC to support this.

ASSESSOR MEMBER REPORTS:

Constituent Organizations:

Acta Victoriana: no report

Caffiends: no report

Cat's Eye: 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

Governing Bodies:

Board of Regents:

Victoria College Council:

Victoria University Senate:

STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Returning Officer (Vibhuti): 5 minutes

Vibhuti: Hi everyone, I hope you're all doing well. I am here to check in about elections. I like to say shout out to all those who have submitting applications forms who are in this meeting right now. Based on our conversations from July in our VUSAC meeting then, the exec and I decided that what was best going forward was to put one signature for candidates to get their nomination. It worked out well, while first years still had questions, overall, I was available so people could ask questions and get those signatures. Overall, we have 21 candidates for the upcoming elections between all three positions available. We've had three info sessions, along with Mehr, Tran, and Michelle and we had between 5-15 people per session. My email has been blowing up because a lot of people have been interested. Now, the All Candidates Meeting will be starting tonight at 8pm. After that, we will start our elections cycle until next Friday. Town Hall is next Friday, 6-9 on Zoom. VUSAC members are highly recommended to come and ask candidates questions about their platform. Invite people to the VUSAC forum as well and please join! We will be releasing graphics about voting. We are a little bit nervous about the voting turn out due to the nature of this election (online). Silent period is September 30th to October 1st. On October 2nd, we will release the results. In two weeks, we will have our full council. If you have any questions about being a neutral party, this is the time to ask! Just as a reminder, you can only "like" a candidate's post and please don't comment. If you're asking a question on the online forum, make sure you like or not like all posts. Just try to not to engage in any endorsement-like activities. Also, in-person campaigning will lead to disqualification this year because of COVID. We are quite serious about it because we want to make sure this is an equitable election! I'd love to clarify any questions.

Alexandra Johnston: I was just wondering if Board of Regents' reps is a neutral party or not?

Vibhuti: Yes, they definitely are. VCC, Board of Regents are all considered neutral parties. We will be a bit more flexible on that to make up on our mistakes.

Communications (Veronica): --

Finance (Ralph): --

Office Manager (Holly): --

Chair (Zoe): --

COMMISSION REPORTS:

Academic (Nerija & Cathy): 3 minutes

Nerija: This is a quick update. We're hiring execs for our commission. Last time I counted we had 9 applications. We released a survey which closed on Wednesday which got quite a few responses. We will ship the prizes out to the winners. I'm excited to start the year!

Arts & Culture (Jenny): --

Commuter (Rheannon & Aya): 5 minutes

Rheannon: Hello everybody, it's so great to see you all. Just a quick update, we're hiring 2 first year reps. Applications are closing on the 22nd and we already have 5-6 applications. On September 12th, we collaborated with the Mental Wellness commission for our Commuter Open House which was a really great time! On the 22nd, we have our first trivia night in collaboration with the Commuter Dons and we have 9 prizes of \$25 Uber Eats gift card. On Saturday the 26th, we will have a collaboration with the International Mentors, which is an online tour of Evergreen Brickworks. It will be an online video tour. Now onto our giveaways, we had almost 200 entries for our Back to School giveaway because the post was shared on the U of T wide bookstore Instagram account, we had to make sure all students who got the prize were Vic students. We had our first weekly grocery store gift card giveaway which is sort of a replacement for pancake brunches. Also, we released a beginning of the year survey and we had some great feedback! That's the gist of what we've been doing.

Vibhuti: Just a comment, I think the grocery store giveaway is really innovative.

Equity (Sooyeon): --

Mental Wellness (Dorian): --

Scarlet & Gold (Fatima): 2 minutes

Fatima: Hope you're all doing well, just wanted to give you an update on the commission. We have released the "More Scarlet, More Gold" survey to get some feedback on what students expect from us this year. As you know the S&G commission is a social gathering commission, so it's been quite compromised this year by COVID. I want to host some small online events this year because people really want the opportunity to meet other people. You can also get a chance to win merch if you fill out our survey. Highball refunds are almost done. That's about it. If you guys have any questions, let me know.

Sustainability (Leila & Jerico): 5 minutes

Leila: I have a quick update on what we've been doing in the past 2 months and what we're hoping to do in the upcoming months. An update on the sustainability policy, I've been working on that with Mehr. We conducted a survey that got a fair amount of responses so, we'll start drafting a

policy based on that and hopefully we will have something ready for the next council meeting. If anyone has any concerns about the policy, feel free to email me. All our execs are now hired. We also closed our first-year apps so I'm excited to fill up those positions soon. For our recruitment event, me and Jerico hosted a meet and greet which wasn't super well attended. In terms of events, we hope to collaborate with Mental Wellness. We are replacing our Doc and Talks with a discussion club, as well as running some cooking workshops throughout the semester. Now onto Vic Zero. For those of you who don't know, Vic Zero is a student led collective that's now a committee of the Sustainability Commission. We are attempting to create concrete action and policy that we can present to the university. We want the Board of Regents and President's Office to approve of this report and we want to make sure that all sustainability efforts over the next several years fits into the broader vision of what sustainability means to students instead of it being ad hoc. Right now, we are finalizing the first draft of that report. We hope to have that presented to the Board of Regents and presidents office within the next month or so. If you have questions or are interested in getting involved, please let me know.

Board of Regents: 5 minutes

Aminah Attar: This year, I, Aloysius Wong, Vibhuti Kacholia and Alexandra Johnston are the student representatives on the board. The Board of Regents is an oversight body for all the things that go on at Vic. Essentially our positions require us to ask a lot of questions. Our aim is to put them on the spot and make them accountable. Let us know what your concerns are and we'll bring it up to admin. Property, investment, finance decisions all happen on the board so if you have any questions surrounding that, please let us know. My concerns this year that I've brought up to the Board have been about equity, bursaries, scholarships, sustainability, student engagement and student voice.

*Motion from Vibhuti to extend Board of Regents discussion by 5 minutes, seconded by Leila.
Motion passes*

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

Vibhuti: Most of the meeting was about academic expenses. It was really interesting to see the finance loss due to COVID, as well as going forward because it's not a one-year kind of thing. We want to make sure that student jobs and engagement aren't being cut from the budget. We are there to make sure that every decision being made financially at Vic are for the benefit of all Vic students. They propose to meet every two weeks instead of every two months which is a big change. The urgency is due to COVID so they can change their response faster this year. We want to bring in investment managers at Vic for a student seminar and hopefully that would give a space for us to ask questions about how they're ensuring sustainability.

Alexandra Johnston: I've been on the finance board for three years. My points are just echoing Vibhuti's and Aminah's points about sustainability. Last year, we were making some progress but then the ESG discussions got contentious towards the end. Message me if you want any information!

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

VP External (Mehr): 5 minutes

Mehr: Dean's advisory meetings have been taking place all summer. They're continuing on a weekly basis in the fall. Regarding the make-up of the meeting, moving on, they will be theme-based in the future which will be helpful in terms of guiding conversation. They're still in the process of hiring a BIPOC counsellor which hopefully they'll have done by the 3rd week of October. They're also working with the UTSU to provide housing for residence students who want to remain on campus over the winter break. Study spaces on campus are still being considered. For Goldring and Pratt, we are still determining capacities. U of T's SGDO (Sexual & Gender Diversity Office) Queer Orientation event is next week and the event itself is a trivia and documentary screening event. We are having a queer orientation through VUSAC, since VicPride! is currently hiring execs. Also, I've been working with UTERN, which is an environmental group who has been working on delivering food boxes for students who require food. Unfortunately, there are limitations on where these boxes can be delivered. I think right now the limitation is Fort Union to a couple kilometres into Mississauga. Additionally, there have been anti-racism panels held every week in collaboration with VicBlack since mid-summer. They are having a conference in November. We want to do a series of workshops on microaggressions, anti-Chinese racism, and other discriminatory practices on Vic campus. The reason why we are doing this is because we want to make VUSAC accountable. This work should be on-going and continuous. Another thing that is happening are Crescams and those awards should hopefully be mailed out soon. We're also starting an anti-sexual violence campaign this fall since reporting has become more difficult in the online world.

VP Internal (Tran): 5 minutes

Tran: We hired Soo as our Equity Co-Chair! Council members, please continue to check your emails. Meeting packages should be read so please come prepared! For anyone accessing Goldring, we don't have keys right now. Over the summer, we have contacted Alero (CLC) to get into the space but we are currently in negotiations for altering that. As it stands, you can contact Shiny if you need to get in. For levies please let me know if you need access to the space. Any VUSAC members, levy heads or club reps accessing the VUSAC office or Clubs Storage need to notify me and CC me in the email to Shiny so we can keep track of who's entering/exiting the VUSAC spaces. Retreat is happening October 17-18th on Zoom, this is mandatory so please put that in your calendars now. SVPC workshop will be held on October 23rd 3-4:30 pm, since their U of T office is closed on weekends. Since the VUSAC office will be closed this upcoming semester, online drop-in office hours will be held instead. Please sign up via email. Also, budgets are due this Monday and if you need an extension ask Ralph. One last point on neutrality (re: fall elections): council members, it is imperative that you remain a neutral party. You are at the mercy of the disciplinary actions of the exec if you don't obey these rules so please be aware of this!

VP Student Organizations (Jay): 5 minutes

Jay: First of all, the clubs fair happened during orientation. I was there and we had over 200 attendees at one point, so it was quite a big turnout! Moving on from there, the Student Projects

Advisory Board which is now officially ratified, had a meeting earlier today to begin the Committee hiring process. The Student Projects Fund will be up and running in the fall, so if you have any ideas, please apply to this fund! I am the acting CRO for the VicPride elections, which have unfortunately been delayed this year. Nominations have been extended until September 29th at 11:59 PM. There are 3 positions available so please encourage your friends who may be interested to run!

Spandan: Can first years run for VicPride?

Jay: Yes! We have decided that first years could run because these elections are happening in the Fall. After they are elected, they will be responsible for hiring the rest of the exec. Equity training is also something that's happening! Usually, they are hosted by Mairi and they will be going through CLNx in the fall. VCDS is running its own specific equity training so they won't be required to attend the CLNx training. Additionally, club and levy check-ins have been going on which I'm mandated to do. Basically, I'm just checking in with them, goals and plans for the year. Budgets Steering Policy were completed with the Finance Chair to figure out budget requests. I want to provide more outreach for clubs and levies, especially for this year (and for the future) so if you have any ideas for better outreach, please let me know!

President (Michelle): 10 minutes

Michelle: Thank you all for coming! One of the biggest things I've been working on was the COVID-19 Fall 2020 Survey. We have 313 responses, which is incredible and might be close to how many people voted in the last elections. All lot of the responses is good material to help inform VUSAC on how we want to move forward with certain initiatives and ways that we can advocate for them. Speaking of the Dean's Office and President Robins, I will be having more regular meetings now that the school semester has started with Dean Kelley and President Robins. I will also be having more meetings with Victoria College Senate, the VCC, the Board of Regents, as well as other student bodies. Unfortunately, because I am an American citizen, I can't vote on the Board. I also spoke with the new chancellor of Vic who wants to collaborate with VUSAC to see how he can help student life at Vic. Another thing I've been working on is having 1:1 meetings that are half consultation, half reflection with both past and present VUSAC members. This is a good chance for VUSAC to look at our operations and assess what our goal is as a whole. This is a good year for us to make shifts to more advocacy-based work. I've had great discussions with council members and one of the changes I'm excited to introduce is a Slack channel for VUSAC for council wide advocacy work. This will be a good chance for all counsellors to work on different portfolios and to empower both VUSAC and VCU members. You'll hear more about it in the coming days. Another thing I've also been in conversation with Tran and Holly about is how to move our office online. Some services we used to be able to offer are no longer offered because our office is no longer open like printing, for example. This is a service that a lot of students still want due to the responses we got from our survey so we're looking at finding a place outside of the VUSAC office that we can work with to help provide this service in a way that's safe for students. I just want to say a huge shout out to all our student leaders because this year has been crazy so far and the amount of leadership I've seen over the last few months has been very inspiring. The last thing I will say is council members, please go to town hall. It is mandatory for you to show up and it's important for you to talk to future council members. Finally, you are a

neutral party! It is not fun for anyone anybody and it's not fun for the person who you do it for since you will both get penalized.

Vibhuti: I would like to emphasize why it is important to be neutral party. As a neutral party, you ensure the legitimacy of the elections. All of our opinions hold a lot of weight.

Motion: Tran motions to extend this discussion by 2 minutes, seconded by Rheannon. Motion passes.

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

Tran: If you are not attending Town Hall and you have a legitimate reason, please let us know! Otherwise it is mandatory for you to be there!

Motion: Jay motions for UTSU Vic Directors to introduce themselves for 5 minutes, seconded by Mehr. Motion passes.

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

Ava Harrington: My name is Ava and I'm one of two UTSU Vic Directors. Just wanted to let you know that I'm here for you all and I'm here for all your UTSU needs. If you're upset about anything that the UTSU does or says throughout the year, please let me know! Also, if you need help budgeting for clubs or for yourself, I'm available for that too. You probably already know this, but the UTSU is the student's union that represents you all and we do this generally for the U of T St George campus. You can reach out to me anytime with questions you might have about the UTSU!

Michelle: Thank you so much Ava for coming. For VUSAC members, if you want to talk to the UTSU, please come through Mehr or myself since it is one of us who will represent you to the UTSU.

Motion: Tran motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rheannon. Motion passes.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.