



**April 1, 2023**

**RE: VUSAC Spring 2023 Elections Voting**

The VUSAC Spring 2023 Elections voting period was set to occur from March 24th at 12:01am until March 28th at 11:59pm via the SimplyVoting website. Due to an error consisting of a candidate being incorrectly positioned on the ballot, the website was relaunched on March 24th at 10:43am.

Once voting was open, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) was made aware of some Victoria College students who were not registered to vote on the website and reached out to the Campus Life Coordinator at UTSG who is in charge of the SimplyVoting elections website to see what could be done. The CRO received a response on March 28th stating that sometimes there are a few people missing and it is quite a common issue. She offered to look into it if the names and emails of the students unable to access the website were provided; however that is when it became evident the issue with the website was on a much larger scale. The nature of students not being able to vote on the official voting website was concerning, and a last-minute effort to get more votes through was made by creating a Qualtrics form which was promoted on the VUSAC instagram and the CRO instagram.

Once the voting period closed and results were sent to candidates at midnight, there was a silent period from March 29th at 12:00am to March 30th at 11:59pm during which candidates were to keep their results confidential and able to submit any appeals to the Elections Appeals Committee (EAC). The EAC received an appeal on March 30th from a candidate stating the election was unfair due to some Vic students being unable to vote on the website and requested a run-off election for their specific position. The EAC agreed that it was unfair that the voting website did not allow for some Vic students to vote and made the decision to extend the voting period not just for one position, but for all positions to allow voting for any Vic students who were unable to vote.

Very soon after the EAC made the decision, the President and the CRO were called into a meeting with the Vice-President Internal and another student who brought forward a series of equity concerns regarding the entirety of the Spring elections process. There were a series of demands made that the President and CRO were simply unable to meet due to capacity constraints, but the President, VPI, and CRO came to the decision of overturning the EAC's decision and re-starting voting entirely. This was an unconstitutional decision as the EAC is a body whose decisions are binding. Overturning the EAC's decision was a mistake of the President, VPI, and CRO. For this, we sincerely apologize.



## VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

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On a separate note, there have also been inquiries regarding the way in which the EAC was selected. The President selected the EAC in a time-crunch during August 2022 in an unconstitutional manner without consultation with the VPI, CRO, and Dean's Office. Although the unconstitutional formation of the EAC was not intentional, this does not negate the gravity of unconstitutionality. The President acknowledges and apologizes for how the EAC was formed. With this being said, the EAC has been working with great care and consideration for each and every appeal that has been made.

On Friday, March 31st, a candidate submitted an appeal to the EAC regarding the President, VPI, and CRO's decision to re-start voting. This appeal was reviewed by the EAC on the same day and the decision was made, which was the original decision, to **extend elections for students who have not been able to vote without restarting the voting cycle.**

During the final VUSAC meeting on March 31st, many concerns were raised regarding VUSAC's elections process, including but not limited to the selection of the EAC, and the lack of transparency to Vic students regarding candidates who have had penalties issued, which is a process unique to VUSAC. There was also a serious concern raised about the lack of transparency and awareness regarding a candidate's anti-Black comments on the CRO instagram. These comments came to our attention on March 24th after voting had already opened and the candidate was disqualified; any votes the candidate would and did receive were disregarded. We apologize for not being transparent about this decision to the VCU who were not given an opportunity to cast an informed vote, but more importantly, apologize to Black students who were left unaware of any actions taken and had their safety threatened on campus due to these comments.

We appreciate the concerns and the feedback from the VCU and will be suggesting them for implementation to next year's council. We also apologize to the candidates who have experienced an unusually stressful and prolonged election cycle, the EAC who have had their integrity questioned, and all Vic students who were uninformed about the concerns and the processes in which to address them.

In service,

**Sooyeon Lee**, President

**Jackson Leslie**, Vice-President Internal

**Pooja Ajit**, Chief Returning Officer