VUSAC Meeting Agenda

**Call to order:** 5:35 pm EST, February 4th, 2022

**Land Acknowledgement:**

*Dixshant*

*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 the Mississaugas of the Credit. 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:**

*Kayla Man, Jackson Leslie*

**Absent:**

**Approval of minutes:**

*Delayed until the next VUSAC meeting*

**Additions to the agenda:**

**Approval of the agenda:**

*Motion by Sooyeon Lee to approve the agenda for October 15th, Seconded by Kayla Man*

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

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

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

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

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

Ali: I have lots of fun updates! As I said last week my booking calendar is widely available now where we can discuss leadership opportunities, getting involved, navigating resources, a first-year check-in or a general check-in. Next, Orientation applications are out and they are due this Monday. I would encourage you all to apply as it would be a really great opportunity. Additionally, we do have crescam applications open. We are looking for people who really care and put passion above all, so nominate someone who you think goes above and beyond in their work. Our leadership fair is coming up and it will be a great opportunity for new leaders or for people looking to get more involved. Last but not least, please take care of yourselves!

Governing Bodies:

*Board of Regents Update, put forth by Zoe Lazaris and Leila Tjiang (5 minutes)*

Leila: Hi everyone! I am one of the representatives of the BOR and I am here to speak on all our behalves with regards to the divestment petition that we have recently written and put out. The main idea behind this petition is the fact that even though UofT had made commitments to divest, Vic has not made any commitment. This is part of a wider push to get all of UofT’s factions to divest because UofT’s commitment does not apply to the federated colleges. The other student representatives and I put together this petition to garner student support on divestment at Vic. I would like to add that there was a whole campaign regarding divestment at Vic in 2018/2019, but a lot of that work is outdated because of the current circumstances we now face. There’s not much other work that’s being done at the board but you are more than welcome to contact any of us if there is anything you would like to discuss.

ACTION ITEMS:

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to ratify VicPride!’s winter 2022 budget as it appears in Appendix A, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Kate: VicPride! needed some extra with their budget so that is why we are looking at it now. Katherine can speak more about the finance behind this and Jaiden can talk more about what they have planned for the semester.

Katherine: From my understanding, they are budgeting to consume only about 25% of their budget. They will be figuring out throughout the semester how they can raise that utilization and a lot of it has been challenges that are out of their control.

Jaiden: We are hoping to do a lot of initiatives throughout the semester where some won’t require funding and some will. As Katherine said, we are thinking of ways to use our funding. We want to hold a trivia night where we give away prizes/gift cards as well as do a baking night. We may request more money later in the semester to fund students purchasing their own ingredients, but as it stands for now we are only requesting $20 for the instructor.

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to ratify VISA’s winter 2022 budget line: VISA Movie Giveaway for a total amount of $640 + $30 buffer for $670 (16 attendees), seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Kate: I have taken over as VISA’s temporary Levy Head. As such I have been working with Tazneen and Katherine to put together a budget that will adequately VISA’s budget. The first event we’re putting on is a movie night for international students. We had 15 spots available and the 16th spot is for Tazneen just to make sure someone is there if any issues arise. The plan is to bulk buy tickets and then provide them with gift cards to go towards snacks. We had a ton of interest and we are really excited about this event.

Katherine: We would really love to see people excited about VISA, so part of these events is seeing what we could do to get students excited at Vic.

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to modify VicIteach’s winter 2022 budget as it appears in Appendix B, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Kate: Katherine and I met with VicIteach because we had concerns about their proposed budget, namely that they were asking for funding related to program-specific events. As a student council, we never want to fund one specific program partially because it is exclusive but also because we don't want to be seen with having affiliations with one POSt over another. The budget line we are striking was requesting gift cards to give to students who filled out the feedback form on the Education and Society program, which we don’t find ethical. The budget line that we are adding would be for merchandise.

Katherine: We were initially worried that their “conference” would be an exclusive event but they made it very clear that it would be open to all students to show off their extracurricular initiatives. As for the merchandise, we find it very reasonable for building community and knowing who’s who.

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to modify The Strand’s Fall 2021 budget as it appears in Appendix C, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Khadija: We needed to shift a couple of expenses. One was a kill fee for a story in our fall magazine that we felt would be most productive if we didn’t move forward with it. It is generally just good practice to offer a kill fee to the writers for all the work they did. We decided to move the money that was originally budgeted for a writing and pitching workshop that we wanted to hold in person. We also forgot to budget for taxes when it came to paying for some legal fees. We initially budgeted for press passes for reporters to go to in-person events and report on them but we decided to use that money to purchase Photoshop.

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to implement a new budget line under Office Manager for Canva Subscription and to strike all other Canva expenses from the budget(excluding Levies), seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Kate: For those of you who were at the budget ratification meeting, you’ll remember that we tabled all expenses related to premium Canva because we wanted to look into possibly creating one account for the clubs to share. We feel that it would make more sense for us to hold a premium account because VUSAC will be here each year whereas clubs can change year to year.

Jerico: This is something we have done in the past and is quite easy as Canva allowed you to create teams that we can allocate to the different clubs if they would like access to the account.

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to approve CARE UofT’s budget, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (2 minutes)*

Kate: Seeing no representative present again, we will have to table the budget again. Any club requesting a budget over $1,000 requires to have a representative present.

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to table CARE UofT’s budget until the next VUSAC meeting, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (2 minutes)*

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

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to ratify Daisy Smith as the Cat’s Eye Junior Co-Manager, seconded by Jerico Raguindin (3 minutes)*

Jerico: The hiring panel went really well and I am very excited to see what Daisy can do with this position.

Dorian: Daisy was a great candidate and we see great things.

Alexander: I can’t say enough praises about Daisy. I am very excited for you to meet this new implementation to the team.

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

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to approve the amendments to the ERC as discussed last meeting, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (5 minutes)*

Jerico: Last meeting we spoke about some amendments to the ERC. The changes we have made weren’t anything drastic but are there for a more flexible elections period and definition clarifications.

Jaiden: I wanted to know if the amendments were based on the ERC currently on the VUSAC website or the actual final document that has the amendments made from last year's meeting?

Jerico: I do believe it is reflected in the ERC right now.

Jaiden: I know last year we wanted to change the word “ex-officio” to “assessor member” which has not been changed in the draft. I just wanted to bring it to your attention to make sure that everything was covered properly.

Jerico: I know that there was some confusion around the continuity of the governing documents. I believed we had the most up-to-date versions. Do you know what the friendly amendments were addressing and their importance?

Jaiden: I don’t believe that the documents were actually updated and may only be present in the minutes. Good points were brought up but nothing that would create a big issue.

Tabina: I know what Jay is talking about and I do remember the amendments were made to a copy. I believe it was either Tran or Nerija who had made those changes, but we’ll definitely have to look and find the documents.

Jerico: On how to proceed, I will leave it up to the council. A lot of our amendments are time-sensitive, so if you don’t feel comfortable voting right now then feel free to share your opinions. If the amendments weren't consequential then we can put these amendments in and can update everyone next meeting about the final version of the ERC.

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

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

Jaiden: I just wanted to specify that I am not saying to not amend the ERC, I just want to ensure that things aren’t being lost.

Malhaar: I wasn’t made aware of any amendments, so I was assuming we were working with the latest version. If the changes weren’t too substantive, then I can work with Tabina to ensure that those amendments are finalized and published at the end of the year.

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

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to sign VUSAC to and endorse the Vic Divestment petition, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (5 minutes)*

Jerico: As Leila mentioned earlier, the board representatives are currently circulating a petition to get Vic to divest. I encourage you all to sign the petition individually. VUSAC is an important part in student governance circles and it would be good to show board representatives that students stand in solidarity with divestment.

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

*Motion: Fatima Mohaned motions to ratify the Academic Commission’s winter 2022 budget as it appears in Appendix D, seconded by Tabina Ahmed (3 minutes)*

Fatima: The winter budget is mostly targeted toward financial incentives for people to come to the events and for anyone that volunteers to help out. We’re planning to have fully online events so we are hoping to utilize %100 of our budget.

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

*Budget Utilization, put forth by Kate Haberl (15 minutes)*

Katherine: For VUSAC, we look like we are budgeted to deplete our surplus, but it is questionable if we will achieve that. Looking at our current financial resources and estimated Levy payments/honorariums, meaning we have overbudgeted by $13,000. However, if our budget utilization is like last semester, then we will have a surplus of $45,000-$55,000. This raises concerns as some members may think we only delivered on 50% of our promises. What I suggest we do, is have everyone’s budget, with the exception of Levies, reviewed and strike off any items that are not likely to be spent. I have been speaking to some previous Finance Chairs who said utilization processes were a lot more strict. If you would like, we can apply more stringent rules but this also puts us under greater scrutiny since we are contributing to the surplus. Next, we have Levies who are underbudgeting and this is a very big concern. The fees that students pay for that academic year are expected to be spent within that year. We have four Levies who are overbudgeting and 4 levies who are underbudgeting. Two Levies are underspending 30-60%, meaning they are not properly utiliting the budget or we are charging students too many fees. The other two Levies are underspending by at least 60%. A problem with this is that some of these Levies will be accumulating a surplus that will exponentiate if we don’t take care of it. Moreover, some Levies are spending a significant amount on honorariums. One Levy spends over 50% of student collected fees on honorariums and another 40%(for reference, VUSAC spends less than 15%). One case I wanted to highlight is that one Levy has accumulated a surplus of 115% but has only budgeted to spend 25% of this year's student fees. They aim to increase the honorariums to represent over 40%, meaning they will be spending 66% more on honorariums than programming. The main takeaway from this is that we need to significantly improve budget utilization across all VUSAC groups.

Jaiden: From the perspective of a Levy, it definitely is a concern that we are not overspending our budget, but there’s also not the ability to use the money efficiently. I may have missed it, but I wish we would have had the option to reduce Levy fees since covid has made it very difficult to spend money. To comment on the honorariums, I do think it is concerning to see Levies spending huge portions of their budget on honorariums, but we have to remember that they're compensative for time spent on this work.

Alexander: Sometimes as a Levy, it’s very hard to decide what the rest of the semester is going to look like. Each semester looks promising and then you’re suddenly diverted with lockdowns and restrictions. What VUSAC did last year was have an open conversation at the beginning of the year which is better than having each Levy decide what the rest of the year will look like.

Katherine: I want to note that at the very least if we start running into troubles, we should give a lot of transparency to the students and hold ourselves accountable.

Cam: I wanted to ask about the honorariums, are they given regardless of the amount of time spent working in the position?

*Motion: Jaiden Muoio motions to extend this discussion, seconded by Kate Haberl (7 minutes)*

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

Katherine: Each Levy does have a constitution and a policy for how the honoraria are awarded but from what I have seen, is that they are always given. With the club that I mentioned earlier, they want to spend 66% more on honorariums than programming yet is only committing to 25% of promised programing. As you can see, this raises a lot of flags.

Alexander: Do you have the actual numbers of what the breakdown is going to be?

Katherine: Yes

Cam: I know that you weren’t going to address the specific Levy but I do think it becomes relevant to ask what Levy this is.

Katherine: I think it would be nice to run it by the Levy first as that would be a really abrupt comment. It will become clear who the Levy is when I publish the updated budget utilization.

Kate: As the VPSO, I am the primary person who assesses whether or not we pay honorariums to Levies. Most of the time we do give out the honorariums because we are usually very pleased with their performance and think they deserve the compensation. There have been cases where it was heavily debated or where we didn’t release an honorarium, so it isn’t something that we take lightly. I want to point out a distinction between the two cases in that though they are both increasing their honorariums by 50%, the second Levy is less labour intensive. These matters are being addressed privately and I have been in contact with this Levy. As Katherine has highlighted, this is an extremely concerning situation.

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to extend this discussion, seconded by Sooyeon Lee (10 minutes)*

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

Dorian: My only comment is that these numbers might say one thing, but some context might show truer intentions.

Katherine: To be blunt, these numbers are showing that we need to hold ourselves to higher standards. There is a lot more work and initiative that we can be doing. If we keep saying “There’s a reason why” then we will never hold ourselves accountable. We have no reason for any more excuses.

Dorian: I meant to say that numbers can be made to say anything when you lack the context behind why it looks like that, especially statistics. Those numbers probably represent much lower amounts of money and in reality, much lower than minimum wage which is never actually achievable in any position here. I think it is unfair to go towards fixing while ignoring that no one is equitably paid and focusing on balancing our budget rather than trying to balance our budget while also making sure that people are paid fairly for their work.

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to see the rest of the discussion and for a 5-minute recess, seconded by Sooyeon Lee*

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

Jaiden: I think budget utilization is a very important thing we need to consider.

Jerico: Budget utilization has been a problem year after year and Katherine brings up excellent points about our next move. We are on track to theoretically utilize our budget, but I am not expecting it to be stamped out this year.

Alexander: I wanted to address Student Projects, my understanding is that no projects have been proposed. Is that being addressed somehow and is there a way to get Vic students more engaged?

Sukhmani: Yes, we haven’t received any applications in large part since we haven't been back in person since November. Since most Levies haven’t used up their funding from VUSAC, there hasn’t been a need for them to come to SP for additional funding.

*Motion: Kate Haberl motions to extend this discussion, seconded by Sooyeon Lee (3 minutes)*

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

Katherine: As we work through the budget surplus we will be able to identify opportunities where we can introduce new programming and perhaps the student projects fund. Kate and I are working on taking inventory of what equipment VUSAC has to determine where we can do potential projects with SP to increase things available for rent to students.

Jaiden: I am curious about how efficient SP has been in the past or is this a continuous issue with surplus accumulation?

Kate: This is an abnormally low turnout because they typically get at least a couple of projects. Sukhmani and I are doing everything we can to let everyone know that they can apply for funding.

Sukhmani: To add again, if you go to our website you’ll see we’ve had a significantly reduced amount of applications come through since the pandemic.

STAFF REPORTS:

*CRO Update, put forth by Malhaar Moharir (5 minutes)*

Malhaar: I wanted to talk about the amendments to the ERC which most have been raised. Elections season is coming up soon, so keep an eye out for emails reminding you all about campaigning and the rules. I am still looking for some members of council to help me plan the elections, so if you are interested please let me know.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

*President: Jerico Raguindin (5 minutes)*

Ali: I know I should have said this earlier, but I wanted to update you all on in-person events. For in-person on-campus events, you will be allowed to have outdoor activities. The same goes for in-person off-camppus events provided that you are complying with public health guidelines. Either way, you are required to complete a VSEF form. I highly recommend submitting a request two weeks in advance, with five days being your minimum. Kate and Jerico will be sending out emails so that you have it all in writing.

Jerico: Just wanted to add that if anyone needs support on planning an event, let us know how we can best facilitate that.

*Motion: Jerico Raguindin motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded Tabina Ahmed*

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

*Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.*