



## Victoria University Students' Administrative Council

150 Charles St. West, Room 127

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[www.vusac.ca](http://www.vusac.ca) | [fb.com/vusacuoft](https://fb.com/vusacuoft)

### VUSAC Meeting Minutes

**Call to order:** 5:30 PM, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Land Acknowledgement:** Zoe Lazaris

Zoe: 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:** Joy Wang (Proxy: Tran Thai)

**Approval of minutes:** *Motion by Kate to approve the minutes from January 15th, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

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

**Additions to the agenda:**

**Approval of the agenda:** *Motion by Vedika to approve the agenda for January 29th, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

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

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

**Meeting ID:** 971 7625 4249

*NOTE: A UofT zoom account is needed to access the meeting*

[Meeting Procedures Infographic](#)

[VUSAC's Guide to Robert's Rules](#)

#### EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

**President of Victoria University:**

**Dean's Office:**

**Board of Regents:**

**Victoria College Council:**

**Victoria University Senate:**

**Campus Life Coordinator (Alero):** 10 minutes

Alero: If you're a student looking for money for performances, the Performing Arts Endowment is awarded 3 times a year to Vic students so please apply for that! Applications are due on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Goldring Student Centre is still on a needs-only basis in terms of access. If you need to access the space, email me and Shiny for that. In terms of hiring, Don applications close on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

If you are looking for other ways to get involved, Orientation Execs applications are now open, and they can be found on the Vic website. For those of you applying to donship, I cannot be a reference for you, and neither can anyone else in the Dean's Office. If you are absolutely desperate, I can try and sort something out. I will be there for VUSAC retreat tomorrow! In terms of orientation, we are now looking at planning some of the dates for orientation. I will be bringing some items up for discussion about orientation throughout the year.

#### ACTION ITEMS:

*Motion by Faye Tan to ratify the tabled Line 95 CARE University of Toronto Item "Giftbags" for \$100.00, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

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

Faye: From last week's meeting, line 95 was expected to be \$100 but the description didn't match up with the expected amount, so we tabled ratifying it. I reached out to Care UofT and they said that want to change the amount from \$100 to \$50.

*Motion by Jay Muoio to ratify Maame Adjoa Asumadu Addo as the Cat's Eye Junior Co-Manager, seconded by Nerija (3 minutes). Motion passes.*

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

Jay: The Cat's Eye Advisory Board met, and they released their applications late this year due to the tenure extension dilemma. The applications were opened in December and they were extended once into January. They got one application for the position. Afterwards they had a vote and decided to hire Maame so we're ratifying her now! She will be working from now until next January.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS:

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

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

*ERC Amendments, put forth by Nerija Gray (15 minutes) [Appendix A]*

Nerija: The ERC Committee has been meeting over the last few months and some significant changes have been made to the initial document. A lot of the changes that you'll see are formatting changes and grammar, however. The most significant change is Chapter 5 which is the neutrality chapter. It puts all of the information you need to know about neutrality into one spot instead of having to sort through the whole document. The next significant section is the deletion of the section requiring the CRO to have a Facebook forum for the candidates. We also had a section that

addressed redefinitions about where and how candidates are allowed to promote their campaigns. In the mandatory meeting section, there is a clarification about the explanations that are required by the CRO in that meeting. The Endorsements Article has been deleted and moved into the neutrality section. We've also added Article 19, Section 2 and that is about plagiarism. If a candidate feels that their platform has been plagiarized, then they have reasonable grounds to go to the CRO under this article. The number of required signatures has been increased for Governing Body candidates from 5 to 10 because these students are usually upper years, and they typically have broader connections in the Vic community. We also added Article 30 and it talks about what other articles might be rendered obsolete in the case of an online election. If there are changes in the document that you are unsure of, please speak now.

Jay: There was one thing in Article 6 that mentioned ex-officio members to VUSAC being neutral parties. It lists ex-officio members to VUSAC but then it lists levy heads and orientation co-chairs who are actually assessor members. Assessor members also include dons and UTSU directors which are outside of the bracket. Can we change that?

Nerija: This was from the old document, so we just copy and pasted it in. If there's anything in this document that's incorrect, please let us know.

Mehr: In terms of the Facebook elections form, I think I would like to hear more about the rationale behind it. I know it says that the CRO would create an online space, but I am interested in hearing more about what that space would look like and how accessible it might be to VCU members. In terms of plagiarism, I feel like in most positions there are many ideas that are very general and easily repeated. I guess the CRO should know to have a bit more discretion in that aspect, but I am afraid that candidates might be worried about campaigning on certain points that other people have campaigned on.

Nerija: One of the concerns that we had about the Facebook forum was that when anyone asked a question on the page, it felt like if you weren't the first person there you didn't have an equal opportunity to make a unique point. It also feels like it's not checked very often so students don't use it the way it should be anyway. We left it so open-ended to give the CRO the chance to decide on another platform but this way it isn't binding to use Facebook. For the plagiarism section, the intent is to give a candidate an avenue to pursue recourse from the ERC if they felt as though their platform was unfairly repeated by another candidate. Should a plagiarism complaint occur in the future, the ERC has the liberty to address this and so candidates feel safe in their intellectual property.

Tabina: At the beginning of my transition, I talked to Vibhuti about the Facebook forum. She suggested to keep everything controlled in a way that gives people the chance to send questions to a centralized authority that would be sent out to the candidates and then posted once everyone has answered.

Mehr: I like the flexibility that both these amendments gives to the CRO and to candidates so that's awesome.

Kate: I have a very nitpicky point to make. Under article 15 for social media, it says that candidates can't use their face or likeness during the election period. Could you film yourself on your personal Instagram story or is that a violation of that?

Nerija: You can't use your face or your likeness during the election period but you can post information from the VUSAC account directly. If you think we should make it clearer by defining that you can't post a photo or video of yourself talking about the election, you can also let us know.

*Motion by Nerija to extend the discussion by 20 minutes, seconded by Maggie. Motion passes.*

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

Jay: In Chapter XIV, Article 25, section 4 has the addition that says talks about increasing or decreasing levy fees in exceptional circumstances. I get that that's what we did this year but I think it might be a little unclear because we don't know who or what defines an exceptional circumstance. I think "barring exceptional circumstances" should clearly only be written for decreasing fees because I can't see a situation where you could increase levy fees without a referendum.

Nerija: We can try to make that in to 2 sentences if that would make it better. As for who would decide these special circumstances, it would be a combination of VUSAC, the DO, and other governing bodies. I think we are just trying to set the precedent for the future.

Vedika: When would it be decided that the election would be online and what are the criteria for that decision? I ask this more for fall elections 2021 when some students might be back on campus but many might not be.

Nerija: Earlier on in the document we have a specific timeline for when elections are supposed to be set. Our idea for this was to make sure that there would be guidelines for online elections if we needed. Article 12 also gives students who are not on campus the ability to run which would give more students the opportunity to get involved even if the semester was online next year.

Tran: Very good point, I think vagueness is a big thing to consider when defining exceptional circumstances. I think we could also make an amendment that would say that if students are at risk by participating in the elections or hosting them in-person, they would move online.

Michelle: The question I had is about slander and the plagiarism. I wanted to ask why the rationale behind defining plagiarism and slander as the same thing? It feels like it could be a messy policy layering situation. I'm wondering if we should rename Article 19 to slander and plagiarism or just have plagiarism in its own separate category.

Nerija: We put it in this section because it didn't seem to fit into any other section. I think we could make a friendly amendment to rename Article 19 and potentially reword Section 2, but I don't think it would make sense to move it anywhere else.

Faye: I had a question about page 58 in the ERC about nomination packages. I believe for public office nomination is the same thing as an endorsement and so if someone has a neutral party on their nomination package it seems like an endorsement.

Nerija: Neutral parties are allowed to sign nomination packages, because if you say yes to signing one candidate's package you have to say yes to all packages. As long as they are given all candidates equal attention, we don't see it as endorsement.

Tran: I think there also needs to be a definition for endorsement. I think there's a difference in this situation regarding endorsement versus nomination.

Nerija: I think we could look into adding a definition of endorsement in the document under the neutrality chapter for additional clarity.

Tran: Okay so now I'm going to go through some of the friendly amendments that we wanted to make. For Article 6, Chapter 5, I think we should break down ex-officio into their positions as suggested by Jay.

Jay: We just need to change the wording of Article 6. Change ex-officio to assessor and move dons and UTSU directors into the brackets. I would also suggest specifying Vic UTSU directors instead of just UTSU directors.

Tran: Okay. The next friendly amendment is renaming article 19 to "Slander and Plagiarism".

Michelle: Because plagiarism is its own thing now, I think we should include that it is a disqualifiable offence.

Nerija: They both already said that they were grounds for discrimination in their own sections.

Tran: Article 25, Section 4 we are going to change to VUSAC may only decrease or increase a levy fee by referendum. We are also going to add a subsection that this will only be done in exceptional circumstances. Next amendment is the criteria for an online election. Is there a specific article that we should add this to?

Vedika: I guess it would be in Article 30 because that it what outlines everything in online elections. I'm not sure about exact wording would be.

Tran: We could define outstanding circumstances are situations in which students' safety may be compromised. The last amendment we have is the definition of endorsement.

Nerija: An endorsement is considered anything more than a signature or a 'like'. It is explicitly saying that you will vote for a candidate. I also think that we should include this in the neutrality section. We should also have a subsection saying that if a neutral party signs an election package, they must do the same for every other candidate who asks.

Tran: Are there any other concerns that people have about the ERC?

*Same Degree, Same Fee Campaign, put forth by Mehr Mukhtar (15 minutes)*

*Motion by Nathan to give Evan Kanter (CSSU) speaking rights, seconded by Maggie. Motion passes.*

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

Evan: I was asked to speak about the Same Degree, Same Fee campaign. This is being run by the CSSU, the UTSU, the ASSU, and the BCBSU and we are asking for VUSAC's help for promoting our survey and petition to Vic students. We are trying to get a stronger sample size for our survey from a wider community than just computer science students. We are campaigning to make tuition more accessible and equitable for everyone. Right now, students in computer sciences pay almost double the tuition as other student. This is impacting mental health and the accessibility to the program that later creates inequality within the computer science field. The reason that we pay more is because the provincial government deregulated computer science programs 20 years ago which means that universities could increase fees. UofT capitalized on this and the fees continued to increase. Since 2004, tuition fees have continued to increase for computer science students and has resulted an increase by 87% in the tuition paid. One of the rationales for increasing tuition fees is that this is a more employable program, however, by charging more, they are making it challenging for low-income students to gain access to the degree and later to employment. The current policy is deeply unfair to the people who are in the program and to those who are trying to get into the program. It also creates a sense of competition between students because of the scramble for high-paying internships. This further makes high tuition a concern for mental health. If you have any questions about this, you can always ask me!

Mehr: I just wanted to say thank you for coming and for advocating for these students! I am excited to see how VUSAC can support this. Hopefully we can vote on our endorsement for this at our next meeting!

Tabina: This was an awesome presentation! Could you repeat the issue of deregulation?

Evan: The provincial government tells universities how much they can increase every year percentage wise; usually this is around 5%. Deregulation is when the government allows universities to adjust fees by themselves. Computer science programs were deregulated in 1998 but in 2004 they were regulated again. In those 6 years, tuition was inflated, and it hasn't gone back down.

Michelle: Thank you so much for coming and talking to us about this! I hope it will only gain momentum from here! We will be sharing this on our social media. I do want to make a motion to formally endorse this campaign.

*Motion by Michelle for VUSAC to formally endorsement the Same Degree, Same Fee campaign, seconded by Mehr. Motion passes.*

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

Evan: Thank you so much!

*Motion by Tran for a 5-minute recess, seconded by Nerija. Motion passes.*

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

#### 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):** 5 minutes

Tabina: We will be starting the nominations period for the Spring Elections on Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> which will continue for three weeks. After that, we will be having the All-Candidates meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>. For the remainder of that week, we will have the campaigning period and the Town Hall on March 26<sup>th</sup>. After Town Hall, we will have a voting period for three days. Once the results are out, we will announce them on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Maggie and I have been working on a special project for elections advertising. We are working to create a promo video clip featuring VUSAC members talking about their positions. If you are in this video, you have to make sure that you aren't running in the elections to maintain neutrality. Once we do have something settled, we'll let you all know. We have also created a really robust calendar for advertisement during the election season. I will be at Retreat tomorrow to give you a workshop on neutrality.

Alero: It says on the website that the All-Candidates Meeting will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March but there's a VUSAC meeting on that day.

Tabina: We will likely hold the All-Candidates meeting after the VUSAC meeting has finished.

**Communications (Veronica):**

**Finance (Faye):**

**Office Manager (Holly):**

**Chair (Zoe):**

COMMISSION REPORTS:

**Academic (Nerija & Cathy):** 3 minutes

Nerija: Networking Night happened this week! Thank you to everyone who came out. Some of the alumni reached out and thanked us for hosting the event and said that it was a really well-run event. In February, we are bringing study space back on Tuesday evenings. We are also going to be doing a career development series on social media and with a few workshop events. We are going to finish that series with an interview workshop with the Career Advisor. After reading break, we are going to be doing the BIPOC academic panel. In March, we are hoping to have some program roundtables featuring upper-year students from a variety of programs to talk about their majors.

Alex: We are going to be sending out all the promo stuff for the BIPOC academic panel in early February so look out for that!

Alero: For the BIPOC professional panel, we have a doctor and a lawyer signed on currently. For those of you who are BIPOC students, what kind of careers would you want to see represented at the panel?

Cathy: I think someone who is very high up in a corporation or leadership position would be interesting.

Alero: When you say corporate do you mean like CEO?

Cathy: From my lens, I was thinking it would be interesting to have someone in business.

Alex: I put all the suggestions in the chat into a Google doc. There will be a registration form happening in February so keep an eye out for that.

**Arts & Culture (Jenny):**

**Equity (Lulu & Sooyeon):**

**Mental Wellness (Dorian):**

**Scarlet & Gold (Fatima):** 2 minutes

Fatima: I wanted to thank everybody for helping out with Winterfest. I have been getting lots of feedback from students who attended, and it's been really positive so far. I wanted to say a big



thank you to my counsellors for everything! We are planning a Valentine's Day event so look out for the invites for that!

**Sustainability (Leila & Jerico):**  
**Commuter (Rheannon & Aya):**

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

**VP External (Mehr):** 5 minutes

Mehr: I'm so proud of everything that we've been working on this year! Crescam nominations open on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Veronica has helped me make all the graphics for that and they will start to roll out in the next couple weeks. If you are trying to nominate someone who holds an elected position, the person in that position must have gone above and beyond the usual expectations for that position. Nominations are open until the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. I took some feedback from Caucus about how students wanted more opportunities to talk with the Dean's Office and I've chatted about this with Alero. In the second week of February, we are going to be having a super informal chat with the VP and the CLC. It's basically like for a drop-in session to ask questions and get connected with resources. I also met with the BoR reps today and we are planning on streamlining how we are releasing information to the student body. Finally, the Caucus date has been set for the 26<sup>th</sup> of February so please look ahead for that.

**VP Internal (Tran):** 3 minutes

Tran: Tomorrow is VUSAC Retreat at 12pm and I will be sending out the Zoom link tomorrow morning. A lot of the workshops will be dealing with things that are relevant to this semester like election neutrality and Zoom bombing. If you are unable to attend, please let me know! The ERC has undergone amendments and the Constitution and Council Policies are also currently undergoing reviews. Please send your feedback if you are interested! You can reach out to me or Alero or Michelle if you need anything!

**VP Student Organizations (Jay):** 3 minutes

Jay: The Vic Winter Clubs Fair happened during the first week of classes. A bunch of clubs and levies got together which was really great. There wasn't a huge turnout, but I think it was a great opportunity for clubs to interact with one another. The Cat's Eye Advisory Board met to hire their new co-manager and I chaired that meeting. The membership of the board has changed slightly since their Food Services Rep is leaving Victoria College, so the Head of Hospitality took their place. Hopefully we'll be meeting again soon to talk about other Cat's Eye agenda items in the future. I am currently doing club and levy check-ins to see how they're doing. If you are looking to get in contact with a club or a levy about something, you can always message me about that and I will bring it up with them during their one-on-one. Back in December the WUSC constitution was brought up as a discussion item but it hasn't been voted on yet because the WUSC President has a scheduling conflict with the VUSAC meetings, and she has to be the one to bring it forward. I am also meeting with the Dean's Office soon to talk about the Vic Records studio space.

**President (Michelle): 5 minutes**

Michelle: I met with President Robins last Thursday which is part of our monthly check-ins for VUSAC and any other campus initiatives that we want to work on. President Robins was instructed in 2018 to create a special Indigenous Affairs Committee to draft a response report to the Renaming Ryerson Project. This report will be available by February 10<sup>th</sup> which is very exciting. He is also working on creating a strategic plan which will set the course for Vic over the next couple years. It will be up for approval in June and then voted on in April. We talked a bit about the new wellness and anti-racism training for staff at Vic. We also talked about mental health and resource distribution for students and faculty. He talked to me about how Vic is falling into line with what UofT is doing to address mental health. In the last two weeks the BoR FPA and Property committees met, and we will be meeting with the rest of the team soon to discuss how student board members can better represent and engage with the wider Vic student body. Mehr and I are meeting with Kelly on Wednesday which helps us establish a clear line between admin and student needs. Please fill out the fall survey form! It's so important to get your feedback on how last semester went. The SGRT is meeting next week and I met with the Alumni Committee to talk about events for future alumni gatherings. Please keep sharing the BIPOC award and please join the Student Leader Handbook team! The last round of cheque reimbursements is going out soon so please keep an eye out for that. Finally, if you have a goal on VUSAC that you feel you haven't achieved yet, please let me know and we can try to support you.

*Motion by Tran to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Max. Motion passes.*

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.