



## VUSAC Fall Caucus Agenda

**Call to order:** 5:40 pm EST, November 25, 2022

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

*Sooyeon Lee*

*At the beginning of events, meetings, and ceremonies at the University of Toronto and at Victoria College, we begin with a land acknowledgement.*

*Land acknowledgements recognize that most of us are not indigenous to this continent. Our lives in Canada, as we know and live it, are a result of settler-colonialism, where European colonists came to Canada, took and settled land for themselves, which were already inhabited by Indigenous peoples. Colonizers established systems of mass resource extraction and systems of hierarchy built upon white supremacy that acted as justification for taking Indigenous land and suppressing Indigenous culture and rights, such as residential schools, the Indian Act, the sixties scoop. These harms done to Indigenous people are not a relic of the past done by colonists a few centuries ago, but an ongoing process that we contribute to and benefit off of. For instance, the last residential school closed in 1996. The history of Indigenous peoples in Canada is always framed as something from the past, but this past isn't archaic.*

*Today is American Thanksgiving. What settlers were taught was that Thanksgiving was a celebration for Pilgrim establishing Plymouth Colony and sharing a feast with Indigenous people in 1621. This isn't true. Thanksgiving was a genocide. Colonizers brought smallpox, stole land through heavy fines, and eliminated traditional food sources. By 1678, 40% of the Wampanoag were murdered in King Phillip's War, and the 69 communities dwindled to 3. Others say the first Thanksgiving was in 1637, when MA colony governor John Winthrop declared a day of "thanksgiving" to celebrate the slaughter of 700 Pequot men, women, and children. Reparations have not been made to Indigenous peoples. Today is an opportunity to educate ourselves about the historical truth of thanksgiving.*

*These institutions also exist because Indigenous people were traumatized and displaced. The massive benefits you'll receive from attending UofT are because this institution was built upon stolen and seized land. Victoria college benefits from investing in fossil fuels. Investment in fossil fuels and oil wells harm the environment and Indigenous communities who are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. The money that Victoria College receives from fossil fuel investments is fueled back into Vic. No matter how removed you think you might be from Indigenous history, the truth is that we attend this college partly because Indigenous people are subject to harm.*



*It is our duty and responsibility to take these benefits and use them to give back to Indigenous people. Use your words, use your actions. Educate yourself and others. Learn about not just negative associations like colonialism, but positive aspects like what it means to be two-spirit, distinct identities of different nations, learn the significance of a wampum, and more. Center Indigenous people in your conversations and learn from Indigenous practices and communities. Show up for those around you. We are here because we are settlers and benefit from Canada's ongoing colonial practices, and we have a duty to support Indigenous communities.*

*When we listen to or read land acknowledgements, we have to actively reflect on them. These land acknowledgements must be an active marker and recommitment to Indigenous solidarity, so we don't forget about our history and so we do the work that is so necessary and and show up for issues that are so important. Truth and reconciliation doesn't end with a land acknowledgement, but begins with one instead.*

*I would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15 000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. It was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. The great lakes represented a dish from which every person would have only one spoon to take from the dish and care for themselves, ensuring that the dish would never run out. For settlers on this land, we must be cognizant of our space and impact. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful and privileged to have the opportunity to work, learn, and grow on this land and give back to it.*

**Official Regrets:** Cameron Miranda-Radbord

**Absent:** Charlie Sun

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

*Dean of Students: Dean Kelley Castle (5 minutes)*

Kelley: Hi, thank you very much for having us come and chat. One of the things that was sent along to us is some of the topics that have come up in VUSAC Meetings in the past and I'm gonna try to address a few of them that are most close to my zone. So if I don't address one of these that is a burning topic for you, someone else may very well, and if nobody does I'll answer them during the Q&A. I wanted to start by talking a little bit about mental health. I gather that there are some questions on dealing with the process at Vic especially in residences, I'd like to talk a bit about that. I'd also like to talk about the phenomenon that seems to be happening we're



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seeing post COVID. We've been having a disproportionately high number of fairly major mental health issues that have arisen in the residences since September. Many of those, we attribute to COVID, but it's hard because we attribute everything to COVID, so we have to start disambiguating some of the issues. But for sure a lot of students are coming to us, and this is reflected in the Dean's Advisory Committee that we recently had, which I'll speak on in a minute. A lot of students have been coming to us that they don't feel equipped—they've never written exams before, talked face-to-face conversations with adults, and certainly not with faculty members. And they have been saying in groups, and I'm quoting, they're not properly socialized, we don't know how to have casual conversations with our peers. So stuff that was a 1/10 is turning into a 3/10, stuff that was a 3/10 is turning into a 6/10, and we're just seeing it being pushed up the spectrum. We are well aware of this and so it breaks my heart when I hear people think that the only thing that gets done is calling campus police, calling campus safety. So I want to unpack a little bit about what happens. First of all, we have on-call staff, my office runs 24/7 all year long. We've had more than 450 calls on the on-call line, which is more than double at this stage. Some of them are more serious and some of them are more in the middle, and those calls can be anything. We've also had over 275 different events with the international mentors, the transition mentors, the residence dons, the commuter dons, VicReady, Ideas for the World, so we've had a lot of events, and the attendance for those is shockingly high. For example, the Humanities for Humanity program, we normally are full and have had 3x as many people sign up, and we've been having to add a whole new thing. There's just a lot of demand and we're seeing it squeezed out in a lot of different places, it's not just people seeking help but people trying to find ways to build community. I know that the issue was raised in VUSAC meetings around when we call campus safety, which was renamed from campus police, for good reasons. So we do call campus safety, we only call them when we deem that you are either a harm to yourself or a harm to others. If those two aren't the case, then we don't call campus safety. It certainly isn't the case for the 450 plus calls that we call campus safety every one of those times. It's only for a few of those cases, and it's because we can't handle the situation ourselves and we think that the students need more than what we can provide. It's definitely not the case that campus safety is what we used to have, they're much more trained and versed in caring responses for students who have mental health concerns. They try absolutely everything possible to not take students off in cuffs, which is what people have asked us. I haven't seen any this year, any students going off in cuffs or any of those circumstances. I've seen those in past years, we've had students with knives, and students with serious issues. But those are the vast minority, and we haven't had any of those cases this year. We've had a couple of situations where campus police attended to students and got them food and took them to mental health resources. Another issue was Stephenson House. I know there's pressing concern. Just so you understand, when I came here originally, the funds were already depleted. So the money that had been bequeathed by Stephenson originally was no longer there. Also, Health and Safety, Fire Departments had



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already come in and said that we couldn't properly zone it for residential use. And so the only way to fund continued, subsidized housing for students was in a co-op form, which is now different because co-op laws have changed. The only way to subsidize that would be to either have our operating budget pay for the residence side which is illegal, because the operating side is funded by the government, which we can't do that. Or to have student fees pay for it, which was really not a fair option in our minds, because that would mean that people who can't afford to live on residence are subsidizing people who will live on residence. I'm happy to answer questions about that, but that's sort of the underlying thing that you might not understand about Stephenson House. I can talk about other issues than that, but I'm going to pass that on to Rhonda right now, and I'm happy to answer questions on student space, and academic start dates that are proposed as well.

*President of Victoria University: President McEwen (5 minutes)*

Rhonda: Hi everybody, I have had the pleasure of meeting a lot of you already, and this is the benefit of being a small campus. Many of you know I came from University of Toronto Mississauga, where I've been for about 13-14 years, so my meeting like this were with students and I always look forward to them. I want to thank you, right off the bat, for the welcome here. I wanted to talk about a few other things, we are currently working through the implementation plan that goes through the strategic framework. And I know not all of you have seen the strategic framework, but if you do get a chance, it's on the website. It's really quite good, and there was a lot of consultation that went into this framework. But it really talks about things I think you'll find familiar at Vic, and we can expand on—things like belonging, and what that truly means. I was a business consultant, so in my head it's how do you make that happen. It's not good enough to just say the word, but what are the specific actions we're going to take to make that happen. So for each of the four pillars of the student framework I've been working with my team, like these three on the stage, and a few others, to come up with the actual actions of each portfolio that will speak to the pieces. And my goal is to publish this, make it available and easy to find, on our website. That's part of my commitment to you on transparency, because you should be able to find the information that you're thinking of looking for. There's some really good things happening but it's hard to locate it. This is also for accountability, so we can see the actions and be accountable to you for the actions. And if I were you this is what I'd ask for from my administration, to be able to say these things and go back and see if those things happened or not, so we can say here's where we are on achieving those goals. It should be something that we can implement and measure. We're pretty far down the track on coming up with our first draft, and the board will approve, and I'll make it public information. I also wanted to talk about Divestment. When I came here, when I was interviewed, I asked the board what are the big issues I need to worry about, and the first thing they said was fossil fuel divestment. In our first meeting with our bursar, he talked about our property in Saskatchewan, that was given to Vic by



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a donor. And, that the Saskatchewan government approached us and said that we'd like to extract, and that was about ten years ago. And to this point that's what's been going on there. That's currently public information, as I've said they haven't been hiding that from us, so we've been working on that from pretty much Day 1, and this has been one of my priorities. If you had the chance to read really well the article of the Strand, this Fall, you would've heard from me on this topic. I'm talking about, and I'm willing to talk about, that I pretty firmly, have strong beliefs about what a university that talks about their values and should be getting involved in it. Times have changed, there was a time where that was not a major concern, in fact, the fact that the property brings in about half a million dollars per year, and we use here at Vic, that's been important to get, especially in a time where the government has underfunded universities very significantly. So we've gone from public universities, like this one, have gone to be funded only a quarter of our money comes in from the government. So it's been really challenging to find other sources of income that isn't jacking these up to a level that students cannot attend. So it's a really interesting conundrum that we're in and that we're working through, but that doesn't stop my fundamental belief that there must be other ways, and I'm pushing the team to find what those other ways are. And it may not always be, and there will be consequences to having a principle and standing by it, you have to be able to stand by what's going to happen next. It might mean a reduction of what our steady income for a while is, and that's going to impact our programs. And so I have to be very careful in how I execute this. It's not all up to me, the board has responsibility on this. I sit on all of the Board committees, I sit on property, investment, finance and budgeting, governance, so all of these committees have a stake in this, but we are working through those angles, and I have a real privilege of being president with a new board chair, Cynthia Chrysler and I from Day 1 have known that this is what we've got to fix. And so, to have that commitment from the chairperson of the board and the President, I think is a really great start, and you have very strong voices from your student government on those same committees, so I think we can make some really strong progress. I want you to know that I will always share with you the risks we are taking when we take this stand, because there are risks, and this is not insignificant, half a million dollars is not a small amount of money to walk away from, there is no other investment that will bring us that return. So we will be working with our financial people to try and find a way and if we are bringing in less, then try to make sure that you don't feel that less. That's me being as honest and transparent as I can, we are already making headway, but I'm not able to tell you yet what that headway is because of board confidentiality, but we have taken a very strong first step, and I hope to make a big announcement with my colleagues in the new year. We aren't doing great in terms of EDI, I think the academy has made changes over the years, we have made some strides, there are still places where people with physical disabilities cannot access. We're doing an update on the elevator in Emmanuel College, and it's one elevator for the whole building, we have to take those classrooms and move them to a more accessible location. These are big things and we're



working hard on these issues, not to say you shouldn't keep applying pressure, that's your job to make sure we're showing up on these issues, but I am quite hopeful as I've seen universities do much better. I also am very proud of the work that VUSAC and the student body here have done over the years to keep these issues at the forefront, and the work that you've done matters. It matters, we listen to it, we read it, we actually action it. So it's really important to us, talking to us on things that are happening to you, and if there are ways for us to do better then we will do better. I also want to apologise on behalf of the administration, for anything that hurt people along the way. But, people weren't always brave to say what they've gotten wrong. I see it in the other universities I've worked at, and I've seen it here, but at least there's a will to do much better. I do want to give you that credit, and that for sure you have my solid commitment to make strides there. Because we can't have belonging in our strategic framework, and then have problems in our classrooms, outside of classrooms, in research labs, there are many places where they should not be operating the way they should be. So I just want to give you my commitment on that.

*Principal's Office: Principal Esterhammer (5 minutes)*

Angela: An abbreviated report, I know that my two colleagues have spoken about issues that are front of mind for a lot of students, as they are for us. So just a few words on what the Principal's Office is doing. This is the time of year when I would say, we spend  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our time running the current year's academic programs and courses, co-curricular academic events, plenary lectures, poetry and fiction readings, academic events put on by the two research centres. We spend the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our time planning for the next academic year, and for the future. That's things like working with lots of different units and departments, and the other colleges, to plan our academic programs, because they are very interdisciplinary academic programs, and working on longer term curriculum change. Couple of things that are exciting that have happened, is governance cycles to make changes to the curriculum in Vic programs. We have introduced some really important new courses such as a course on residential schools in Canada, in the Education & Society program, and of course the global renaissance in the Renaissance program, which would take a broader view in contrast to the traditionally western-oriented view of renaissance studies. Also a really important initiative for us, is we're on the point of launching a working group, a very student-focused working group on EDI in the curricula of Victoria College programs in particular. That's in the process of being formed, and will be active in the next semester, the purpose is really to ensure student voices are fully heard and listened to, and that the process of academic change is as transparent as possible. I'll basically end there, the other kinds of things my office does ranges from organizing the scholars in residence program, all our academic programs and courses, and working together with other colleges on issues that concern all the colleges. If you wanna hear about any more of that, please feel free to ask.



*Registrar's Office: Yvette Ali (5 minutes)*

Yvette: Hi everybody, I'm Yvette, I'm the Registrar. I've been asked to talk about what's happening in our office, and I'll try to be quick and mindful of the time. During the pandemic, we were really busy and we continue to be. I just want to remind people that students are still welcome to come to us for one-on-one academic advising, we also have drop-ins twice a week. What we see is the majority of students wanting to see us virtually, but I wanted to remind you all that our offices are open, and we'd love to see you in person. Even drop-ins, we can see you in person or online, it's your choice. Peer mentoring has Math, Physics, and Chemistry has resumed, that service is being offered in a hybrid model. Two questions that I know are important to VUSAC, that I wanted to take this opportunity to talk about is awards for underprivileged students. To be honest, we at Vic, we are leaders in this area. We are, as far as I'm aware, one of the few academic units that offer generous awards to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color students who demonstrate financial need. So we make an effort to let these students know they've received the award before they have to accept their offer to UofT, so they can feel certain that they can afford their education here. These year, we gave out eight opportunity awards, and these are generous awards that provide full year housing in residence, as well as a \$5000 renewable scholarship for tuition. Rhonda and I have been talking about what sorts of supports we can have in place, to make sure that these students feel supported and that they have what they need to be successful. The other thing I'll mention for current students, we continue to have Vic Bursaries, just a reminder that you can apply at any time, and see us in our office, we're happy to help you. The other question was about Indigenous students. I am pleased to say that every single applicant to Vic who self identified as Indigenous, met the Faculty of Arts and Science cutoff for admission, was admitted to Vic and several of them did receive admission scholarships. All of UofT finds it challenging for various reasons to track Indigenous students but I think that we're making good headway, and we're really committed to supporting students. I don't know if you're all aware, but one of our students, an Indigenous student, received a Rhodes scholarship, one of the things she mentions when you talk to her is the opportunity to be mentored by faculty, and how that helped her. We're making progress but these things take time, but we're working on them.

*Question and Answer Period: 40 minutes*

Rebecca: First off, thank you for being here, we really appreciate it, as you probably already know, many of us here are wearing red to demonstrate our support for Vic Divest. As a federated college, Vic has still not committed to divest even though the rest of UofT has. At this point it is past the time for Vic to divest. Though we understand that this is a decision for the Board of Regents, there are still many questions that can be addressed here at Caucus. We eagerly await for the decisions with regards to sustainability, and believe that there is a distinct lack of transparency when it comes to sustainability at Vic. At the moment, Vic has very few avenues for



students to determine what steps we're taking to be more sustainable. The Vic page on sustainability has the annual reports which are very minimal on detail, and they tend to focus on building for energy efficiency but there is next to nothing on any other forms of sustainability work done here at Vic. The sustainability committee meetings that are advertised as an avenue for student feedback has only been open to a very limited number of students. Furthermore, these meetings are only an hour in length three times a year. Many students feel that this is insufficient, and that we don't have a means for getting involved in Vic sustainability plans. How can we ensure that not only is Vic being transparent in sustainability efforts, but students have a substantial way of getting involved in these decisions?

Rhonda: Thank you so much and I'm really happy and it's wonderful to hear this passion on sustainability. I'm 100% onboard with you. I was talking with our sustainability folks about opening up some forums so there would be more ability for others to participate, and they are very open to that. They didn't think students wanted to come and spend more time, but they are more enthusiastic about it, so look out, there will be more invitations and I encourage you to come out when those meetings are happening. We'll try and hold them multiple times a year so if you don't make one you can make another one of them. I also agree with you, that what can be on the website, we need to use it to be more transparent, and I think there's a lot more that we can have out there. I'm looking forward to having a page dedicated to this, and having a place for you to have feedback, not just when those meetings take place but a bit throughout the year, so that it's more of a conversation.

Annie: Thank you for the recycling bins having organics in them, the light gray bins that are around most of campus won't take organics but they will take lids, coffee cups, Hart House takes organics but not the sleeves or the lids. So various parts and various buildings of campus are contradictory and it can be confusing in general to students it particular. So what I'm really looking for, is if there is a concerted effort across campus to be consistent, and if not, why not, and when can it happen?

Rhonda: I myself have noticed this, and I don't know enough about this but it is very important. It's part of the overall issue so I just made a note on it, and if you don't mind let me get back to you on this one. It seems like something we can do something about pretty quickly.

Diana: Last year, numerous students reported both publicly and privately struggling to find housing during the winter break. Do you think Victoria University's current resources for winter break housing are sufficient, and if not, what steps have you taken to improve them?



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Kelley: So there are lots of different issues around it. One of them is that Vic in particular has seventeen different entrances to residences, and the way it's set up is that you'd have one person on one floor manning two people, it wouldn't be very sustainable and be very costly, having one person be there for one person on residence. Which brings us back to the problem I was saying with Stephenson House, and that other people would be sustaining non-residence students and other residence students would be paying for students who stay in residence and we didn't want to have that. But we're investigating now, because it's becoming more and more of an issue post-COVID, because it becomes harder to travel and people may or may not be able to go home, etc. We're exploring and trying to find out in advance whether or not students want winter housing, and if they do then those people would be in Marg Ad, and the problem would be less cumbersome, and more affordable.

Diana: Is there a way for students to be involved in that initiative and do you have any timeline of when that'd happen?

Kelley: I'd like to be hopeful for September, and the Dean's Advisory Committee, send a message to Heidi, and you can come to the Dean's Advisory Committee meeting, we'll put it on the agenda.

Yvette: If you have difficulty paying for winter housing, please contact our office, and we can help you with the additional cost with the bursary.

Diana: How are those resources being publicized to students and how are you making sure that they're accessible to students who aren't sure they qualify?

Yvette: We have it on our published, it's on our website, we do our best, we have the funds and I'm saying to everyone here, just contact us, we're happy to help you with that. I'll make sure that the people who review the bursaries are aware of these requests coming in.

Kelley: We can circulate that to the residence students now, as a reminder.

Shane: We have an anonymous question, during Victoria College Orientation leader training, topics of SA, response, aftercare, and prevention were spoken about but only through campus wide mandated leadership training. What specific college-wide training, if any, is Victoria College planning to deliver to orientation leaders. What measures are being taken to promote those resources to incoming students, not only during orientation but throughout the year? How is Victoria College making sure that these resources are being delivered to students in-residence and commuters?



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Kelley: So we have a bunch of different conduits, and it's interesting because it depends what resources you're talking about. Most of the time we have responsive resources—when someone is sexually violated, or when someone experiences gender violation, or when someone experiences sexual harassment, they'll come to us afterward seeking support, and that's when we make available to you the resources. Preventative things, however, are things that can happen through peers and locally. One of the things we do is training for IMs and TMs, residence and commuter dons, and everyone in our office has training specifically for sexual violence. Training changes, consent training changes and we review that on a regular basis and we have programming for those. We do, do it during orientation. We used to do a training session on orientation, largely around the date-rape drug. Because a lot of the situations that come to us are situational and we've tried to move our orientation training to being more about clarification and consent.

Shane: I think the question was asking more about leaders. Because we have mentors and dons who get different training from leaders, and leaders only really have training before orientation week. Is there anything other than that that Victoria College could be doing?

Ali: We were really lucky because we did partner with Trinity College, to get sexual violence training to all leaders. We were leading that part of the training, I totally agree that we can do more, and this year we did have more training than the centralized leadership training.

Zoe: I wanted to talk about Stephenson House, which Kelley already brought up, but not everyone knows what that means, so I'm going to very briefly give context. So in 1939 Professor Stephenson donated a collection of properties to Vic with a number of stipulations. The one of most importance is that one of the houses would be made into a co-operative house. Within this agreement, it says if Vic wanted to use this property for any other purpose, the university would use \$30,000, which is now 700,000 with inflation to open up a new affordable housing option for students. And Vic upheld this promise for decades, moving the house from 77 Charles to 80 St Mary's and finally 63 Charles until 2010. But in 2010, despite much student protest, the board motioned to shut down Stephenson House, the only less expensive housing option where students didn't have to pay the meal plan. However, student activists at the time negotiated with the administrators such as Kelley Castle, Paul Gooch, to move Stephenson House and what they agreed on is that Stephenson House would be moved into the RJ mansion, and that the RJ mansion would embody the values of Stephenson House. But this didn't happen, the mansion isn't at Stephenson House right now, it's not more affordable than the other residence options, and it doesn't have a reduced meal plan. I just wanted to know why that happened.



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Kelley: So, it wasn't moved, we tried it for a year in Law House and it didn't work out very well because what people wanted was to cook for themselves. Health and Safety said that we could have eight, and we were talking about eight people getting massively subsidized housing. There was \$12,000 left and they wanted that money that was leftover to be handed in to something that was both community student focused, and he wanted it to be in the Humanities for Humanity program, because it would go to students and community members themselves. We didn't wind up relocating it, and we have had conversations, subsequently, about whether or not something like that could happen. And it really boiled down to subsidizing students at the expense of others.

Zoe: I would like to point out that that privilege would be a needs basis and not just random students selected, rather to help people that did need that help.

Rhonda: I wanted to reiterate what Yvette said earlier which is that we have other mechanisms for those students. We are actually giving residence places to people who can't afford to live on residence. The spirit of those are still existing in a different format. Kelley also mentioned that the co-op rules have changed a lot and it wouldn't be as attractive. What was, is not even possible, and which is why I think that what we have now is a better use of the philosophy of what this was, of students and community working in harmony.

Shane: Another question is from VOICES, for anyone who doesn't know they're a branch of the PEARS Project—Prevention, Empowerment, Advocacy, and Response for Survivors, they're pretty well known. Recently there's been a lot of controversy surrounding the Varsity Article about UTM professor Robert Reisz, and his misconduct. Is Victoria College planning to release a statement condemning the actions of this professor, and if not, why? Furthermore, will you address this situation with action and how?

Rhonda: Interestingly, this is one I know a lot about because I was at UTM, and I was Vice-Principal Academic and Dean. I think, what I want you to be aware of is that not everything you read is the full story of the thing. There's no possible way that what went on could be described fully. There are many people who are harmed in that story. What you do hear, you will hear partially what comes out. What I can tell you was that there was a full investigation, and external investigations came in for this case and did a very thorough investigation. There were interviews. One of the critiques that I read is that it took a really long time, but at the same time, to do a really good investigation, you better take a long time to do your work well. Was every stone turned on this one? I've dealt with many of these, I wasn't involved in this particular case but I read all the particular documentation, and I had to be brought up to speed. What I can say is that there were recommendations from the investigators and that all of those were taken. In the end of it, when I look at the view I say, there was an accusation, there was a review, there was



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judgment, the judgment was executed. Will everybody be happy with the end of these things? I wish the answer was always yes, I know that it cannot be yes, because there will be people who feel that what they wanted was taken. I can say categorically that under my watch and purview, I can say that due process is followed and we do what we are recommended to do. And that is what I will say. Any statement from me would not be appropriate because there's a lot of this that I know of, that is not possible to put into the public domain because of the illegal situations around it. I think people should advocate if they feel like they want more information, and that would come from UofT. If this was something from Victoria University that I could do more about then I would, but that's about as much as I can do.

Shane: Just a quick follow up, I wanted to ask, do you think that UofT will say anything about this? There's a lot of students making noise about it, and you might not know the answer to that question.

Rhonda: It's not unfair, I'm putting myself back in my old role, and I couldn't say anything then. This is a closed case that went all the way through the system and it's closed. Do I think that maybe there's room for more dialogue that some people can hear what I just said to you, perhaps, but there may be reasons that UofT may not choose to do that, and I would respect that.

Amy: The reality is, is that the world is changing, and that this generation is likely going to be worse off than our parents. And we are facing a world of natural disasters and scarce resources that are and will continue to exacerbate these systems of oppression. In his op-ed in the Varsity, the director of the School of the Environment, Steve Esterbrook, wrote that we should be preparing our students for discontinuous future, one where past assumptions of future careers are likely wrong. That means that we're doing every single program of study across the university to ensure and equip our students with the knowledge they need to face this new world. I'd also like to add that this includes integrating decolonial perspectives and learning about governance, law, and the environment. I wanted to ask, how are you going to incorporate climate justice into the curriculums at Vic?

Rhonda: Steve's a really good friend of mine, we actually do a lot of things together. I know where he's coming from because he's trying to drive change from a particular angle here. What I'll say is one or two things. One, is that the most important thing for me that we can gift to our students is the ability to find the data and the resources, and analyse it appropriately and be strong enough and brave enough to take action. In terms of details in climate justice, we can definitely support these, curriculum doesn't change overnight. If you think about UofT and the perspectives of what you can do in the courses, those are commitments we make. When we put something out, we need to make sure we have all the resources to back that particular area.



Those curriculum seems like a long time to come through. I'm particularly excited about Creativity & Society, and in there, it'd be almost exactly what you're talking about, topic-based ideas, creatively thinking about what solutions and how we can create solutions for society. That's one that will be a Vic program that I'm excited about, and applying creative solutions to the world's problems. It's already been submitted in governance and we hope to soon have that one come out, and we're always looking to see those ways to prepare students. But never forget that we might leave here and what you're learning how to do in those courses is how to find good information, analyse it really well, and how to take action on those issues. I feel very confident that the kind of things that you're going to do in your courses lead you up that path as well.

Angela: I'll briefly second all of that, I think that the program we're working very hard on, the major Creativity & Society, actually builds on the existing minor in Creative Expression and Society, which is already in place. That's going to be a program that is transdisciplinary where creativity is interpreted as social innovation, creativity in sciences, as well as the way climate justice is an increasingly prominent issue in creative expression. So that's very well relevant, so is the working group that I mentioned earlier. As you said, climate justice in the curriculum can also be an aspect to decolonizing the curriculum and that's exactly what we're going to be talking about in these student focus group. So I would encourage you or anyone else to get in touch with me if you want to be involved in the working group.

Kelley: If you contact my office you can find out more about Humanities for Humanity, as well.

Shane: This question is on food related issues, are there any plans to expand the food options at Ned's Cafe? There's the opportunity for a sandwich and pizza bar at Burwash but only pasta is offered at Ned's. Even if students were to go to Burwash, they'd have to pay the full price just for a sandwich, whereas Ned's would be a more convenient option.

Kelley: Yeah, that's on me. I said can we have pasta bars at Ned's, cause students would like it. And so now they have pasta bars constantly. They're gonna start something in January, so it would be stir fry, pasta bar, and micro meals.

Zach: As we all know inflation is impacting everybody. I want to know, how are all of you ensuring that besides bursaries, and students in dire financial need, that the costs of inflation are not falling on students and making sure that students don't have to go to other places for their food, which would cost them more money potentially.



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Rhonda: On one hand, we'll lose some revenue for reasons we must, on the other hand, we don't want to put that on students. So we have to be very careful, and we're being as fiscally responsible and careful that as much as possible to move and shift those costs, but there are costs. While I try to balance all these issues, can I do something like make sure that every building gets accessible by 2023, which I have to by legislation. A lot of this comes down to making those hard decisions, what comes off deck. And I'm hearing these food options, and I'm thinking, as long as they don't raise my costs somewhere else. Because I do want to make sure that the fees stay where they are. Food costs, I know we're absorbing some loss, so it's already a difficult situation but we're gonna try and be as creative as possible. I'm doing a lot of work on advancement, and seeing if we can raise funds in other ways and I'm also thinking of investments. It's always on that balance, and I'm working with the board and my team to try and keep the things that matter to us most.

Zach: You mentioned food costs, why are we not ensuring that students that aren't using up the full amount of their meal plan is it not carrying over to the future so they can't use it again. In my first year, I had \$2000 to my mealplan that was just lost, and the following year I had \$800 left. How are we ensuring that students will be able to use up their plan, are we going to allow them to carry over their plan, what's the plan with that?

Kelley: So we are of course, working on that, one thing we do is we prepare the meals and if they don't eat them then they're still prepared. So that's one of the fundamental problems with that. Most meal plans have a missed meal factor, so they know that you won't use a certain amount. One of the discussions we have with the board is that the rule is that you can raise the fees by CPI + 2%, so the consumer price index plus 2%. Food costs went up by 14% last year and we expect it to go up by 20% this year. Again, we're back in the conundrum where the carry forward would also be the same thing, and then we'd have to pay for the food that was already made that wasn't eaten. We're in a difficult situation, because students would be paying for students. So we are looking for more flexible meal plans, we're trying to have longer hours in Burwash so that prepared meals would be consumed and we're trying to look at that all of the same time.

Rhonda: Nick Saul, our chancellor, his thing is food waste. There's a significant amount of work we need to do better at Vic on food waste. On one hand, I hear the issue we have here but our food team they have some really good suggestions on how we can get better at this. We should get better at estimating what's going to be used, we're working on updating our things there. But honestly it really bothers me to see food waste. COVID rules make it so that we can't even give it away, so it gets thrown away. So this really bugs me but we do need creative ideas to reduce our costs.



Sooyeon: This is for Principal Esterhammer, are there considerations being made for Iranian students who could potentially face difficulties in submitting their applications due to the ongoing protests?

Angela: That's something I will have to pass on to one of my colleagues because I don't have any information on that as of yet.

Yvette: I'm trying to rememebr the name but there's an award available, scholars at risk, for students who are impacted by any political situation. I'm not too sure about UofT waiving the application fee, I know they do offer that to some students where they don't have to pay the application fee if they can prove financial hardship.

Rhonda: What I know is that the international office of uoft is actively on the Iranian file right now, they do fall under the Scholars at Risk category, and what we're doing is making sure that there's a way for those students to get here. It's quite complicated but we've done it for Pakistan, Ukraine, and more. We actually have the process so now they're just lining up for Iran how they fit in the scbolars at risk program.

Sooyeon: Is there any consideration for flexible deadline in terms of when students can submit an application by?

Yvette: I don't think there's any provision like that anywhere at UofT.

Rhonda: Last year, we put them into other kinds of prep programs like getting their english sorted until the application period came around. We got a lot of non-governmental organizations to help all universities to try and do the right thing. Also getting visas are a massive problem. The Canadian government has been struggling to get visas through for international students. It has been very hard, even if we have the processes, it's hard to get people here to get them through the visa process, and we have no control over visas. All we can do is line up our processes but in the meantime we have canadian embassy people on the ground there to try and get students to come, then whenever the visas come through we can see students come through.

Callan: Thank you all for being here. I have a question regarding the campus of Victoria as a whole, and how it's changed over time. I'm a little concerned as to where it used to be and where it is now and I hope that better decisions are being made in the consideration of the future. To give a few items for example, Birge-Carnegie Library was the original student library of Victoria University, which also held a student café in the basement, it's currently closed to students except for one room—and it's unused so that's disappointing. The Gardiner Museum used to be



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student tennis courts and recreational space was given for free. The Isabel Bader Theatre used to be student tennis courts, The Colonnade used to be five separate buildings of student housing. The Britannica Building, also used to be student housing. The Lillian Massey building, the first recreational facility for women at the University of Toronto, including common rooms, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool and we leased it to a luxury retail store and has now sat vacant for 2 years. Margaret Addison Field used to contain a gymnasium, field house, and skating rink for students in addition to the open field, it's now gated and locked to students unless there is a specific event scheduled. The original location of a student gymnasium and staff housing, demolished to lease the land to an insurance firm, McKinsey. University Apartments, the original location of administrative offices, which have since been forced to encroach on student spaces like Wymilwood and The Goldring Student Centre. 63/65 Charles, too. Again, this is not an extensive list but that's concerning to me and I hope it's concerning to everyone else, and I hope that we are conscious of it, and the fact that spaces have gone down while student enrollment has gone up. We have a huge population here, and a whole bunch of people with way less buildings and spaces to access. For commuter students have nowhere to go on the weekends, Old Vic, Goldring, and Birge-Carnegie used to be open on the weekends, but they're closed. So I would just like to know, where do we go from here?

Rhonda: The histories you lay out are really interesting. I will say that overall, there are more student housing that there were before. To hold in perspective that firstly, I can't tell you why each decision was made, but there are more places for students to live than there used to be and some of the places you talk about are for that reason. Financially, every decade the ramped down their funding to universities and we had to find something to do with that. One of the biggest asset we have is the value of the land, and we've been able to take that and reinvest it so that we have the programs that we have, bursaries. It's always one hand or the other. It saddens me about green space, it does, but the good news is that we're trying to use that for geothermal energy. Marg Ad is gonna give us a third that UofT is getting from the UC field. My understanding of the field is that the students can use Marg Ad field, and you can just get the key from the Marg Ad front desk. It's locked because of what happens to green space in the city. But I think that all Vic students can get the key from the Marg Ad front desk. I would encourage you to use that space, it's great space. Lillian Massey, I'll say something about that,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the building is academic, it is UofT, there are student spaces. I personally think we can do something really cool there, and there are some things in the works that we're working on for that. Gardiner Museum, yeah I heard that story, they always talk about this, I hear you on that one, I think there's more, and they're searching for a new director there and I'd like to get some programming there. Material Culture program is doing well there and what they give us through that is quite significant.



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Yvette: UofT's facilities in terms of athletics have really upped their game. The Goldring High Performance Center, there's no way we can afford something like that. There are lots of good facilities.

Kelley: Two things-one is that other colleges don't have dedicated student spaces. We are having conversations about what it'll take to have longer hours and I think that would be a great thing. We think that it's servicing commuter students but we're finding that it's servicing residence students disproportionately, because they want to leave their room, that kind of stuff. Helping resident students at the expense of commuter students, which is the risk side. We also have Burwash Study Space starting Dec 9th-19th, and runs all night.

Rhonda: The other thing I wanted to mention was Birge-Carnegie. It's not just a travesty that's not available for students but for faculty too. My lab just moved in there, the floors are unsafe. Birge is not in good shape but we have a big campus plan that I will be sharing with everyone as it comes through, and Birge is not going to stay empty. We still need to use it, so there are plans that are coming, Northrop Frye is not in the best shape either, so there are some moves that need to be made on this campus. The other thing I wanted to say that I've spoken to VUSAC about, is we really need to start thinking of student spaces differently at Victoria University. These spaces are your spaces, and if you want to talk to someone about when they're accessible, I am with you on that. Empty classrooms, these are places to study. Every space is a student space, so I'm gonna try to help with that part.

Jackie: I asked about the early starting dates of U of T, which they claim to start it from the academic year 2024-25, asking why they were so adamant about it despite the obvious harms for students - such as reduced work hours, housing problems, moving problems etc. I asked whether it was to increase tuition with the excuse of extra days opening facilities, staff, professors, they said that it's a new perspective that they never thought about and such. But then, in a passing statement, they said that the extra fees will befall on the students. This is very concerning and disturbing, which I think we should try to discuss later on.

Kelley: I hadn't even thought about that. That being said, it's not my decision and I've been very vocal about it. However, I do understand the problem that they're trying to solve, which is that there's an alignment that they're trying to have between campuses between Mississauga and Scarborough, and also other faculties like engineering. And I've been here since 1995, and they've been discussing it since then. It's not a new problem, and it's one that UofT Vice Provost wants to solve. That has come from relatively high up, and it seems rather concrete. However I'm reminded that we can flip the switch on this. For context, the University of Toronto has announced that in all likelihood, the start date of classes September 2024 will be the day after



labor day. Orientation will be squeezed, it used to be five days long, and now it's squeezed and moved before labor day, if it's to happen at all, which has many different impacts in my mind. I think it underestimates the importance of orientation, thinking it's just a social event. The EDI training and other trainings that happen during orientation week will be impacted, especially for international students who need some introduction to what's expected culturally here and what's expected at UofT. It's also a financial issue because people would need housing during that month of August, and many students wouldn't be able to work. So those are the things at risk. I don't think it's a tuition thing but there probably will be associated costs.

Rhonda: When I was at UTM, we had a different start date than St. George. This inconsistency across campuses means that some staff work earlier than other staff, this is a bigger problem. I don't know if money is the thing because there would be less money for students. But the other problem I need everyone to understand that they're trying to solve is the end of the semester. This is where the problem is lying. These exam schedules are not lining up. The other thing that affected it was Reading Week, it pushed out the terms an extra week, so now we're in a situation where there's no more time. It's a matter of the calendar now and they're trying to get it all in, which is what's happening. I don't want you to feel like this is a random idea, there were four options presented, each of them have a plus and a minus. They're trying to work through what would be the best option—I don't like the front end getting squished, and I've spoken with other presidents and we all agree that it doesn't work for us. We've been having conversations on the backend about this, and I do understand the problem, and I want to make sure that you understand the problem as well.

Jackie: Will they be publicizing this properly and getting information from students, because barely anyone knows?

Kelley: It's a post-hoc consultation, but there's a committee with the Vice-Provost to discuss. So if you'd like more information and to get your voice heard, I'd contact Sandy Welsh, the Vice-Provost of Students. She's been very openly wanting to have a conversation, and I would encourage you to do it.

Rebecca: I know that a few of us have become aware that there are less full time workers being employed at Burwash and Ned's. Most of those are students or contract workers who are not getting the benefit of a guaranteed rehire at the end of the year, and not getting the pension that full-time workers are getting. There's less and less workers getting hired. I just wanted to know if there are actions being taken to protect the rights of these workers?



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Rhonda: I am talking to John Ackerman who is our Head of Union. What I can say is that HR is working very closely with the union. I don't know if you have been hearing this but it's really hard to find people who will take these jobs right now. The optics right now looks like that but that's not always the case. We have cases where we have people offering jobs and we're not getting those jobs still. We, right now, have jobs open that we're getting very few applicants for, and we still have to run these services. We're in conversation with union and there's lots more going on behind the scenes. What I'm really happy about here is the relationship we have with our union head, this is a much larger problem and we're trying to find ways around it but it's not as straightforward as people waiting for these jobs and we're refusing to give it to them.

Zoe: Callan already brought up the Goldring Student Centre, so right now the only operating hours, commuter students don't have a space to go to when they're closed. So here are a couple of things, students want access to GSC 24/7, it's a student centre, we pay for it in our student fees, so I'm still wondering why we can't have access to it. There was also a change, before COVID, if you had an office in the GSC you had a key to your office, people that are in these unions and clubs don't have access to their space anymore. I think students want two things, they want access to Goldring all the time, and if they have an office in there, they want a key to it.

Kelley: The key problem is definitely something we can work on. The issue that we have is with the 24/7, so the student fee goes to mortgage of GSC, it does not go into keeping the doors open. Keeping the doors open is a much more expensive proposition. We need security cause we have multiple exits, even when we try to keep it open late we have security issues. We don't have a high usage very much after 11:00, so I'd be less inclined to do 24/7, even though I agree in general that, interestingly, there was a study done that it decreases substance abuse to have 24/7 access to student space, which is a really interesting thing. It's good for social environments, it's good for study, it's good for all kinds of things. I don't disagree with you, that's one of the reasons we implemented the overnight study space. So I'll have a conversation with people to see what we can do and it's the same conversation of who's paying for that, cause students are in fact paying for the building but not to keep it open, so that's a pretty substantial cost. I think we can look at what's the night it's used most and keep the door open to that conversation.

Rhonda: I just want to end and say we are working for you. There's no chance that anybody here is not pushing as hard as we can. I love these ideas, keep them coming. We are on your side on this and there is a limited budget, but I'm trying my best to keep all these things. If I have to give security 24/7 then something else comes off the table. We have to make sure we make the best decision for everyone. If we have a conversation where it's give us more and we're willing to take this off the table, that is so much more of a dialogue. Otherwise it'll just be more, more, more, and I'm sitting here thinking how I'm gonna pay for it. But I am on your side, and



everyone sitting up here, I have not met a more dedicated group of people than the Vic Administration. And I'm really pleased to be here for that reason, and you guys are pure fire and I love the work that you're doing as a student body. Keep putting pressure on, but also bring creative solutions because you're smart. We will take both your critique and your pressure and your ideas, and those things together will do some magical things.

*Motion by Jackson Leslie for a fifteen minute recess, seconded by Michael Elsaesser.  
All in favour. None opposed. None abstaining. Motion passes.*

**ACTION ITEMS:**

*Motion: Sooyeon Lee to endorse the Council Statement Re: Robert Reisz, as it appears in Appendix A, Seconded by Jackson Leslie (5 minutes)*

Sooyeon: For people that don't know, Robert Reisz is a professor at the Biology department at UTM, and he was recently found guilty of a whole bunch of awful things, such as academic bullying and they've all been found to be true. So he is guilty of all these things, the VUSAC Executive and we want to sign it on behalf of the entire VUSAC, because I think it's important that we stand up against the horrible things that Robert Reisz has done, and it's not something we support at the university. So basically we're echoing what PEARS did, and in the PEARS open letter, they listed the following demands which were; one, terminate Robert Reisz, it's ridiculous that he's still employed and still scheduled to teach in the Winter. Secondly, issue a formal statement condemning the acts of Robert Reisz and an apology to the survivors, and lastly, hire external investigatory bodies. And I know that Rhonda said that they followed all policy recommendations, and that the recommendation wasn't to fire him and for him to continue teaching. So, I think we should sign it and I bring forward the motion for the entire VUSAC council to sign it as well.

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

*Motion: Sooyeon Lee to sign the "Open Letter regarding Robert Reisz's violence and the University's negligence and complicity," written by The PEARS Project (3 minutes)*

Sooyeon: Now that we've motioned to endorse the council statement, we also want to make sure that everyone is also signing on what PEARS also wrote. They wrote a very informative statement and I would like us all to sign as a council to sign the statement.

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



DISCUSSION ITEMS:

*Student housing over Winter Break, put forth by Diana Vink (10 minutes)*

Diana: I was somewhat pleased with the response we just got, but I still want to make sure that students this year have places to live over winter break. So what can we do to facilitate students having places to live? If you're not familiar with the current options, it's \$129/night subsidized, with taxes, \$2700. I want to make sure students have safe places to go. I know that one of the things we should do is promote the Vic Bursaries, it could be really helpful to publicize that.

Tariq: If there could be an option similar to that price point. Everything has a price, so I think bursaries are available but I think every time we have money issues, would we be able to present to student projects and use that money as funding to support students?

Diana: I don't believe that given the time constraint, and when we would need this by, I'm not sure we'd be able to get a full understanding of the monetary estimate of what we would need.

Jiwoo: Applications close on the 3rd.

Diana: We'd need that done this week.

Tariq: Is that something we can do retroactively?

Zoe: I just wanted to say something, I think it's too unsustainable to have students in random places, and I'm kind of calling her out for that. They have those housing options for dons, and they're making those exceptions for them.

Rebecca: Echoing what Zoe said, these residences are already open for the dons and I know that it's a liability issue because with the dons there's some kind of supervision. A bursary has a lot of weird requirements—you need to prove immense financial need and that it's an emergency and that can be very difficult if you're in a bad situation and it's not recent. Some people might not be comfortable, so telling people to just apply for the Vic Bursary isn't necessarily productive.

Lara: Is there any way we can facilitate an off-campus student program that they offer their housing over the break if they go home for the holiday?

Jerico: I support student mutual initiatives, I think it fosters community and how you're doing grassroots things like this. I encourage everyone as individuals to think about how to perform mutual aid. Students are being put in weird situations for housing, and we need to mutually aid people. I'd also like to make a direct to Tariq for student projects, as far as I'm aware there's a lot



of issues with Vic student funds, where you can't give that to students directly or have a subsidized rate. You can get around with some other ways, though.

Tariq: I actually think it's a good idea to share houses between students, but we couldn't set that up as VUSAC.

Sooyeon: I had a meeting with Rhonda about what the possibility of housing students over the break would look like. It looks like a hotel system, and there still needs to be someone at the front desk for emergencies. But don't we do that for dons 24/7 anyways? I didn't know what the issue with having additional students there would make.

*Usage of space in the Goldring Student Centre, put forth by Sooyeon Lee (10 minutes)*

Sooyeon: Just a quick recap from the last meeting, I'm working with Caitriona and looking at student spaces and the most popular are Wymilwood, Copper, and rooms that have AV. We have a lot of different kinds of spaces but I kind of wanna know if you're coming into Goldring, are you there in the morning, afternoon, evening, and if you come to hang out or study.

Diana: Do we also have keys to the other spaces Callan mentioned?

Shane: I would say the reason we don't have access to those buildings is because we don't have student offices there. Ali, do you know why?

Ali: I don't know for sure, but I do know that in terms of this space, Birge used to be our student centre, and then this was created. The other ones are academic or retail centred, but not a lot of student spaces.

Rebecca: With getting access to Marg Ad there's a lot of information on that, I think we should communicate that more and the fact we have access to them.

Zoe: I disagree that you need to lock the space, cause we don't lock the quad.

Sooyeon: I also wanted to touch on the accessibility of spaces. During Orientation, I was on crutches, and the Orientation Exec was in the guest houses. And there aren't elevators and it's an accessibility issue. I don't know if there are any other inaccessible spaces at Vic. A lot of spaces are old, and the one elevator in the dining hall is old and nonfunctional. I think there's a lot of issues with how our spaces are being used.



Zach: For Birge, it's planned to be an office space for NF, but it could be a student space after that.

Shane: Birge Carnegie reading room then becomes a meeting room.

Diana: There are no elevators in the Burwash residences. There's an accessibility problem for students at residence, there is an elevator in Northrop Frye, and i know there's one in Emmanuel and EJ Pratt.

Jackie: The Annesley building has an elevator but on the outside there's no ramp. There's a lot of accessibility issues from ground level.

Rebecca: I was gonna say the same with the elevators at Old Vic. Half the people I know last year didn't know that the elevator existed, so some signs can be helpful in terms of accessibility.

Diana: In Old Vic, the sign for the elevator is right next to it. It also scares me that I might get stuck, so just upgrading the accessibility features. I think we also need to think about spaces being accessible beyond being physically accessible. I think it's also important to think about accessibility as multifaceted such as sensory accessibility issues as well.

Callan: President McEwen did say that she's legally required to making buildings more accessible by 2025.

Carolyn: It's especially prevalent in Burwash. While we can place people who have accessibility issues in the first floor, there are still lots of issues with the building.

Sooyeon: I think the idea of putting students on the first floor sounds fine in practice, but if you end up injuring yourself at one point, I think that can become a problem. The building should be accessible regardless. In regards to what Diana mentioned, I think study pods where you can take meetings is something we can apply to student projects for. I think that would be really helpful and beneficial for students.

*Future direction of the Victoria International Students' Association (VISA), put forth by Jackson Leslie (15 minutes)*

Jackson: If you attended our meetings before you would be aware of what we're bringing forth. VISA is the levy that's supposed to represent international students, and they've been inactive for one and a half years. After a period of inactivity we're supposed to dissolve the levy, and something the previous exec was looking into was turning VISA into a commission. It would



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function similar to VOCA, and the international councillor would turn into the international commissioner and oversee the role and make sure that they're taken care of. I wanted to bring this forward, I'm an international student and I don't like that we're not represented. We've been asked if people know we've been looking for a levy head and do we know of anyone who is interested in the role, and how would you feel about increasing those fees?

Michael: I'm VPSO so I oversee clubs and levies. Last year, VISA was relatively inactive until the levy head decided to step down. The former VPSO took over as acting levy head, and I believe last year there was an attempt to get a new levy head. So I stepped into that figure out how that works, since a lot of that was lost. So trying to get access to social media, their bank account, etc has been a challenge. So the question with this is that the commission would not have guaranteed money, what is the state of a levy's autonomy, and the thing is that the commission has the support of the entire council, especially given that they would be starting anew.

Diana: I'm a little worried it's not gonna solve the participation problem. Our issue now is that we don't have people interested. I understand that commissions are parts of VUSAC, I'm not opposed to the idea, but I don't know how much it's gonna solve a problem.

Shane: I get what you're saying, the fear of international students not being interested, but I think VUSAC has to ask ourselves if we've been doing our due diligence, making absolutely sure we can't fill the positions on VISA.

Julie: I think with international student populations it's really important for a student to find a sense of community, and the further away they move the more important it becomes. I understand that it's hard enough to get people to run for things, and I don't think that problem is going to go away. Have we considered reaching out through orientation through ISO, because a lot of people found their friends through there.

Lara: Shane mentioned how council has done their due diligence in the past, and I was not involved in any student organization in my freshman year, but I was following VUSAC on Instagram, and I didn't know VISA existed. I also did not know that there were events for international students, and I didn't know you were looking to fill the position, and I think that when I came into council I noticed we have commissions for commuters, but we don't have these support for VUSAC in terms of international students. And now I'm really looking towards the idea of it being a commission, would be a really good idea. I agree that engagement might be an issue, but if we take it under VUSAC's wing, you're able to have more support from a larger group of people to put these events into place.



Diana: I have a question, I'm wondering what did that process look like, how was that promoted, who did you reach out to?

Michael: I wish I had the answer, unfortunately I haven't had the chance to speak with the previous VPSO on this subject. To my knowledge, the last levy head resigned, the former VPSO ran an event, I'm not sure beyond that what steps were taken to find a levy head.

Ali: Sometimes we twist the way we think of time. Kate was doing a lot of work reaching out, but I agree with Julie about connecting with IMs and ISO. I think it was hard last term because we were deep in COVID, so it was harder to get involvement. You're in a much different space and you can reach out.

Rebecca: I was just gonna ask Michael, has any efforts been made this year to get a levy head?

Michael: We started having discussions of the future of VISA, I've put that on hold how much we plan because we could dissolve the levy. I haven't made a giant effort right now cause we're trying to figure out what the future looks like, but I think the tone of the conversation has been more towards reviving it and I'm more than happy to put in that effort to get that up as soon as possible.

Shane: COVID is really an important factor with lack of student enthusiasm. I think now that we're in a post COVID world, a new effort from VUSAC needs to be made to ensure we've done everything we can.

*Accountability for handing over signing authority, put forth by Michael Elsaesser (10 minutes)*

Michael: A lot of issues came up regarding signing authority with bank accounts, so things got lost or we would need help with letters of direction. So we've had discussions with exec, on how we can make it mandatory before the levy heads receive their honoraria. Cat's Eye has this stipulated in their levy document, so we'd like to put that in other levy documents or in the VUSAC constitution, which overrides all of them. Since we have levy heads here, I'd like to ask if anyone has any thoughts regarding it.

: I know that we didn't have a physical transition but, we had a document coordinating people, because we've had international students so they were out of the country for months, and that might be easier and something that has to happen.



Diana: I feel it might be a bit tedious in every levy's individual constitution when we can just do it in one, and it would be great to have that especially for levies that are inactive for a period of time.

Jackson: We hold VUSAC to the same standard, in terms of transition reports, that determines in council if people get their honoraria. If we hold levies to that standard then we want to hold ourselves to the same standard and that would apply to the President's honoraria and Finance Chair's honoraria.

Agrata: I just wanted to ask that if signing authority could be tied to honoraria, then if there's no other person to sign it to, can we give that to the Finance Chair or President.

Michael: My understanding is that if there's no levy head it goes to the signing authorities of VUSAC.

Sooyeon: Signing authority was a mess because of COVID, so we've resolved that now. Recently VUSAC has implemented a \$500 honoraria for our commissioners and co chairs, and with more money we need to be more accountable to ourselves and the population we are serving. It would be a good idea if you receive a large amount of money and if you don't do your due diligence such as your transition report, that's something we can do to ensure we're doing what we're supposed to do.

Daisy: I do want to throw out there that I hope there's understanding that there are in person requirements for signing authority and requirements around identification, which we've hit issues with, especially with Ontario IDs, when people are and aren't in province, it can really delay things beyond anyone's control. I just want to throw that I hope that if a policy was enacted it would be very understanding of people trying their best to transfer signing authority and hitting walls with banks and IDs.

Zach: Could that be included in the policy as a caveat?

Shane: Yeah, I think that's a good point as well.

#### GOVERNING BODIES:

*Board of Regents (5 minutes)*

Zoe: BoR is in conversations with the students about how much we're allowed to share with you guys, but what I can tell you is that we've been bringing up a lot of these issues from VUSAC to BoR like Stephenson House, the oil well, and we've made a lot of progress. Our confidentiality



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Toronto, ON , M5S 1K9  
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agreement says that the general board minutes can be shared but I'll follow up cause I haven't been able to do that. In the future, we want to talk about some issues with mental health. Kelley Castle brought that up today and said that students are concerned that anytime they bring up mental health issues, the cops are called. That's a bad way of framing it, activists are just concerned about it happening at all, does that really help students, in any way? There's a report that I want to bring forward to the BoR that was done by a commission and found that UofT does not have a police alternative to mental health and that they need a police officer to respond to mental health crises. People who work in universities and Dean's Offices are calling cops not because they think it's helpful but because they're afraid they'd lose their job if they don't do that. So is this something that is a legal liability or are we actually helping students? I've been able to speak to these students who have had these interactions with police, and they all have similar stories where cops are called, armed people show up at their door, they're escorted out, and a lot of students say that they get to the hospital and they're turned away, so they go through an entire traumatic experience only to be at the exact same place they started. So the DO can check off their legal liability but they're not actually helping students, and I'd like to bring that up to the board.

Sooyeon: I think when we talk about mental health, I think it's also important to discuss prevention, which is one of the more important things we need to focus on. Cops don't need a space on campus, and looking at meal plans in residence cost-finances is one of the biggest contributors to poor mental health. Looking at how the university responds to violence and sexual violence, these are huge contributors to mental health. I think existing systems need to be corrected in tandem with reaching resources.

*Motion: Dhir Shah motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tariq Harney*

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

*Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.*