



VICTORIA COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## MINUTES

### Victoria College Council Meeting

October 3, 2022 4:00 pm-5:00 pm  
via Zoom

- Attendance:** A. Esterhammer (Chair), Y. Ali, H. Barseghyan, C. Battershill, D. Bender, J. Berkovitz, E. Brill, C. Bruun, K. Castle, W. Cecil, M. Cichosz, D. Cook, L. Dacome, A. Dhand, S. Dowling, J. Duncan, Y. Fehige, J. Forgie, J. Hamilton-Diabo, B. Havercroft, E. Jones-Imhotep, M. Kavaler, A. Keith, G. Kim, A. Komaromi, J. Leblanc, S. (Sherry) Lee, S. (Sooyeon) Lee, R. McEwen, A. Moritz, M. Motsch, S. Ross, C. Sa Carvalho, M. Scarci, L. Sherlock, A. Sol, M. Solovey, A. Urbancic, M. Vicedo, K. Vold, I. Wells, I. Williams
- Regrets:** L. Colantoni, A. Cutter, R. Davidson, P. Gooch, A. Hernandez, E. Jennings, I. Kalmar, A. McQuibban, I. Mihalache, W. Robins
- Guests:** M. Attar-Zadeh, A. Bailey, H. Ulfing

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm by the Chair, A. Esterhammer.

#### 1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks (A. Esterhammer)

A. Esterhammer welcomed everyone to the first VCC meeting of the 2022-23 academic year, including members who are new to Council: President and Vice-Chancellor Rhonda McEwen; VUSAC President Sooyeon Lee; new Victoria College faculty members Maria Cichosz and Laura Ingallinella; newly appointed Fellows and student representatives; and Principal's Office new staff members including Grase Kim, who, as Director of Administration, also serves as Secretary of Victoria College Council.

#### 2. Minutes of the Meeting of April 25, 2022 (attached)

**MOTION:** To accept the minutes without changes.

The motion was moved by S. Dowling and seconded by J. Forgie. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

#### 3. Report of the Principal (A. Esterhammer)

A. Esterhammer provided the following report:

- **Return to campus**

Victoria College saw a lively start to the Fall 2022 semester with in-person classes, orientation, and co-curricular activities. Across the University of Toronto, about 92% of courses are in-person this semester; at Victoria College, virtually all of them are. It's wonderful to see Caffiends', Ned's, Burwash, and other campus dining and meeting spaces re-opened and to have in-person activities taking place once again, from lunch colloquia to larger events like the recent Vic Book Sale.

- **Enrolment overview**

Victoria College welcomed a large entering class, with higher enrolments than projected due to high offer-acceptance rates from both domestic and international students. Total Victoria College enrolment currently stands at 3,981 students; in coordination with Faculty of Arts & Science enrolment increases, this represents a steady upward trend for the past few years. More students than ever have received Victoria College admission scholarships; it is especially good to see more Opportunity Awards available for students from underrepresented groups and communities. As is usual, enrolment numbers are expected to moderate somewhat in the next few weeks and the Registrar will bring a fuller report on enrolment to the next Council meeting in November.

- **Summer and international programs**

It was a busy summer on the Vic campus, even if we were still emerging from the pandemic. The Scholars-in-Residence program ran in May at its full pre-pandemic in-person size of 100 students, with an additional Online/International pilot session of 34 students. In July, the Humber College Writers' Workshop took place on the Vic campus for the first time; Vic students were involved in both assistant and participant roles, some of them funded by new scholarships created by Victoria College. A small number of Vic students were able to participate in experiential learning opportunities abroad with grants from the Vic International program, which is funded by the federal government's Global Skills Opportunity initiative. We hope that all these projects will continue and expand next summer and that more students will be able to benefit from Vic International grants, among other things by going to Japan, China, South Korea, and Israel in connection with Vic academic programs.

- **Academic programs**

- The proposal for a new Major in Creativity & Society continues to be a priority this year as it makes its way through U of T's approval and governance process. Meanwhile, student interest in the existing Minor program in Creative Expression & Society continues to be very strong and enrolment continues to climb. We are beginning the process of bringing a program name change – from "Creative Expression & Society" to "Creativity & Society" – through the consultation and governance process this year, in order to align the existing Minor and the proposed Major program.
- We have received permission from the Faculty of Arts & Science to hire a new tenure-stream Assistant Professor of Creative Writing as a joint appointment with the Department of English. There may also be an opportunity for Victoria College to partner with the Department of Anthropology on a new Assistant Professor in the Archaeology of the African Diaspora. If their area of specialization is appropriate, the successful candidate for this position will be cross-appointed to Material Culture & Semiotics. Both these jobs are currently posted and Victoria College will be involved in the appointment processes.
- A key priority this year is to continue the work of diversifying and decolonizing the curricula of all the Victoria College academic programs. In addition to the VCC Academic Committee, program committees, and student unions that are working on this crucial and many-faceted initiative, we are forming a special working group together with VUSAC to ensure that student ideas and feedback are fully heard and that the process of academic change, while necessarily complex, is as transparent as possible.

- **Review of the Role of the Colleges on the St George Campus**

Review of the Role of the Colleges on the St George Campus. The final report was released last week by the U of T Provost's office after an almost three-year-long review process. It contains some promising recommendations about clarifying the involvement of departmental faculty at

Colleges (as Fellows and in College-based academic programs); ensuring that principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility govern enrolment processes and student services; and potentially increasing resources to Colleges. We will be working through its recommendations and implications for some time to come. Members of Council are encouraged to read the review report (a link to it was provided during the meeting)

<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2022/09/Final-Report-of-Review-of-the-Role-of-the-Colleges-on-the-St.-George-Campus-1.pdf>.

#### **4. Report of Academic Committee (I. Wells)**

The Chair of the Academic Committee (I. Wells) thanked Victoria College instructors for managing the return to in-person classes and discussed enrolment trends up to 2021-2022 for each program.

- **Literature & Critical Theory**

Enrolments in the Major program went from 54 to 60 students. The Specialist program continued with 5 students enrolled. For the Minor program enrolment increased from 29 to 39 students. A total of 104 students across all programs was reported.

- **Science, Technology & Society**

There was a steady climb in enrolments over the last nine years with a jump from 43 students to 69 students in 2021-2022.

- **Renaissance Studies**

There were seven students in the Major program, no students in the Specialist program, and 17 students in the Minor program. A pathway with first-year offerings to Renaissance Studies could include a future offering of another Vic One Hundred course taught by Prof. Ingallinella.

- **Creative Expression & Society**

A surge in student enrollments was evident in a change from 154 to 183 students. I. Wells noted there is a challenge to meet demand for this program with often long course waitlists.

- **Education & Society**

There was growth from 105 to 110 students in 2021-2022 and current enrolments are nearly doubling the enrolments from 2016-2017.

- **Material Culture & Semiotics**

Due to a merger of the two programs, students now enrol in the combined Material Culture & Semiotics program (35 students). There are also students enrolled in and completing the stand-alone Semiotics & Communication Studies program (33 students) and the Material Culture Minor (26 students).

- **Overall Enrolments**

Over the last decade, a positive trend occurred with more students enrolled in our programs. Fall 2022 will involve minor modifications through the Faculty of Arts & Science governance, including renaming of Creative Expression & Society to Creativity & Society as well as seven new course. We expect that the VCC Academic Committee will consider 7 new course proposals. Three are CES Special Topics course shells (at the 200, 300, and 400 level). Two are distinct new Creativity-themed courses, to satisfy demand in that area. Two more are courses which are currently being taught as special topics courses by a Vic Fellow and Associate Fellow, which we hope to bring online as regular calendar offerings with permanent course numbers in the year ahead.

**Discussion:** A. Esterhammer thanked I. Wells for his report with the summary of enrolment numbers and his notes about governance and program changes. A. Esterhammer highlighted the enrolments were from last year. This year, enrolments in all programs continue the upward trend.

**5. Report of the Fellows Committee (A. Komaromi)**

The Chair of the Fellows Committee (A. Komaromi) began her report with nominations for new Fellows and Associates. The nominees were asked to wait in a separate meeting room during the vote.

**MOTION:** To accept H. Barseghyan and A. Sol as new Fellows and to accept M. Cichosz as an Associate. The motion was moved by A. Komaromi and seconded by A. Urbancic. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

H. Barseghyan, A. Sol, and M. Cichosz returned to the meeting and were congratulated. A motion for the nominations for Junior Fellows followed.

**MOTION:** To accept the list of Junior Fellows as new Fellows or renewals. The motion was moved A. Komaromi and seconded by S. Dowling. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

A. Komaromi indicated a welcome lunch for new Fellows occurred on Sept. 21, 2022. Upcoming events include a Fellows welcome reception (Oct. 27 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm in Alumni Hall), a Victoria University Book Launch (Jan. 26 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm in Alumni Hall), and the Fellows Lunch Colloquium series (throughout the year from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm in the Victoria University Common Room and online).

**6. President's Remarks (R. McEwen)**

President and Vice-Chancellor McEwen thanked all the reports that were provided at VCC. R. McEwen gave students a wave-at-me-as-you-pass-me challenge during orientation, which was inspired by a quote from American journalist, Sydney J. Harris: "The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows". The idea is instead of looking at reflections of ourselves to look past ourselves at other perspectives. R. McEwen remarked that many students come to Victoria College for a liberal arts education as well as about half who are studying sciences. She commented that Victoria College is developing a different kind of scientist – someone who is informed by liberal arts. R. McEwen has enjoyed meeting faculty, fellows, staff, librarians, and students. Her priorities will be focused on students. She met with VUSAC representatives over the past few weeks. R. McEwen requested A. Komaromi invite her to the Fellows Colloquia. She will be presenting a Vic One plenary on Oct. 5 at 4:00 pm to discuss her research. She recognized that students are coming back from a difficult time and recognized Principal Esterhammer and her team making Victoria College a wonderful place to learn.

**7. Report of VUSAC (S. Lee)**

The President of VUSAC, S. (Sooyeon) Lee, commented on high student engagement while returning to in-person campus life. VUSAC has been considering ways to re-build a community that was suspended the last two years with online learning. VUSAC aims to foster participation and engagement with students beyond the initial excitement at the start of the academic year. Recent in-person events included plant giveaways, pancake brunches, and study sessions. VUSAC will also be looking at ways to make university more affordable. VUSAC also is interested in revisiting what mental health support looks like for students and other supports for students, such as spaces for commuter students to eat and study on campus.

**8. Report of the Library (L. Sherlock)**

Chief Librarian, L. Sherlock, announced that library hours will be extended following Oct. 11 and effective January, the library will return to pre-pandemic hours. L. Sherlock communicated that the

library will be conducting research and writing seminars for students (literature reviews on Oct. 4 and critical reading skills on Oct. 11). Also faculty can arrange for course-specific sessions by contacting Colin Deinhardt, Instruction Coordinator. L. Sherlock informed members Oct. 3-7 is the last week for the Hoeniger Prize exhibition of Rion Levy's Beat Literature collection comprised of books and photographs with writings of Jack Kerouac, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Alan Ginsberg among others. The next exhibition will begin on Oct. 20 and will be a celebration of the 75th anniversary of Northrop Frye's publication of *Fearful Symmetry* and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Frye's graduation from Victoria College. L. Sherlock relayed the library recently acquired, as an important addition to the Bentley Blake collection, a document signed by William Blake in 1797 attesting to printing processes used by printer Alexander Tilloch to prevent counterfeiting currency. Also, two books with annotations by Samuel Taylor Coleridge were added to the Coleridge collection - Fernando Warner's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Thomas More* and the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems* with added poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd. This year's Victoria University Friends of the Library book sale (Sept. 22-27) included two years' worth of excellent donations. The proceeds will fund future Library acquisitions, help supplement student staffing, as well as support scholarships and bursaries for Vic students.

**Discussion:** A request was made for more information on the extended hours for the library. L. Sherlock indicated that the library will be open until 9:45 pm in the fall and until 11:45 pm starting in January.

**9. Report of the Northrop Frye Centre (S. Lee)**

S. (Sherry) Lee presented the NFC report as Acting Director of the Northrop Frye Centre. B. Davidson is on leave this year. B. Davidson was selected for the Premi Josep M. Batista i Roca - Memorial Enric Garriga Trullols award for his contributions to promote Catalan culture. S. Lee extended a warm welcome to M. Attar-Zadeh, who will be helping with NFC events while A. Bailey will be on her maternity leave. There are four NFC doctoral and five NFC undergraduate fellows this year. On Mar. 16, the NFC lecture speaker will be Julie Beth Napolin from The New School.

**10. Report of the CRRS (M. Kavalier)**

M. Kavalier stated the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies (CRRS) has planned for largely in-person events this year. The Erasmus Lecture Oct. 31 will be Daniella Bleichmar from the University of Southern California on the remaking of Mexican Indigenous History in print. This is the second collaboration with the Early Modern Study Center of USC. The Global Renaissance: A Roundtable on Nov. 16 will occur from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm on Zoom with four speakers - N. Terpstra and L. Ingallinella (from U of T) along with D. Lines and N. Din-Kariuki (from University of Warwick). New additions to CRRS library include Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Prayer of the Lord*, two of Johann Jacob Boissard's emblem books, and a Dutch songbook that was published in 1629.

**11. Report of the Dean of Students (K. Castle)**

K. Castle discussed that students are back in full force and this poses some challenges as these are students with fewer social, academic, and personal tools than pre-COVID. K. Castle commented that first-year students have less experience with work, fewer social accomplishments, many have never written exams before, and are meeting for the first time with adults outside of their families. Additionally, upper-year students feel a crunch to get involved in the time they have remaining and are worried about not having enough experience for an impressive CV. Advisors in the Office of the Dean of Students saw 76 students for one-hour career conversations in three weeks resulting in 25 one-hour appointments per week which is not normally the case. The number of high-risk students is exceptionally high this year. Events (first-year orientation, welcome back barbeque, Vic orientation for international students, commuter orientation) were well-attended. There has been lots of online engagement for e-mentorship and on social media (25% increase in engagement with College's Instagram account). There were 25 students who completed the Vic Ready boot camp, a career

readiness program. Humanities for Humanity, a community outreach program, saw a large number of participants in the September session. More sessions will continue throughout the fall. Theatre for Thought sessions will be hosted in the winter term. There are two upcoming conferences – 10<sup>th</sup> annual Minding our Minds conference on mental health and technology (Oct. 21) as well as Campus (Re) Conciliations: Indigenous Issues in Higher Education in the winter term.

**12. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Concluding Remarks:** A. Esterhammer thanked the members for their attention and stated there will be many opportunities in the coming weeks to see each other in person and further discuss the topics presented at VCC. The next VCC meeting will be Nov. 28 and hopefully there will be time at the end of the meeting to socialize.

The meeting ended at 5:24 pm.