



VICTORIA COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## MINUTES

### Victoria College Council Meeting

February 13, 2023, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Alumni Hall

**Attendance:** A. Esterhammer (Chair), H. Barseghyan, K. Castle, M. Cichosz, P. Gooch, J. Hamilton-Diabo, L. Ingallinella, R. Kanga Fonseca, G. Kim, S. (Sherry) Lee, S. (Sooyeon) Lee, R. McEwen, C. Miranda-Radbord, A. Moritz, J. Papayiannis, A. Perez-Leroux, M. Scarci, L. Sherlock, A. Sol, M. Solovey, H. Ulfig, A. Urbancic, M. Vicedo, I. Wells, D. Wright, D. Zhang

**Regrets:** K. Bartlett, W. Cecil, D. Cook, J. Forgie, M. Kavalier, S. Joy, J. LeBlanc, N. Nagy, L. Somigli, E. Swenson

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by the Chair, A. Esterhammer.

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

Principal Esterhammer welcomed everyone to the VCC meeting and reminded members to use the microphone when speaking. A. Esterhammer began the meeting with a land acknowledgement.

#### 2. Minutes of the Meeting of November 28, 2022 (attached)

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

The motion was moved by A. Urbancic and seconded by D. Wright. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

A. Esterhammer noted one follow up action from the minutes. Two vacant student positions on the Academic Committee were filled since the last VCC meeting. A. Esterhammer thanked C. Miranda-Radbord for joining the Academic Committee as one of the student representatives and for bringing the vacancies to our attention at the previous VCC meeting.

A. Esterhammer indicated a change in the order of agenda items to accommodate President McEwen's late arrival. The report of the principal was provided ahead of the president's report.

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

A. Esterhammer provided the following report:

- **EDI Working Group**

The Working Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Victoria College Academic Programs began meeting in January. We have had very productive meetings with students about their experiences in a variety of academic programs, at Vic and in other units, and we are making progress on identifying issues, gaps, and best practices. There is a lot of work to be done, and we have heard from students about their interest in continuing to meet in the next academic year with the involvement of more first- and second-year students, and also about the importance of moving toward effective action.

- **Academic Events**

Significant events in the Vic calendar since the beginning of the semester that might not be mentioned elsewhere on today's agenda include a Vic One plenary reading on January 18 by this year's Shaftesbury Creative Writer-in-Residence Liz Howard, a poet of Anishinaabe heritage who combines poetry, science, and Indigenous ways of knowing in her creative work. The annual Pelham Edgar Lecture took place on January 25 with internationally renowned fiction writer Sheila Heti, who was well received by students and other members of the Vic community who attended. On January 26, the Fellows Committee hosted a book launch to celebrate books published by Victoria College and Emmanuel College Faculty and Fellows, which is always a colourful and congenial event. The annual Vic Research Day to showcase research by Vic students in all fields will take place on March 27. The lead organizer is Undergraduate Research Coordinator Shaun Ross; the event will include poster displays in the Old Vic foyer as well as presentations, panel discussions, and prizes. We are gearing up for the Vic One 20th Anniversary Celebration on April 12-13, organized by Carol Beattie and Emily Fu in the Principal's Office with staff from the Alumni and Advancement Office. Among other things, it will feature an event in the Bader Theatre that will showcase the past, present, and future of Vic One and will include a discussion between former ambassador and current Vic One professor David Wright, and current ambassador and former Vic One professor Bob Rae.

- **Vic Global**

The Vic Global initiative (formerly Vic International Internships), funded by the federal government's Global Skills Opportunity until 2024-2025, offers grants to assist students with experiential learning opportunities abroad. We currently have students doing internships in Japan and the USA, and one leaving shortly for a teaching internship at an Indigenous school in Australia. In early summer 2023 we expect to have cohorts of students taking up Education internships in South Korea, as well as Material Culture and Creative Expression & Society internships in Israel.

- **Jackman Scholars-in-Residence**

The student application period for the Jackman Scholars-in-Residence program is underway with an application deadline of February 27. This year's intensive research mentorship program in humanities and social science will take place May 1-26. Ira Wells and Maral Attar-Zadeh in the Office of the Principal are deeply involved in organizational work and are responding to hundreds of e-mail inquiries from interested students.

- **Humber College Writers' Workshop**

For the second year, the Humber College Writers' Workshop is expected to take place on the Vic campus in July. This well-regarded, week-long workshop has partnered with our Creative Expression & Society program; Victoria College sponsors several CES students to participate in it and also to "intern" as program assistants. Adam Sol, Coordinator of Creative Expression & Society, is the lead liaison on this initiative.

#### **4. Amendments to Victoria College Council By-Laws**

**MOTION:** To approve revisions to the Governing By-Laws of the Victoria College Council that reflect updated titles, roles, and practices.

The Chair reviewed for VCC members the procedure for voting on changes to the By-Laws and spoke to the rationale for the proposed revisions. Changes are intended to reflect current titles, roles, and practices that have shifted since the last time the By-Laws were revised in 2014. These revisions include changes to the titles of the Director of Administration and the Academic Programs Director; the number

of teaching faculty on the Awards and Prizes Committee; and the “retirement” of the College Life Committee as a standing committee. In the past decade, there were several years when the College Life Committee did not meet at all or did not have substantial business to discuss. Items that, in previous decades, might have been come to the College Life committee, such as co-curricular programming and matters concerning the physical campus, are now under the purview of other offices and governance structures such as the Dean of Students, the Bursar, and/or Board of Regents sub-committees. Consultation between students, faculty, and administration is effectively achieved by other governance bodies such as the Dean’s Advisory Committee and Victoria College Council, or by striking a special committee or working group.

**Discussion:** A question was asked with regards to where individuals can direct their inquiries related to the physical environment of our campus. While discussions can be raised under other business at VCC meetings, these types of inquiries are best addressed by the offices of the Dean of Students, Bursar or President depending on the nature of the requests. There is representation of faculty, staff, and students on the Board of Regents that would address large-scale items related to our property and physical environment of our campus. Another question was asked why the Awards and Prizes Committee does not have student representation. It was explained that the committee adjudicates student prizes and it would be considered a conflict of interest for students to influence the awarding of funds to other students. It also involves a heavy workload that would make it challenging for students to participate. The amendment to change student representation on standing committees would involve a more extensive discussion, whereas the revisions proposed with the current motion are intended to correct outdated information and/or practice.

The motion was moved by A. Esterhammer and seconded by I. Wells. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

#### **5. Report of the President (R. McEwen)**

President McEwen thanked teaching staff and faculty administrators for a successful return to in-person teaching and learning on the campus. R. McEwen acknowledged faculty had to pivot from in-person to Zoom then back to the classrooms which involved considerable efforts. She also extended thanks to our chief librarian and library administrators who supported faculty with their courses. Additionally, the President recognized students on VUSAC who worked closely with her on several initiatives this fall.

The President’s report highlighted recent activities:

- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

The rollout of EDI training for all faculty and full-time continuing staff members was recently launched with two online modules “Unconscious Bias” and “Systemic and Societal Racism”. Future in-person workshops will occur end of March to continue these important conversations. The training is part of the implementation plan that follows from Victoria University’s Strategic Framework and commitment to create an inclusive community for students, faculty, and staff.

- **Search for New Hires**

President McEwen reported that several searches were underway for hiring new staff, including the search for a new Bursar & Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Candidates shortlisted in February will be interviewed in early March. The applicant pool consists of very experienced people. The President’s Office will also hire a Capital Assets Manager reporting to the Executive Director of Infrastructure & Sustainability.

- **Space Analysis**

The President's Office will be conducting a space audit to collect data on how faculty office space is currently utilized. Faculty will be asked to complete a short survey to help plan for future construction.

- **City of Toronto Approval of Secondary Plan**

Victoria University received final approval from the City of Toronto for development on our campus including a new academic building replacing Northrop Frye Hall. There are some heritage restrictions and zoning By-Laws that will need to be followed; however, they should not pose significant issues.

## 6. Report of the Writing Centre (M. Cichosz)

A. Esterhammer invited M. Cichosz, Director of the Writing Centre, to provide a report and reminded members that the administration of the Writing Centre shifted from the Registrar's Office to the Principal's Office as of July 2022.

M. Cichosz communicated to members recent operational changes to the Centre since Summer 2022:

- The Writing Centre is now located in the Goldring Student Centre;
- The Director of the Writing Centre is a faculty member, which aligns with other colleges' writing centres;
- Appointments, both in person and online, are for 50 minutes;
- To meet increased demand, two additional writing instructors were hired for a total of four instructors; and
- A waitlist is maintained for contacting students to step in when there are last-minute cancellations.

This year, 68% of appointments have been online and 32% in-person. Students were encouraged to book multiple appointments during the term to work on a sequence of skills rather than last-minute remedial help on assignments.

In collaboration with the E.J. Pratt Library, 2-hour online sessions ("Research & Writing Seminars: Develop Your Scholarly Voice") were offered. Students who attended three out of four seminars earned a Co-Curricular Record (CCR) credit noted on their transcripts.

The Writing Centre was also working with the Office of the Registrar and Academic Advising to help students write their personal statements for graduate school applications.

The Writing Centre will pilot targeted in-class assignment skills sessions. M. Cichosz indicated she would like to work with faculty to help students with understanding specific assignment types. Please contact her at [maria.cichosz@utoronto.ca](mailto:maria.cichosz@utoronto.ca) or [vic.writing@utoronto.ca](mailto:vic.writing@utoronto.ca).

**Discussion:** A query was made related to the data presented which showed the number of appointments with first-year students was significantly higher in the fall than in the winter term. M. Cichosz suggested that the winter term might be a slower time for first-year students as they may find themselves busier and/or feel their concerns were already addressed in the fall. A second question was asked if the Writing Centre would collaborate with career services to help students with their writing for job applications. M. Cichosz responded she would be open to doing something more career-focused and requested that VUSAC members contact her to discuss further.

## 7. Report of Academic Committee (I. Wells)

I. Wells, Chair of the Academic Committee, reported on minor program modifications and new courses.

- **Minor Modifications/Course Modifications**

- A name change for one of our programs from “Creative Expression & Society” to “Creativity & Society” will be in effect Fall 2024. This change reflects the addition of several new courses to the program, including the required new course, CRE201H1 Introduction to Creativity as well as CRE375H1 Histories of Creativity. The name further reflects a change in curricular emphasis within the program away from distinct forms of creativity to multi- and trans-disciplinary considerations of creativity itself.
- The second minor modification involves a course title change for VIC207H1 from “Evolution, Genetics and Behaviour” to “Genetic Technologies: Scientific Promises and Ethical Dilemmas”. The purpose of this change is to distinguish VIC207H1 from the existing VIC107H1 course with the same title and Calendar copy – and to allow Professor Vicedo from IHPST to offer the course on a more regular basis within our Science, Technology and Society program. The STS minor has demonstrated consistent growth in terms of enrollments, so we’re excited to be able to provide an additional option with our colleagues in IHPST.

- **New Courses**

- Two new courses - CRE349H1 and CRE449H1 - are Special Topics in Creativity. Topics vary from year to year depending on instructors. These courses allow students to participate in small seminars on specialized topics and provide instructors an opportunity to explore course possibilities outside of standard calendar offerings.
- VIC196H1 Renaissance Queens examines Renaissance queens and queenship by exploring historical and fictional queens and empresses. This new first-year seminar provides students with an additional option to complete their Victoria College small course requirements. It also creates an additional pathway into the College’s Renaissance Studies program. It reflects the interests of Professor Ingallinella and posits the Renaissance as a global phenomenon, centring voices that may have been marginalized in previous conceptions of the period.
- VIC248H1 Genetics and the Movies: Mad Scientists, Clones, Superhumans and Designer Babies explores how scientific and technological advances in genetics have been presented in the movies, focusing on American cinema. This course provides students with another option for completing a required course group and will provide an opportunity to regularly draw upon the teaching of Professor Vicedo.
- VIC396H0 International Internship Opportunity supports students in Vic programs who wish to pursue international experiential learning. It also helps to facilitate new international placements developed within the Vic Global initiative.

**Discussion:** A request was made to differentiate the Vic International experience from study abroad.

I. Wells explained the Vic International internship is a credit-bearing course with a Victoria College faculty supervisor and is student-driven initially.

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

Chief Librarian L. Sherlock reported that hours of operation are back to pre-pandemic hours this term with closings most nights at 11:45 p.m., except on Fridays. Please check the E.J. Pratt Library website for details or for changes in hours. Instructional support is available through Reader Services. To enrich the existing collection donated in 2005 by G.E. Bentley Jr., a Blake scholar and former U of T English professor, the library recently purchased two illustrated plates that were engraved, printed and hand-painted for an edition of Edward Young’s poem *Night Thoughts* (1797). We hope to display these plates

in the fall of 2023 along with more recent additions to the library's special collections. Currently an exhibition "Fireside Tales, Selections from the Robins Folklore Collection" is on display in the foyer and reading room of Pratt Library until Friday February 24. Vic alumna Iona Whatford and Hoeniger Book Prize winner will be presenting an online lecture "The Magic and Beauty of Endpapers" on February 22 at 2 p.m. This is an event jointly sponsored by the Friends of Victoria University Library and Victoria Women's Association. More information is on the Friends of the Library web page and social media.

**9. Report of Registrar's Office (R. Kanga Fonseca)**

R. Kanga Fonseca, Acting Registrar while Y. Ali is on leave, provided an enrolment update for the current year. R. Kanga Fonseca reported Victoria College enrolments for 2022-23 is 3,982 students with just over 1,000 newly admitted students. This represents a slight increase from the previous year (3,786 total enrolments including 978 new students in 2021-22). This follows coordinated enrolment increases across colleges with the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS). In the current year, domestic students represent 70% and international students represent 30% of the overall Victoria College enrolment. Enrolment at Victoria College represents 12.7% of overall enrolment for FAS and 13.8% of the incoming FAS class. The first round of Fall 2023 admission offers is currently underway. Similar to prior years, the target for Victoria College is 13.5% of FAS first-year intake. Offers will continue in rounds until May/June.

**Discussion:** VUSAC members requested copies of the presentation slides. A question was asked why the proportion of U of T international students is different from the proportion of Vic international students. R. Kanga Fonseca noted that there is not a big discrepancy. Students tend to indicate preferences on their applications based on familiarity with one college over others. Another question related to why offers of admission are sent in rounds. R. Kanga Fonseca explained offers are sent to applicants in batches due to information transmissions from the Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC), which is released to all institutions in waves.

**10. Report of the Dean of Student (K. Castle)**

K. Castle reported on the Minding our Minds conference that was held in October on mental health and technology, including R. McEwen's presentation on technology and mental health. Another presenter was Dr. Gratzler from the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH). On March 23, the Office of the Dean of Students will host the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Campus (Re)Conciliations: Indigenous Issues in Higher Education Conference on Justice and Politics. Some student-led events and initiatives include the VUSAC semi-formal and Life-after-Vic organized jointly by VUSAC, Office of the Dean of Students, and Office of Alumni Affairs & Advancement. The Office of the Dean of Students provides a number of student leadership opportunities, such as orientation leaders, orientation executives, peer-to-peer mentors, as well as residence and commuter Dons. This year, there is high student engagement with increased number of applications for residence Dons, commuter Dons, transition mentors, and orientation executives. Other Office of the Dean of Students activities are the VIC College life Instagram, career advising, one-on-one appointments, collaborations with the Registrar's Office and Career Centre, Vic Ready Bootcamp, a partnership with ICON Talent Partners, residence support for international students, and student leader-led and peer-led support programs for mental health.

**Discussion:** A question was asked about increasing support for commuter students. Plans next year will involve more online Dons and online counselling. K. Castle responded to another question regarding mask requirements and air filtration in residence. Our policies follow U of T's policies which in turn adhere to provincial public health requirements.

A. Esterhammer announced M. Kavalier sends his regrets and is unable to make his report.

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

Acting Director of the Northrop Frye Centre, S. (Sherry) Lee, provided information on upcoming NFC events and activities. On March 2 at 4:30 pm the final NFC Doctoral Fellows Lecture will feature Hong Liu, who is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Comparative Literature at U of T, and NFC Undergraduate Fellows' research presentations will take place on March 27 during the Vic Research Day. The call for NFC student fellow applications for 2023-24 will go out end of the week. Please encourage students to apply for those opportunities. The NFC annual lecture will take place on March 16 in Alumni Hall. Julie Beth Napolin is an Associate Professor of Digital Humanities at The New School and co-President of the William Faulkner Society. Her first book, *The Fact of Resonance: Modernist Acoustics and Narrative Form*, appeared with Fordham UP in 2020 and argues that narrative theory has been founded on an exclusion of sound. She is now working on a project on strategies of recitation and remediation in 20th-century American culture, media, and performance, and as Frye Lecturer she will deliver a talk titled "Unrecordable Sound," about the history of sound technology and the racial unconscious. Northrop Frye Visiting Fellow, Professor Thomas Peattie from the University of Mississippi will be in residence March 16-25. Peattie's research explores the relationship between Romanticism and long-20<sup>th</sup> century modernist musical cultures; he is the author of *Gustav Mahler's Symphonic Landscapes* (Cambridge UP 2015) and is currently working on a project on modernist practices of transcription, focusing particularly on the transcriptions of Luciano Berio. He will deliver a public lecture on March 23 and will also meet with NFC fellows to consult on their research as well as provide feedback to our undergraduate fellows on their research presentations prior to the Vic Research Day.

**12. Other Business**

There was no other business.

Concluding Remarks: A. Esterhammer encouraged VCC members to stay behind in Alumni Hall at the end of the meeting to socialize and re-connect with colleagues.

The meeting ended at 5:53 p.m.