



MINUTES

Victoria College Council Meeting

February 12th, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Alumni Hall

Attendance: Y. Ali, C. Battershill, H. Birss, C. Bruun, K. Castle, M. Cichosz, D. Cook, A. Esterhammer (Chair), E. Istrate, E. Jagoe, E. Jennings, S. Joy, M. Kavalier, G. Kim, A. Komaromi, S. Lee, S. Mutch, J. Papayiannis, M. Scarci, D. Shah, A. Sol, M. Solovey, A. Urbancic, M. Vercelli, I. Williams, S. Yun

Regrets: H. Barseghyan, B. Davidson, J. Hamilton-Diabo, B. Havercroft, R. McEwen, A. Moritz, A. Motsch, S. Ross, L. Sherlock, L. Somigli, I. Wells

Guest: C. Callon

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m. by the Chair, A. Esterhammer.

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

Principal Esterhammer greeted VCC members, began the meeting with a land acknowledgement, and noted items on the agenda have been reordered with the Report of the Academic Committee following the Report of the Principal.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of November 27, 2023 (attached)

MOTION: To accept the minutes without changes.

The motion was moved by A. Urbancic and seconded by S. Joy. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

3. Report of the Principal (A. Esterhammer)

Principal Esterhammer provided the following report:

- 1) **Visiting Lectures and Special Events:** A. Esterhammer indicated several special academic events have occurred, including the inaugural Coxford Lecture at Victoria College on January 31, 2024. Thanks was extended to First-Year Programs Officer, C. Beattie and the Principal's Office team for their leadership in organizing a very successful lecture by Mark Carney, UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Co-Chair for the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net Zero. His lecture filled the Bader Theatre with Vic One students, alumni, and external guests. Additionally, A. Esterhammer shared that the annual Mentoring Tea for student mentees and faculty/fellow mentors was held on January 18 and organized primarily by Special Projects & Events Coordinator, W. Thorne. The event saw the highest attendance ever, filling Alumni Hall, and both the tea and the mentoring program in general received very positive feedback from students and faculty.
- 2) **University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Review of Literature & Critical Theory:** A. Esterhammer reported that a U of T cyclical review with the graduate Centre for Comparative Literature Program was underway. Three external reviewers visited February 7 and 8; conversations with them centred on productive ways to enhance the existing partnership between LCT and Comp Lit.

- 3) **A 2-year Full-time CLTA Faculty Appointment in the Education & Society Program:**
A. Esterhammer announced the hiring process for a 2-year full-time CLTA in the Education & Society Program, with an emphasis on Social Justice in Education, had started. Four short-listed candidates will be visiting the campus for interviews between February 29 and March 8.
- 4) **Creativity initiatives:** Brainstorming continues about Victoria College's priority area of Creativity & Society. An exciting initiative that has emerged from these conversations is a Victoria University Centre for Creativity: a hub for events, conferences, and research projects that highlight creativity in the arts, media, technology, and society, and bring together faculty, students, and external researchers and practitioners across the disciplines. Relationships with other campus and external partners and projects are being explored; for instance, this year's Scholars-in-Residence program features 3-4 projects oriented toward research-creation and creative practice. There are tentative plans for a launch event for the new Centre in mid-May, during SiR. The Centre for Creativity would add visibility to the study and practice of creativity on the Vic campus and provide infrastructure to spark and support further activities, projects, and interdisciplinary convergences. Ideas and feedback are welcome and can be directed to A. Esterhammer or A. Sol, Coordinator of the Creativity & Society Program, who is taking the lead on this project. We expect to provide an update and more details at the April meeting of VCC.
- 5) **Reminder for VCC Members:** A. Esterhammer reminded members that the next VCC meeting has been moved from its originally scheduled date and location to April 9 at 4 p.m. in VC304.

Discussion: A question was raised whether the launch of the Centre for Creativity will restructure the Creativity & Society (C&S) Program. The discussion included a note that while changes to the C&S Program may be a result of new ideas coming from the Centre, that will not be its main focus. Co-curricular activities will be a priority for the Centre to amplify how study and practice of creative endeavours can be fostered. Creative projects, an annual conference, and other activities will involve faculty and students from across different disciplines. A potential partner will be IHPST as the Centre will promote social innovation and capture the intersection of creativity, technology, and science.

4. Report of the Academic Committee (E. Istrate)

E. Istrate presented the report on behalf of I. Wells, who sent his regrets. The following items were approved by the Faculty of Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Curriculum Committee:

1) New courses

- VIC103H1 Leadership, Narrative and Creativity. This course, building from a successful special topics course offered this year, will examine leadership through textual and film narratives and provide students with another option for completing their small-class requirement.
- CRE272H1 Song, Lyrics and Songwriting investigates song and lyrics in various genres, provides students with another option in the Group A cluster of courses, and strengthens the intermedial emphasis of the program.
- EDS360H0 Education Internship – International. This course, an “H0” version of an existing internship course, will allow students to take part in international teaching and learning opportunities abroad, including via a partnership with Branksome Hall Asia.
- MCS226H1 The Materiality of Magic: Sorcery, Spells, Devotion and Divination. This course aims to materialize magic and anchor it in physical practices, performances, ceremonies and rituals from Prehistory to the present day; it also represents a new teaching direction for one of the core faculty members in our MCS program.

- MCS331H1 The Materiality of Information. An addition to our Material Culture and Semiotics program, this course will involve hands-on case studies that address the material factors behind the development of information technology throughout history.
- REN240H1 The Renaissance in Italy (along with REN244H1, below) are currently a single Y course. The two new H versions are being offered to make them more accessible to students and to allow for greater flexibility in staffing.
- REN244H1 The Renaissance in Europe and the World (see above)
- VIC301H1 Public Communication in Science considers how scientific findings are communicated to non-experts, and takes up the broader public issue of science skepticism.
- VIC302H1 Science Policy considers policy frameworks that define power relationships between government, research and educational institutions, private companies, social media and NGOs. These final two courses will provide further options in our Science, Technology and Society Minor.

2) Retired courses

- Y version of REN240Y1: The Civilization of Renaissance Europe, now two H versions
- REN441H1: Michel de Montaigne: A Renaissance Life, a course which we have been unable to offer and do not foresee offering.

3) Program modifications

- Several minor modifications (mostly housekeeping matters pertaining to our new course introductions) were put forward.
- One substantive modification is the decision to remove the program requirement stipulating a half course in Breadth Requirement 5 (quantitative reasoning) in LCT. The rationale for doing so is threefold: first, none of the LCT learning outcomes addresses this requirement; second, the requirement unnecessarily duplicated a breadth requirement that more appropriately sits at the level of the degree; and third, it restricts the choices of students who may wish, for example, to take a full credit of BR 4 (natural sciences). By reducing the overall LCT Major and Specialist program requirements by 0.5 courses, now allowing for a greater variety of pathways through the programs.

E. Istrate introduced the motion from the Academic Committee be approved by VCC.

MOTION: To approve major modification proposal to create two Combined Degree Programs (CDP) -1) Honours Bachelor of Science (HBA) and Master of Education in Social Justice Education (MEd-SJE) 2) Honours Bachelor of Arts (HBA) and Master of Education in Social Justice Education (MEd-SJE). The motion was moved by E. Istrate and seconded by D. Shah. *The motion was passed nem. con.*

Discussion: A brief discussion occurred prior to voting on the motion. It was explained that the proposed new combined degree programs mirror already existing combined degree programs with OISE. They do not involve any new courses on our part. Instead, formally opening a new program will create a new pathway for students to receive early admission to OISE and take graduate courses in their final year of their undergraduate program. The above motion will also involve the governance process at FAS.

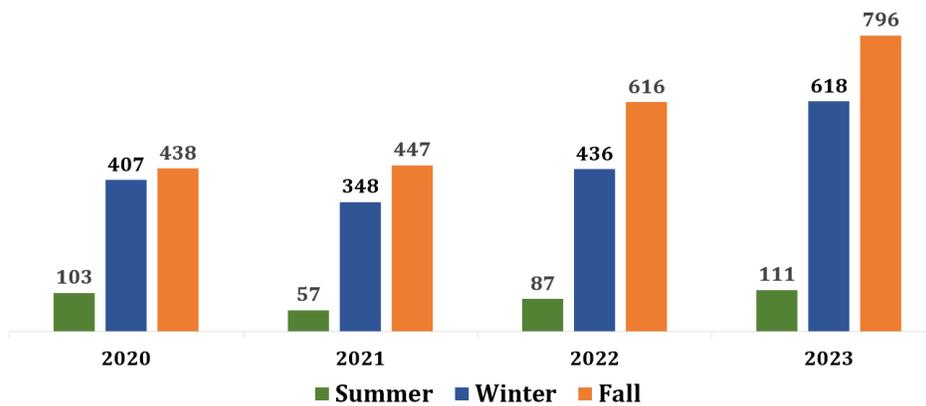
5. Presentation by Victoria University Research Associate (C. Callon)

C. Callon introduced herself as the new Research Associate at Victoria University who will provide support for librarians and faculty with their research initiatives. More specifically, C. Callon will be available to assist with research grant-writing. Future SSHRC grant applications will include new expectations for data management plans and EDI-considerations. C. Callon works on campus on Mondays and Tuesdays and remotely on other weekdays. She can be reached via email at callie.callon@utoronto.ca.

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

M. Cichosz provided an update on the activities of the Writing Centre. Appointments are 50 minutes long, one appointment per student per week, and the Writing Centre can provide approximately 70 appointments per week as well as adjust based on demand. M. Cichosz illustrated there was increased activity this year in the number of appointments compared to prior years.

Writing Centre Usage
(Number of Appointments per Term)



The number of appointments for the first five weeks of the winter term also increased by 56% compared to last year. Appointments by modality (31% in person, 69% online) remained consistent with last year. Services are available to students from other college taking VIC courses as well as VIC students taking courses at other departments. Support can be at any stage of writing assignments. The Writing Centre will also support instructors who may want assignment-specific workshops or a graduate school or job applications sessions. Assistance with creative writing assignments is also an option. One instructor in the Writing Centre is an award-winning poet. M. Cichosz reported outreach initiatives included first-year class visits, a booth at Open Vic, a session “Develop Your Scholarly Voice” in collaboration with the library, first-year transition events, a “lunch date” session, workshops on how to write a more comprehensive graduate application, a Vic One plenary, a MCS-specific session for students on graduate/professional writing, a personal statement session with iTeach, and participation in a workshop with UofT’s Summer Undergraduate Data Sciences (SUDS) research opportunities program. M. Cichosz announced that in 2024-2025, the Centre will move from its current location in VC 108C (beside Caffiends) to the Goldring Student Centre, on the second floor. For inquiries, contact vic.writing@utoronto.ca or maria.cichosz@utoronto.ca.

Discussion: A question was asked about the capacity to meet increasing demand. M. Cichosz commented that constant growth will not be the goal and hiring an additional instructor in the Writing Centre last year allows the Centre to meet demand and reduce waiting times.

7. Report of the Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) (S. Joy)

S. Joy reported on VUSAC activities since the last VCC report in November. Events included the annual December 6th memorial for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students, the 151st annual iteration of The Bob Revue in the Isabel Bader Theatre, and the annual gala at the Gardiner Museum. In January, VUSAC addressed budgetary constraints by reducing costs, securing external funding, and negotiating discounts. Recently, VUSAC developed a new food waste diversion program known as Eat After Eight, in partnership with Food Services, which provides leftover food from Burwash Dining hall to students in need. S. Joy attended Victoria University's signing of the Scarborough Charter ceremony at the beginning of Black History Month. On February 9, VUSAC hosted its semesterly Caucus meeting. Last weekend, VUSAC also hosted a Lunar New Year celebration. At the end of February, the VUSAC Academic Commission and the Office of Alumni Affairs & Advancement will be hosting Life After Vic, a networking event connecting Victoria College students and alumni. Other future events include the Crescam Serviendo Award Ceremony, Commuter Appreciation Week, Environmental Equity Day, and VUSAC's biggest event Highball. VUSAC plans to review its governing documents (Constitution, Council Policies, Elections and Referenda Code, Budget Steering Policy). VUSAC hired a new Sustainability Co-Chair. The Working Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Victoria College Academic Programs continues to meet. S. Joy is working with VicPride! and VOICES to establish an award for queer and trans students on campus. S. Joy also has been in discussions with the Chair of the Emmanuel College Student Society on ways to strengthen relations. VUSAC will be conducting its Spring Elections throughout February and March.

8. Report of the Dean of Students (K. Castle)

K. Castle reported on the recent signing of the Okanagan Charter, an international Charter for Health Promoting Universities & Colleges – ensuring a campus culture across administration and programs in support of mental health. K. Castle recently attended the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators conference for higher education professionals. A major highlight was the move away from reductive language and a more holistic view of wellness on campus. The emphasis was on creating a culture of wellbeing and using new language around wellness, such as circles of care and communities of wellbeing to conceptualize mental health efforts more broadly. New initiatives introduced this year included peer-to-peer mental health counselling and a new Assistant Dean, Student Wellness position for managing non-clinical student cases. Other events and activities included the "Minding Our Minds" conference on October 26, 2023, which focused on supporting student neurodiversity, "Ask. Listen. Talk." to connect students to someone to talk to about mental health, sexual assault, homophobia/transphobia, and racism, the "Ideas for the World" seminar-style discussions, and ongoing meetings of the Dean's Advisory Council. Upcoming events will be a "Vic Ready" bootcamp February 20-23 to help upper-year students to get ready for life after graduation and a "Campus (Re)Conciliations" conference in April.

9. Report of Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies (M. Kavalier)

M. Kavalier reported on a recent acquisition of two rare books, including a 1592 illustrated version of Renard the Fox. Kavalier announced Stephen J. Campbell from Johns Hopkins University is the CRRS Distinguished Visiting Scholar and will lecture on Leonardo in March 2024.

10. Other Business

There was no other business to report.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.