



MINUTES

Victoria College Council Meeting October 21, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Alumni Hall

Attendance: Y. Ali, K. Baron, C. Bruun, L. Carr, K. Castle, W. Cecil, D. Chariandy, M. Cichosz, D. Cook, B. Davidson, J. Duncan, Y. Fehige, P. Gooch, J. Hamilton-Diabo, A. Hernandez (Chair), E. Istrate, S. Joy, R. Kail, A. Keith, G. Kim, J. Liou, S. Lee, C. Lewis, R. McEwen, A. Motsch, N. Naga, J. Papayiannis, W. Robins, M. Scarci, A. Sol, A. Van Leeuwen, J. Yun, E. Zhang

Regrets: H. Barseghyan, A. Chucheong, B. Havercroft, I. Kalma, M. Kavalier, R. McGill, S. Mutch, D. Wright, M. Vicedo

Guest: D. Michaud

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

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

Principal Hernandez greeted VCC members and began the meeting with a land acknowledgement. He also noted that the agenda has been adjusted, as there will be no CRRS report.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of April 9, 2024

MOTION: To accept the minutes without changes.

The motion was moved by E. Istrate and seconded by C. Lewis. Abstentions: D. Chariandy. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

3. Report of the Principal (A. Hernandez)

1. Faculty and Staff Updates: A. Hernandez noted that he is not the only new face in the Principal's Office. Kelly Baron has stepped into the role of Special Projects and Events Coordinator (Research). She will be assisting the research centres—primarily the Northrop Frye Centre and the Centre for Creativity—across a variety of events and initiatives. In addition, Carol Beattie, the First-Year Programs Liaison will be seconded to UTSC through April; Wanda Thorne, the Special Events Coordinator, will take over that role in her absence. Wanda Thorne's replacement has not yet been determined. The role of Academic Programs Coordinator will be split this year between Emanuel Istrate, who is acting in the role in the Fall, and Ira Wells, who resumes the position in the Winter term. A. Hernandez also noted that Harim Ulfig has returned after a period of leave, and expressed gratitude at having her back in the office.

On the faculty side, there are several new instructors this year. Lee Emrich, Nkem Ike, and Jennifer DeSilva all began appointments this year, while Prof. Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo has moved from a joint-appointment with Emmanuel College to a 100% appointment at Victoria College.

2. Job Searches: A. Hernandez noted that the Assistant Professor search to support the Education & Society program had mixed results, as there was no successful hire for the position, but the finalists were able to teach in the program under one-year contracts. The search will be resumed in 2025-2026.

In the meantime, Victoria College will collaborate with Emmanuel College in a search for a Teaching Stream Assistant Professor. That search is in the field of New Testament and Sacred Scriptures, but half of those courses would be taught in Victoria College's programs.

3. Notice of the 2024 Review of CRRS: The Principal's Office is currently preparing to launch a review of the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies. Matt Kavaler's tenure as Director of the Centre ends this academic year, and the Centre itself has not undergone formal review in more than a decade (the last review having been conducted in 2009, with a brief governance review having taken place also in 2012).
4. Endowed Talks and Special Plenaries: A. Hernandez noted that Anishinaabe writer and journalist, Waubgeshig Rice, will deliver the 2024-2025 Pelham Edgar Lecture Wednesday, October 23rd. Planning remains ongoing for both the Coxford Lecture and Judy LaMarsh Lecture for academic year 2024-2025. Earlier this semester, the College hosted a special panel discussion on "Civil Discourse on Campus" as part of its Vic One Plenary Series. That conversation featured Prof. Randy Boyagoda (Provostial Advisor on Civil Discourse), Prof. Ian Williams (Victoria College Fellow and 2024 CBC Massey Lecturer), Pamela Paul (New York Times Opinion Columnist), and Prof. Janice Stein (Founding Director, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy).
5. Centre for Creativity: Victoria University launched the Centre for Creativity in May of 2024. Prof. Adam Sol serves as the Centre's Launch Director and has been active both on campus and in the broader community. Among their activities so far: a series of workshops at Word on the Street, a panel at the Toronto Jazz Festival, and most recently, the prospect of a podcast co-sponsored by the CBC. The Centre is exploring a number of additional partnerships that will provide opportunities for our students, underwrite research and creativity among university faculty, and support complementary community organizations.
6. Student-facing initiatives: The Faculty Mentorship Program has been revised for this year in the hopes of increasing faculty-student engagement between approximately 40 mentor-mentee matches. Principal Hernandez noted that the launch event was very well attended. Other student-focused initiatives include "Third Thursdays with the Principal," a monthly open-house style office hours event hosted jointly by the Principal's Office and VUSAC. Additionally, the EDI Student Working Group hopes to build on the progress of the previous year, including a set of actionable recommendations to be considered in the fall semester.

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

E. Istrate noted that the number of students in our upper year programs continue to grow. Since the VCC meeting last fall, our overall enrolment has grown from 708 students to 827. It is broken down as follows:

- Literature & Critical Theory (Specialist, Major, Minor) has grown from 108 to 115 students
- Renaissance Studies (Specialist, Major, Minor) has grown from 23 to 38 students
- Creativity and Society (Minor) has grown from 223 to 275 students
- Education and Society (Minor) has grown from 156 to 164 students
- Material Culture and Semiotics (Minor) has grown from 62 to 76 students
- Science, Technology, and Society (Minor) has grown from 136 to 159 students

E. Istrate noted that First-Year programs are also going strong, with Vic One enrolment growing from 217 last year to 239 now. Most of the Vic One Hundred courses are also full, and the total number of students in those courses is 286. The Academic Committee is currently planning for this year's course additions and minor program modifications. The committee plans to introduce 4 new courses, on the topics of Mental Health Literacy; Disability, Inclusion and Education; Speculative Fiction; and Creativity and the Altered

Consciousness. Perhaps the biggest challenge this year has been with space for our classes. Due to renovations in two of our buildings, many of our courses had to be scheduled elsewhere on campus.

5. Report of the Fellows Committee (A. Motsch)

The Fellows lunch colloquiums has started; R. McGill will be presenting in the upcoming week on Alice Munro. A. Motsch noted that there are 8 new junior fellows this year, resulting in a total of 23 junior fellows. The junior fellows will be presented to the community in a reception on Oct 25. A. Motsch noted that it's important to welcome and integrate them into the Victoria College community well; a new initiative ongoing is to have 2 or 3 of the junior fellows host a panel during one of the lunch colloquium sessions. A. Motsch noted that the Principal's Office will soon begin a review of the Fellow and Associate system and the community will be approached for feedback shortly.

A. Motsch moved the motion to accept the list of junior fellows: S. Simmons, J. Collings, M. Iurorio, N. Khan, D. McCarthy, J. McLaughlin, L. Simpson, H. Smith. B. Davidson seconded. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

A. Motsch moved the motion to advance A. Hernandez from associate to full fellow. S. Lee seconded. The motion was passed *nem. con.*

6. Report of VUSAC (J. Yun)

J. Yun noted that over the Summer, alongside reviewing two governing documents of the Equitable Hiring Policy and Budget Steering Policy to ensure that VUSAC policies reflect students' interest to the best it can, she held 30+ hours of office hours each week. VUSAC was able to ratify 22 clubs over the summer, and a few more later in the Fall. A significant focus of their summer work was centred around Orientation, Commuter Orientation, Registration and Name Tags, Dinner with VUSAC, Clubs and Levies, as well as a first-ever Tri-College Dance at the ROM. The first event of the year was the Scarlett and Gold pub night, which had more than one hundred attendees. The year began with student elections, and J. Yun issued congratulations to the four new VCC representatives, won by S. Musk, J. Liou, A. Chucheong, and E. Zhang.

J. Yun noted that VUSAC held a once-in-a-lifetime Centennial Gala with their annual semi-formal dance, as the Victoria University student parliament was developed in 1924. She expressed gratitude to K. Castle, A. Hernandez, Y. Ali, and Alumni Jamie Janiero for attending the event.

Another priority of VUSAC this year is to bridge the gap between Victoria University administration and the student body. J. Yun expressed gratitude to A. Hernandez for the Third Thursdays initiative, helping to connect the student body directly with the Principal. J. Yun also expressed gratitude for the VUSAC team, the Dean's Office, the President's Office, the Principal's Office, and the Registrar's Office for their support of VUSAC and the student body.

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

K. Castle noted that the Office of the Dean of Students assisted or hosted three past orientations: first, a communal orientation for students to get to know their peers prior to the term beginning, attended by 83 students; second, an orientation for international students, attended by 95 students; and third, regular orientation, attended by 920 students. Two further orientation days will be occurring: a neurodiversity day of learning after reading week, along with a reorientation for first-year students will be at the end of November to help keep the first-year students oriented.

K. Castle also noted that the residences are full; only 50% of the upper year students were able to get into

residence, resulting in 250 students being turned away. 23 beds were added this year, and currently there are 824 students living in residence, or a 98.5% occupancy rate, which is beneficial for Victoria University's ancillary revenue.

The Office of the Dean of Students has also expanded their offerings for Emmanuel College. K. Castle noted that they hired an Associate Dean of Student Welfare and Engagement for that purpose, and that they are now looking to bridge together Emmanuel College and Victoria College.

Finally, K. Castle noted that there have been a number of ongoing conversations and events hosted by or supported by the Office of the Dean of Students. Most recently was the Minding Your Minds Conference, with a special topic on screentime and mental health; upcoming in March will be an event focused on the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after ten years, to be managed by J. Hamilton-Diabo. At Emmanuel College, there will be discussions on Spirituality in the Public Sphere, focused on representations of religion in Canada and the U.S. There will also be discussions on Culture and Conflict, and civil discourse in the university.

Discussion: W. Robins inquired for an update on Y. Ali and K. Castle's shared space in Northrop Frye Hall. K. Castle noted that they had not received any complaints from students about being unable to find their offices, and the proximity has facilitated more conversations and collaborations between the two offices.

8. Report of the Northrop Frye Centre (B. Davidson)

B. Davidson thanked everyone for their attendance at the record number of talks last year. B. Davidson thanked Hayley Birss, the former Special Projects and Events Coordinator, and Kelly Baron, for stepping into the role. B. Davidson also expressed gratitude to the Principal's Office for their continued support, and highlighted the Dr. Sally L.D. Katary Memorial Lecture, "Slavery and the Athenian Sex Trade," to be delivered by Prof. Alison Glazebrook on Nov 28 at 4 p.m. in Alumni Hall.

B. Davidson highlighted that the NFC has a new collaboration with the Centre for the Study of the United States (CSUS), which has funded four more fellows at the NFC: two doctoral students, and two undergraduates. The collaboration has already been fruitful, resulting in one past lunchtime talk, and another two lunchtime talks upcoming.

Finally, B. Davidson noted that this year's visiting scholar is Dr. Uxía Otero-González, a visiting post-doctoral fellow at TMU who works on women's fashion in Francoist Spain. B. Davidson welcomed the VCC to send any undergraduates interested in fashion and garments her way, and noted that he looks forward to seeing members of the VCC at the NFC's upcoming events.

9. Other Business

B. Davidson inquired about the status of the President's Report; A. Hernandez replied that it is likely coming at the next VCC.

W. Robins reminded the VCC that there's high table lunch, and expressed interest in seeing more people there. W. Robins explained that the entrance is through the VUCR; that faculty are welcome to fill their plates from any food station, and that a paper chit will be brought to them at the high table to fill in later, and that a wide variety of payment options are offered (individual accounts or card). A. Hernandez agreed, expressing

his interest in revitalizing the High Table as a place for conversation and collegiality.

A. Sol reminded the VCC that the faculty reading series is occurring on Nov 6 and features John Reibetanz and Kate Cayley.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m. A. Sol motioned to adjourn.