

Victoria College Student Projects Fund

Operating Policy

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Section A: Preamble..... | 2 |
| Section B: Structure of the Student Projects Fund..... | 3 |
| Section C: The Student Projects Advisory Board..... | 4 |
| Section D: The Student Projects Chair..... | 6 |
| Section E: The Student Projects Committee..... | 8 |
| Section F: Funding Policies..... | 11 |
| Section G: The Application Process..... | 14 |
| Section H: The Appeals Process..... | 17 |

Section A: Preamble

A proposal for the Special Projects Levy (later renamed the Student Projects Fund) was put forth by a sub-committee of the Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) in the spring of 2000. The proposal called for the creation of a new levy – to be paid by all Victoria College students – with the goal of improving student life at Victoria College. A referendum was put forth, asking students to pay a \$10.00 Student Projects Levy (\$5.00 semesterly), effective September 2000. The referendum question was passed on the ballot for the VUSAC Spring 2000 Elections, and approved by the Victoria University Board of Regents in June 2000. The Student Projects Fund has existed since then, and has resulted in improvements across the Victoria College community. A referendum was passed during the VUSAC Spring 2018 Elections decreasing the levy fee to \$6.00 (\$3.00 semesterly), effective September 2018.

A1. The purpose of the Student Projects Fund Levy (“The Student Projects Fund” or “the Fund”) shall be to finance student initiatives that meet the criteria of the Fund to improve student life at Victoria College, pursuant to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

A2. The Student Projects Fund shall be managed by the Student Projects Chair (“the Chair”), the Student Projects Advisory Board (“the Advisory Board” or “the Board”), and the Student Projects Committee (“the Committee”).

A3. The Student Projects Chair and Student Projects Committee shall be responsible to the VUSAC and to the Advisory Board, following all the policies and procedures outlined in this document to govern the administration of the Student Projects Fund.

A4. The Student Projects Fund shall serve to benefit the quality of academic and student life of all Victoria College students and students who pay Victoria College fees (“the Victoria College Union” or “VCU”) by fostering innovation and community-building on campus.

Section B: Structure of the Student Projects Fund

B1. The Student Projects Fund shall consist of three components:

- a. The Student Projects Chair, who shall be hired at the end of each academic year (March-April).
- b. The Student Projects Advisory Board, which shall be formed in accordance with the policies outlined in Section C2.
- c. The Student Projects Committee, which shall be formed in accordance with the policies outlined in Section E2.

Section C: The Student Projects Advisory Board

C1. The Advisory Board shall consist of 8 voting members including the non-voting VUSAC Vice-President Student Organizations (VPSO) who shall chair meetings.

C2. Membership to the Advisory Board shall consist of:

- a. The standing Student Projects Chair (1 vote)
- b. A representative from the Office of the Dean of Students (1 vote)
- c. One appointee of the VUSAC President (1 vote)
- d. One appointee of the VUSAC Vice President External (VPE) (1 vote)
- e. One appointee of the VUSAC Vice President Internal (VPI) (1 vote)
- f. One appointee of the VUSAC VPSO (1 vote)
- g. Two appointees of the VUSAC Commuter Commissioner (1 vote each)
- h. The VUSAC VPSO (non-voting Chair)

C3. When making their appointment, appointers shall submit a rationale to the Student Projects Chair explaining why they believe their appointee is best suited to sit on the board.

C4. Appointed members of the board shall not be current members of the VUSAC, inclusive of assessor members.

C5. Each member of the VUSAC Executive shall be responsible for appointing a student to the Advisory Board by the September following their election, as outlined by Section C2.

C6. The VUSAC Commuter Commissioner shall be responsible for appointing two students to the Advisory Board by the September following their election, as outlined by Section C2.

C7. The Advisory Board shall be responsible for:

- a. Conducting an annual review of the Student Projects Levy Operating Policy and making any required amendments.
- b. Hearing any appeals brought forth regarding failure of a project application to be ratified by the VUSAC.

C8. Quorum for Advisory Board meetings shall be 5 voting members.

a. The Student Projects Chair must be present at any meetings of the Advisory Board.

C9. The Advisory Board shall serve their terms for one academic year, from their appointment in September to the following April.

Section D: The Student Projects Chair

D1. The Student Projects Committee shall be chaired by the Student Projects Chair.

D2. The Student Projects Chair shall be held jointly responsible and accountable to the Advisory Board, the VUSAC, and the Student Projects Committee.

D3. The Student Projects Chair shall be hired by a hiring committee at the end of each academic year to chair the following year of the Student Projects Fund, beginning in September.

a. This committee shall be composed of:

i. The VUSAC President or a designated representative.

ii. The outgoing Chair

1. Should the outgoing chair be reapplying or otherwise unavailable, a VUSAC representative shall take their seat on the hiring committee.

iii. A representative from the Office of the Dean of Students.

iv. An appointed member of the current Advisory Board, to be chosen by the outgoing Chair and Dean's Office representative.

v. An outgoing hired member of the Student Projects Committee, to be chosen by the outgoing Chair and Dean's Office representative.

b. This committee shall make every effort to apply equitable hiring best practices in accordance with the VUSAC Equitable Hiring Policy when hiring the Chair.

D4. The roles and responsibilities of the Student Projects Chair are as follows, and may be delegated as the Chair sees fit:

a. General Responsibilities

i. Chair all meetings of the Student Projects Committee, responsible for facilitating conversation as an unbiased, neutral party.

ii. Receive applications to the Student Projects Fund and direct all complete applications to the Committee for consideration.

iii. Follow up with all applicants on the status of their project and funding.

iv. Update the Advisory Board on any approved applications at the beginning of each meeting.

v. Provide a summary of the financial account of the Student Projects

Fund at the beginning of each Committee meeting.

vi. Attend VUSAC meetings to report on the activities of the fund and present any projects approved by the Committee for ratification by the VUSAC.

vii. Complete and submit a year-end report to the Advisory Board, the VUSAC, and the Office of the Dean of Students, including a breakdown of projects that have been funded, the current state of funding for each, and suggestions for future years.

viii. Complete and submit a transition report containing materials and information necessary for the transition of the incoming Chair, as well as links to any other relevant documents.

viii. Shall communicate with the VUSAC Finance Chair to ensure that approved applications are reflected on the VUSAC Master Budget.

b. Publicity and Promotions

i. In conjunction with Committee members, The Chair shall be responsible for advertising the Student Projects Fund as a source of funding for projects that fall under the purview of the Fund.

ii. The Chair shall advertise applications for the hiring of the next Student Projects Chair, and the Committee.

D5. The Student Projects Chair shall receive an honorarium of \$500, to be paid at the end of their term, pending submission of their year-end report.

Section E: The Student Projects Committee

E1. The Student Projects Committee shall consist of 10 voting members and the non-voting Student Projects Chair, who shall chair meetings.

E2. Membership of the Committee shall consist of:

a. Appointed Members:

- i. A representative of the Office of the Dean of Students (1 vote)
- ii. The VUSAC President or a representative (1 vote)
- iii. The current VUSAC Finance Chair (1 vote)
- iv. The current VUSAC Commuter Commissioner or Co-Chair, as decided amongst themselves at the beginning of the academic year. (1 vote)
- v. The current VUSAC Equity Commissioner or Co-Chair, as decided amongst themselves at the beginning of the academic year. (1 vote)

b. Hired Members, who must be members of the VCU and follow the constituencies as outlined below:

- i. Two commuter students who do not hold an executive position on a club/levy (1 vote each - 2 votes)
- ii. Two residence students who do not hold an executive position on a club/levy (1 vote each - 2 votes)
- iii. One club representative (1 vote)
- iv. One levy representative (1 vote)

c. The Hired Members shall be hired by the committee outlined in Section D3(a) during the September of the academic year for which the Student Projects Chair was hired.

- i. The outgoing Chair will be replaced by the newly-hired Student Projects Chair for the upcoming academic year.

d. The chair shall make every effort to apply the VUSAC Equitable Hiring Policy when hiring the hired members of the Committee.

E3. Two (2) of the hired Committee members shall be assigned to the following portfolios and responsibilities by the Chair.

a. The Deputy Chair shall assist the chair by:

- i. Attending VUSAC meetings to provide updates on the Student Projects

Fund, and to present any projects that have passed through the Committee for ratification before the VUSAC.

iii. Keeping a detailed account of each Committee meeting by taking minutes, including recording attendance, questions asked and answered by Committee members and the applicant(s), respectively, relevant points from discussions of each proposal, and the results of all votes on applications considered by the Committee.

b. The Marketing Coordinator shall assist the chair by:

i. Designing promotional materials for the Student Projects Fund to be shared on social media and in-person.

ii. Promoting the Fund on Instagram, including sharing committee meeting dates and times, application deadlines, hiring applications, and outreach opportunities.

iii. Updating the Student Projects Fund website to include all new dates and deadlines, updates to the application process and governing documents, biographical information on each Committee member, and each new project approved by the Committee and ratified by the VUSAC.

d. The Deputy Chair and Marketing Coordinator shall each receive an honorarium of \$250.00 in recognition of their efforts.

E4. The Committee shall be held responsible to the Advisory Board and the VUSAC.

E5. The Committee shall meet bi-weekly, as determined by the Chair in consultation with the Committee, to discuss and vote on all complete applications that are submitted.

E6. The Committee shall vote on all project applications to fund only those that qualify under the policies and procedures outlined in the Operating Policy. Should a conflict of interest situation arise, where a Committee member has a vested interest in a project application, that member shall be required to abstain from voting.

a. It is the responsibility of the Chair to clarify potential conflicts of interest involving Committee members when they arise.

b. In circumstances where a Committee member is a Club or Levy representative, and a project application is submitted by a member of their organization, they shall be required to abstain from voting

i. This shall also be applied to project applications by VUSAC Co-Chairs or Commissioners.

c. In circumstances where a project is submitted by the VUSAC, or any of its Commissions, all Committee members belonging to VUSAC (President or representative, Commuter Commissioner/Co-Chair, Equity Commissioner/Co-Chair, and Finance Chair) shall be required to abstain from voting.

d. If a Committee member applies for a project, they shall be required to abstain from voting and must leave the room during discussion.

E7. All Committee members shall be required to attend each meeting of the Student Projects Committee.

a. Regrets to any missed Committee meeting shall be sent to the Chair within a reasonable timeframe.

b. If a Committee member misses two (2) Committee meetings without having previously informed the Chair, they shall be removed from the Student Projects Committee, and replaced at the discretion of the Advisory Board.

E8. Minutes shall be taken by the Deputy Chair or Chair at meetings, and shall be made available to the Advisory Board and the VUSAC should the need arise.

E9. Should any member request to vote by Secret Ballot, the Chair shall implement such a vote.

Section F: Funding Policies

F1. Only individual members of the Victoria College Union (VCU) shall be considered for, and may apply for funding.

- a. If an individual, at any time during the fulfillment of their project, ceases to be a member of the VCU, they must assign a new project manager, pending approval by the Student Projects Chair, or their approval for funding shall be rescinded.

F2. Only VUSAC-recognized clubs and levies shall be considered for, and may apply for funding.

- a. If an organization loses its VUSAC recognition, their approval shall be rescinded and any funding released shall be returned to the Student Projects Fund.

F3. An amount up to \$2000 shall be allocated to the Student Projects Advisory Board and Committee for spending on Student Projects Fund-related goods and/or services.

- a. Any expenditures under this fund shall be presented to the Committee at the beginning of each Committee meeting, as well as the Advisory Board at the beginning of each Advisory Board meeting.
- b. All expenditures must be listed in the financial account of the Fund as well as the Chair's year-end report.

F4. The Student Projects Fund shall not allocate funds to any project application that falls under the following categories¹:

- a. Annually-occurring/recurring operating costs for any student organizations, clubs, or councils. Operating costs include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Any items that are required for the day-to-day operations of an organization. Examples may include subscriptions.²
- b. Proposals for furnishing, equipment, or facilities improvements in residences:³
 - i. Any project that is to be made available only to a subset of VCU members shall not be considered. Examples include initiatives open to strictly residence or strictly commuter students.

¹ However, exceptions shall be granted at the discretion of the Committee provided that the application meets the necessary requirements, listed below, to qualify for an exception.

² EXCEPTIONS may be made if the applicant can demonstrate need and/or at the discretion of the Committee based on the potential benefit of the project to Victoria College students.

³ EXCEPTIONS are made at the discretion of the Committee if the proposed project takes place at the 24-Hour Victoria University Front Desk (in Margaret Addison Hall).

- c. Any project applications that have already attained complete funding elsewhere shall not be considered under Student Projects Fund.⁴
- d. Wages, salaries, and any similar expenditure that may be considered taxable income:⁵
- i. Any project that provides compensation for an individual in return for services rendered shall not be considered for funding. Expenditures such as speaker fees, where the individual is not under the direct employment of the applicant, are not included in this stipulation.
- e. Previous projects that were funded by the Student Projects Fund. Previous projects include, but are not limited to:⁶
- i. Unfulfilled projects that have received partial funding from the Student Projects Fund.
 - ii. Project applications for events that have received funding from the Student Projects Fund in the past are no longer eligible to attain funding for a second event.
 - iii. Repairs to items purchased through Student Projects shall not be funded through the Student Projects Fund.
 - iv. Items that have been purchased through Student Projects are not eligible for further funding in the future, whether for repairs, or for increased quantities.
- f. Each VUSAC Levy organization, including the VUSAC itself, shall not receive funding in excess of four times per academic year unless need can be demonstrated to the committee.⁷

F5. Projects that receive funding through a Student Projects grant must be completed by the September 30th of the following academic year.

- a. The Student Projects Chair shall send a reminder email by September 1st prior to the expiration of funding.
- b. The project applicant shall have the opportunity to apply for an extension of one year.

⁴ NO EXCEPTIONS.

⁵ EXCEPTIONS are made at the discretion of the Committee to provide an Honoraria to a maximum of \$500.00.

⁶ EXCEPTIONS are jointly made at the discretion of both the Committee and the Advisory Board based on the potential benefit of the project to Victoria College students.

⁷ EXCEPTIONS are jointly made at the discretion of both the Committee and the Advisory Board based on the potential benefit of the project to Victoria College students.

i. Extension applications shall be due by September 30th, and shall be processed by the Committee.

Section G: The Application Process

G1. The Application Process for Student Projects shall follow the policies and procedures outlined in this section.

G2. Applications shall be accepted on a rolling basis over the course of two rounds: Round 1 (October – December) and Round 2 (January – April).

a. Funding applications shall be accepted and discussed on a bi-weekly basis:

i. The Chair and Marketing Coordinator shall cooperate to ensure all application deadlines are conveyed to the VCU membership through all available means – including, but not limited to: the existing social media accounts, the VUSAC listserv, and the website.

b. All applications shall be made available on the Student Projects Fund website.

G3. Applications shall be considered for funding on the following criteria:

a. Accessibility (accessible to all VCU members)

b. Quality of proposal (well-researched, clearly written, thorough, all aspects of application fully addressed)

c. Purpose (meets the purpose of the Student Projects Fund, and is consistent with the policies outlined in Section F)

d. Community enhancement (adds to the Victoria College community in a positive way)

e. Commuter accommodation

f. Feasibility (outlines how project will be carried out)

g. Financial due-diligence (shows thoughtfulness in funding amount requested, and provides alternatives which vary in price)

h. Student consultation (evidence of student consultation in decision-making)

i. The Committee will not approve of funding that is aimed at benefiting, or would mainly benefit, non-members of the Victoria College Union (VCU). If found to be used otherwise, the receiver may be asked to return the funds to Student Projects.

G4. Only completed applications shall be considered for funding, and must contain:

- a. Project and Project Information
- b. Price Comparisons for financial due diligence
- c. Projects requesting more than \$2000.00 in funding must have a minimum of two (2) written endorsements by members of the VCU and a maximum of five (5) written endorsements.
 - i. Endorsements from Student Projects Committee members shall not be accepted.
 - ii. Late endorsements may be accepted at the discretion of the Chair, but shall not be considered after a decision has been made regarding the funding status of the project application.

G5. Applications shall be submitted electronically to the Student Projects Chair, and will be assessed by the Committee in the order that they are received.

G6. All completed applications shall be provided to the Committee prior to the Committee meeting.

- a. The Student Projects Chair shall confirm receipt of applications and inform applicants that their project application is being sent to the Committee for consideration.

- i. In the event an applicant believes their application has not been submitted to the Committee, they may request the VUSAC President or VPSO to inquire as to the state of their application.

- b. The Chair shall also provide an interview time during the Committee meeting, at which the applicant will pitch their project, answer questions, and provide further clarification regarding their proposal.

G7. Once an interview has concluded, the applicant shall leave the room for further discussion by the Committee.

G8. The Committee shall vote to decide on each project application individually.

- a. The release of funding requires a simple majority vote of the Student Projects Committee.

- b. In the case of a tied vote, the non-voting Chair shall be granted the tiebreaker vote.

G9. All project applicants shall be informed within 24 hours of the Committee meeting regarding the decision of the Committee.

a. Should a project be passed by the Student Projects Committee, the applicant shall only be informed of the result following its consideration by the VUSAC. shall be informed that the project must then be ratified by the VUSAC.

G10. Once an application has been presented to the VUSAC for ratification, the Chair shall inform the applicant of the VUSAC's decision within 24 hours.

a. Should VUSAC fail to ratify a project, the applicant has the opportunity to appeal the decision (per the policies and procedures outlined in section H).

b. With notice to the Chair, VUSAC may split any projects approved by the committee into its individual line items, and vote to ratify each line item separately.

G11. Once a project has been ratified by the VUSAC, the applicant shall direct any questions to the Chair.

G12. The Chair must confirm that spending by a project manager falls within the scope of their application before they can be reimbursed through the Office of the Dean of Students.

a. If purchases are too large for any one individual to facilitate, project managers are encouraged to contact the Chair to discuss the possibility of direct purchases through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Section H: The Appeals Process

H1. Should a project not be ratified by the VUSAC, the applicants have the opportunity to appeal the decision.

a. Requests for appeal must be received within 72 hours of notification regarding funding status.

i. Appeals shall be sent to the Chair, who will then direct all the documentation to the Advisory Board for consideration.

ii. The Chair shall not withhold any appeal request from the Advisory Board. In the event an applicant believes their appeal has not been submitted to the Board, they may request the VUSAC President or VPSO to inquire as to the state of their application.

b. Projects shall only receive one opportunity to be appealed.

c. All project appeals shall be considered by the Advisory Board.

i. The Advisory Board may request the minutes from the relevant meeting(s) and/or consult with the Committee for rationale on their initial decision.

H2. The Advisory Board shall meet with the appellant before deciding whether or not to reverse or uphold the original decision made by the Student Projects Committee and the VUSAC.

a. The Advisory Board must schedule a meeting within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal. If no meeting can be scheduled, the Advisory Board shall make a decision based on the information available to them.

i. The applicant and the VUSAC Executive must be present at this meeting.

b. The applicant, the Committee, and the VUSAC shall be given a copy of the appeal before this meeting occurs.

H3. Should the Advisory Board make a decision regarding the status of the Appeal, this decision shall be relayed to the VUSAC as well as to the applicant within 48 hours of the decision.

a. No alterations to the funding amount allocated by the Committee shall be permitted.

b. Should the Advisory Board choose to approve the project, it shall pass through VUSAC for ratification once again. If the project fails to be ratified by the VUSAC, the application is rejected.

Section I: Annual Review Guidelines and Amendments to the Operating Policy

- I1. The Student Projects Fund Operating Policy shall be reviewed annually in the winter semester.
- I2. The Student Projects Chair shall make recommendations to the Advisory Board, who shall be consulted on any Operating Policy changes.
- I3. When possible, the Chair shall solicit feedback and consultation from VCU members.
- I4. Any changes to the Operating Policy shall pass through the Advisory Board and receive a two-thirds majority vote.
 - a. Any Operating Policy changes must then be ratified through the VUSAC, and only then shall they be considered incorporated into this document.
 - b. The VUSAC President shall be invited to any annual review meeting as a resource to solicit feedback.
- I5. The Operating Policy changes shall be made available to the VUSAC within 48 hours of an Advisory Board decision.