

# Student Projects Levy Operating Policy

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# Student Projects Levy Operating Policy

## Section A: Preamble

A Proposal for the Special Projects Levy (later renamed the Student Projects Levy) 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 into by all Victoria College students – with the goal of improving student life at the college. A referendum question was put forth, asking students to pay a \$10 Student Projects Levy, 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 as a \$10 levy fee since then, and has resulted in improvements across the Victoria College community. A referendum question was passed on the ballot the VUSAC Spring 2018 elections that decreased this amount to \$6, 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 guidelines of the Fund to improve student life, pursuant to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.
  - a. The Student Projects Fund exists to foster innovation, and a sense of community-building.
- 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.

## Section B: Structure of the Student Projects Levy Fund

- B1. The Student Projects Fund shall be made up of three components:
  - a. The Student Projects Chair, who shall be hired at the end of each academic year (March-April)

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- b. The Student Projects Advisory Board, which shall be formed under the policies outlined in Section C2
- a. The Student Projects Committee, which shall be formed under the policies outlined in Section E2

## Section C: The Student Projects Advisory Board

- C1. The Advisory Board shall consist of 8 voting members (as outlined in Section C2) along with 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 or Co-Presidents (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 → 2 votes)
  - h. The VUSAC VPSO (non-voting Chair)
- C3. Each member of the VUSAC Judiciary shall be responsible for appointing a student to the Advisory Board following the VUSAC Spring Elections, as outlined by Section C2. Between the four appointees, a minimum of one student must be a commuter student.
- a. The VUSAC Co-Presidents shall appoint one student.
  - b. The VUSAC VPE shall appoint one student.
  - c. The VUSAC VPI shall appoint one student.
  - d. The VUSAC VPSO shall appoint one student.
- C4. The VUSAC Commuter Commissioner shall be responsible for appointing two students to the Advisory Board following the VUSAC Spring Elections, as outlined by Section C2.
- C5. All voting members of the Advisory Board must be ratified by VUSAC.

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- C6. The Advisory Board shall be responsible for:
  - a. Hiring of the Student Project Committee
  - b. Conducting a bi-annual review of the Student Projects Levy Operating Policy and making any required amendments
  - c. Hearing any appeals brought forth regarding failure of a project application to be ratified by the VUSAC
- C7. 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.
- C8. The Advisory Board shall serve their terms for one academic year from their appointment in September.

## Section D: The Student Projects Chair

- D1. The Student Projects Committee shall be chaired by the Student Projects Chair. The responsibilities of this individual shall be determined jointly by the VUSAC and the Student Projects Advisory Board, as outlined in this document.
- 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.
  - a) This committee shall be composed of:
    - I. The VUSAC President
    - II. The Outgoing Chair
    - III. The Dean's Office representative
  - b) This committee shall make every effort to apply equitable hiring best practices in 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

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- i. Chair all meetings of the Student Projects Committee in an unbiased manner
  - ii. Receive applications to the Student Projects Fund and direct all applications to the Committee for consideration
  - iii. Follow up with all applicants on the status of their project and funding
  - iv. Provide a detailed financial account of the Student Projects Fund at the beginning of any Advisory Board, Committee, or VUSAC meeting
  
  - v. Attend VUSAC meetings to provide updates on the Student Project Fund, to report on the activities of the fund, and to present any projects that have passed through the Committee for ratification before the VUSAC
  - vi. Complete and submit a year-end report to the Advisory Board, to the VUSAC, and to the Office of the Dean of Students, including a breakdown of projects that have been funded and the state of funding for each
- 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.

## Section E: The Student Projects Committee

- E1. The Student Projects Committee shall consist of 10 voting members (as outlined in Section E2) and the non-voting Student Projects Chair, who shall chair meetings.
- E2. Membership of the Committee shall consist of:

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a. Appointed Members:

- i. A representative of the Office of the Dean of Students (1 vote)
- ii. The current VUSAC President (1 vote)
- iii. the standing VUSAC Finance Chair (1 vote)
- iv. the current VUSAC Commuter Commissioner/VOCA Co-Chair (1 vote)
- v. The current VUSAC Equity Commissioner/Equity Co-Chair (1 vote)

b. Hired Members, who must follow the constituencies as outlined below:

- i. Two commuter students (1 vote each → 2 votes)
- ii. One residence student (1 vote)
- iii. One club representatives (1 vote each)
- iv. One levy representative (1 vote)

c. The chair shall make every effort to apply equitable hiring practices in hiring the above hired members of the committee.

E3. The Committee shall be held ultimately responsible to the Advisory Board and to the VUSAC.

E4. The Committee shall meet bi-weekly, as determined by the Chair in consultation with the Committee, to discuss and vote on all applications that are submitted.

E5. 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.

organization, they shall be so applied. This shall not apply to a member of the

- i. This shall also be applied to project applications by VUSAC Co-Chairs or Committee Heads (ex. VOCA Co-Chair).

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

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- c. If a Committee member applies for a project, they shall be required to abstain from voting and may choose to leave the room during discussion.
- E6. All Committee members shall sign the Student Projects Committee Member Contract at the start of their term.
- 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 the timeframe presented in the meeting notice email.
  - b. If a Committee member misses two (2) Committee meeting 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 Chair or delegated committee member 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 Student Projects 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 proctor, pending approval by the Student Projects Chair, or their funding shall be returned to the Student Projects Fund.
- F2. Only VUSAC-recognized clubs and constituent organizations shall be considered for, and may apply for Student Projects Funding.

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

F3. An amount up to \$1000.00 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 first be presented to the Advisory Board.

F4. The Student Projects Fund cannot allocate funds for any project application that falls under the following guidelines:

- a. Annually occurring 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 furniture and equipment for daily function.
  - ii. Items such as furniture and equipment required for daily function shall be considered at the discretion of the committee.
  - iii. Items for daily functioned may be granted if the applicant can prove need to the committee
  - iv. Start-up costs may be considered for funding by the Student Projects Fund; decisions are ultimately left to the Committee and the Advisory Board.
- b. Proposals for furnishings, equipment, or facilities improvements in residences:
  - i. Any project that is to be made available only to subset of VCU members shall not be considered.
  - ii. Projects may, in lieu of being inside residences, be made available from the 24-Hour Victoria University Front Desk (in Margaret Addison Hall).

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- c. Any project applications that have already attained complete funding elsewhere shall not be considered under Student Projects Fund.
- d. Wages, salaries, and any similar expenditure that may be considered taxable income:
  - i. Any project that provides compensation for an individual in return for services rendered shall not be considered for funding.
  - ii. Honoraria to a maximum of \$500.00 shall be considered an allowable amount.
- e. Applications requesting recurring costs – this shall include operating costs, as outlined in Section F4a.
  - i. Projects that have already received funding from the Student Projects Fund are not eligible to be funded again.
    - 1. Should an application come forth which falls under this clause, the Committee and Advisory Board shall come to a decision on a one-off basis.
  - 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 (VUSAC, The Cat's Eye, Caffiends, World University Service of Canada, The Strand, the Victoria College Drama Society, the Victoria College Athletics Association, Vic Pride, VicXposure and Acta Victoriana) shall not receive funding in excess of four times per academic year unless need can be proven to the committee.
  - i. Should a project application come forth which exceeds this amount,

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the Committee and Advisory Board shall come to a decision on a one-off basis.

- F5. Projects that receive funding through a Student Projects grant must be completed by the September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following academic year.
- a. The Student Projects Chair shall send a reminder email by the September 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the expiration of funding.
  - b. The project applicant shall have the opportunity to apply for an extension of one year.
    - i. Extension applications shall be due by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 in 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. Application deadlines shall be 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, as well as in the Goldring Student Center
- G3. Applications shall be considered for funding on the following criteria:
- a. Accessibility (accessible to all VCU members)

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- b. Quality of proposal (well researched, clearly written, thorough, all aspects and assessment criteria correctly addressed)
  - c. Purpose (meets the purpose of the Student Projects Fund, and is permissible under the policies outlined in Section F)
  - d. Community enhancement (adds to the Vic 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)
- 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.
- 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

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President/Co-Presidents or VPSO to inquire as to the state of their application.

- b. The Chair shall also provide an interview time during the Committee meeting, during which time the project applicant may be questioned regarding their project application and to provide further clarifications regarding the project.

G7. At the discretion of the Chair the Committee shall meet and question the applicant regarding the project application. Once a question period has concluded, the applicant shall leave the room for further discussion.

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 (6 votes).
- 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 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).

G11. Once a project has been ratified by the VUSAC, the applicant shall be informed and assigned a Committee liaison, to whom they may direct any questions.

## Section H: The Appeals Process

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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.
    1. 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 Committee, they may request the VUSAC President/Co-Presidents 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 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 judiciary must be present at this meeting.
  - ii. In the event that no meeting can be scheduled, the Advisory Board shall contact the applicant no later than after 21 days of the receipt of the appeal to inform them of the imminent expiration of the appeal, and allow them to submit a written response to the appeal.
- b. The applicant, the Committee, and the VUSAC shall be given a copy of the appeal before this meeting occurs.

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- 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.

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

- I1. The Student Projects Levy Operating Policy shall be reviewed bi-annually, once at the start of each academic year, and once at the end.
- 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 (5 votes).
  - a. Any Operating Policy changes that modify the voting structures of any of the constituent committees of the Student Projects Fund shall be required to be ratified through the VUSAC.
  - b. The VUSAC President/Co-President shall be invited to any Bi-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.