



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

150 Charles St. West, Room 127
Toronto, ON , M5S 1K9
(416) 585 - 4473
www.vusac.ca | fb.com/vusacuoft

1 February 2019

RE: Arts and Science Students' Students Union Referendum

At the directive of a unanimous vote on February 1st, the Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) formally endorses the Arts and Science Students' Students Union (ASSU)'s upcoming referendum.

We encourage Victoria College students to vote 'yes' to the fee increase on February 13th and 14th. For context, we have included the full text of ASSU's January 28th statement on the referendum below.

Yours in service,

The Victoria University Students' Administrative Council



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January 28, 2019

We, at the Arts and Science Students' Union (ASSU), proudly represent over 27 000 students at the University of Toronto, St George Campus. As your academic student union, we work to ensure that the needs of all our students are prioritized and fulfilled. Through our structure of 62 recognized course unions, we organize with students, faculty, and community members to hold events, change policies, improve programs, and provide support towards academic grievances. In order to continue to serve you and ensure our students have a fair and meaningful undergraduate experience, ASSU will be holding a referendum on February 13th and 14th seeking a \$1.50 levy increase.

Despite being the largest academic student union in Canada, ASSU currently has one of the lowest student society levies at the University of Toronto, collecting \$9.50 per full-time A&S student per term. ASSU's levy, unlike most other student societies on campus, is also not attached to the cost-of-living (CPI), meaning that it does not reflect the changes of dollar inflation over time. Currently, ASSU funds over \$180 000 to 62 student course unions in departments and programs, grants over \$36 000 in bursaries and awards, and funds over \$21 000 in grant money for undergraduate research and conference travel. In order to ensure that these funds are able to withstand each academic year, ASSU has historically asked students for a levy increase on a 5 or 6-year cycle, allowing our fees to balance inflationary pressures while ensuring that the typical student would not need to experience a fee increase during their undergraduate career. In accordance with this cycle, ASSU held a referendum in 2016 which unfortunately failed. It has now been 9 years since our last levy change in 2010, meaning that in real terms our fee is now lower than it was in 2010. To ensure future proportionality with inflation, ASSU is also seeking consent from its members to allow annual cost-of-living increases to the Arts and Science Students' Union Fee if the levy increase is approved.

Alongside course union funding that goes towards research conferences, academic journals, seminars, social events, and academic guidance among many things, ASSU has created several ongoing projects and conferences. Our annual Undergraduate Research



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Conference provides undergraduate students the opportunity to showcase their scholarly research, and our Student Success Day Conference invites marginalized high school students from the GTA to participate in workshops facilitated by a variety of course unions and campus groups. We continue to work on projects which attempt to broaden our reach and speak to student interests, including the ASSU Mentorship Program, our 'Moving on From' social campaign, and the upcoming release of the Arbor Journal of Undergraduate Research. ASSU continues to advocate on behalf of the academic interests and wellbeing of students to the Dean and faculty members of Arts and Science, leading to many positive results such as the implementation of our annual Fall Reading Week and the open discussion of a proposed American Sign Language course. Our office is an accessible and welcoming space which offers a multitude of useful resources for our students, including access to our past test library of over 500 courses, available printing and photocopying, faxing and telephone services, and health and wellness supplies.

On January 15th, our referendum received the unanimous support from ASSU Council, and now on February 13th and 14th, we ask for your support so that we can expand on our existing projects, increase bursaries and scholarships, and fund the growth of our course unions and their valuable work. Voting will be made available in-person in Sidney Smith Hall and online. Whether you have presented your research at our Undergraduate Research Conference, pet some dogs at our bi-annual Exam Jam, or only know us for our bright pink office and buttons, we hope to continue to provide you with the friendly and accountable service you expect from us. With your continued support, we look forward to strengthening our shared vision of an accessible, equitable, and student-focused University of Toronto.

Arts and Science Students' Union Executive