

2016 Governing Council Elections Student Candidates' Statements

Voting Period: Monday, February 8, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. to Friday, February 19, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Online voting will take place on U-elecT at voting.utoronto.ca and through a secured website for post-graduate medical trainees.

Full-Time Undergraduate Students – Constituency I (Faculty of Arts and Science; University of Toronto Mississauga; and University of Toronto Scarborough)

Mohammad Amin

Trust, dedication, leadership, results. MOHAMMAD AMIN for Governing Council. I am here to voice your concerns on issues that are important to you. Introducing better co-op opportunities, ensuring that the administration makes the right decisions that act in our best interests and strengthening the bond between our three campuses are matters that I will passionately pursue. I am a born leader. I have an outstanding history of accomplishments at various UTM and UofT organizations. Elect me as your representative at the highest decision making body at UofT. Mohammad Amin, your voice at the Governing Council. www.facebook.com/Amin4GC

Bamdad Attaran

The University of Toronto is considered to be Canada's best University in terms of research and education. Though it is truly evident that many students of the university are not pleased. The university has one of lowest student approval rates in Canada, due to concerns about high tuition and a lack of interest in student wellbeing. The governing student council has the potential to transform the university's policies. Vote for Bamdad Attaran, it's time for progress.

Ibraheem Aziz

My name is Ibraheem Aziz and I am a first-year undergraduate student in the Rotman Commerce program at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus. I have a strong background in youth and student governance, including service on the City Youth Council of Toronto as a Junior Councillor and as a member of the Student Activity Council at my high school. I am dedicated to providing a strong, professional voice for students at the University of Toronto and am committed to ensuring all students received maximum benefit individual university experiences. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ibraheem-aziz-b947bb67>

Kush Beepat

If elected, I intend to uphold the duties vested in me by the University of Toronto Act, 1971, which obliges members of the Governing Council to act with diligence, honestly, and with good faith in the best interests of the University. Any interests to be advanced while in office will be solely that of my constituents and none of my own.

Lucy Cheung

I am aware that many students feel a tad bit neglected by the university. By this I mean that students always seem to get the short end of the stick. Like during the CUPE strike, when students went weeks without grades. Or that psychological health issues are not addressed and processed in a timely manner. All these issues can be resolved with efficient solutions and a dedicated student who speaks out for all students at U of T. I am that student, for I am not afraid to defend the students at U of T. Vote Lucy Cheung for measurable change.

Janessa Duran

Janessa Duran is a second year student specializing in Peace, Conflict, and Justice Studies and minoring in Computer Science. She grew up in Southern California before moving to Chile at 17. Janessa eventually moved to Toronto to begin her studies, and thus far, has been published in Woodsworth College's undergrad journal, Vox, has interned at the US Consulate General, and was chosen as Ulife's new member of the year for 2015. Janessa is running for the governing council in the hopes that she may become an active member in an operation integral to the University of Toronto.

Paola Floro

Since the beginning, I have worked hard in contributing positively to UofT and to the overall student experience. As First Year Representative at Loretto College, I developed leadership skills, learned from my peers and ultimately became a voice for first year St. Michael's students. Similarly, my current role as Events Director for the Spanish Student Organization has allowed me to gain experience in budgeting, and planning of various social and academic events. I am hard-working and determined. If elected as student governor, I will use my acquired experience and commit to being the voice for all students. Thank you.

Nick Grant

Hello, my name is Nicholas Grant, and I'm interested in running for Governing Council because I believe it's the next step forward, building on my experience working on student issues at UofT. I'm a three-time elected member of NCSC, and twice-elected to UTSU. I'm proud of fighting for students' representation and increased transparency. I intend to keep fighting for these and can promise that I will be fully committed to this role, if elected. Please consider voting for Nicholas Grant.

Austin Han

Austin Han is the founder and CEO of the volunteer organization Toronto First Aid Network and the President of the University of Toronto First Aid Society. As a former City Youth Councillor of Toronto and a Toronto District School Board Trustee candidate, he is working hard to represent the interest of all students. Currently studying Computer Science and Human Biology as a 3rd year student at the University of Toronto, he would like to act as your representative in the Governing Council. Visit <http://gc.austinhn.ca> for more information.

Dominick Han

Hi everyone I'm Dominick Han and I'm an international student from China. I'm a second year student double-majoring in Computer Science and Life Sciences, and I'm running for the Full-Time Undergraduate Student seat. First time in the history that, us, international students are eligible to be on the Governing Council, but until now we still have less coverage in insurance plans, less scholarship availabilities, and it's hard to just fit in the Canadian culture. As an international student myself, I have first-hand experience about these issues around campus and I will try my best to address and solve your problems. <http://dominick-han.com>

Sasha Henry

Vote SASHA HENRY for Governing Council! As a fourth-year English and Caribbean Studies student, and as an Executive of the Black Students' Association, I have been active in New College and across the University in supporting students and building community. As a Governor, I want to address the quality and accessibility of education for students on all three campuses of the University. I will work to lower tuition fees, improve mental health services and academic accommodations, and challenge systemic racism and other forms of oppression within the institution. From February 8-19, 2016, vote SASHA HENRY for Governing Council.

Luke Jeagal

Our university, while great, is far from perfect. In the past few years, students have seen various issues and grievances surface, and actions being taken without our concerns heard, many of which have long been recurring. I am speaking specifically about the University's handling of last winter's strike of CUPE 3902 Units 1 and 3 ("TA strike"); the administration's refusal to divest from fossil fuels; enormous, disconnected Convocation Hall classes; and continuing tuition hikes among others. We would also benefit from more comprehensive services in mental health and support for sexual assault cases on campus. Vote Luke Jeagal for accountability.

Marianne Alice Kalacynski

My desire to be involved in and contribute to the University of Toronto prompted me to stand for election for the 2016 Governing Council. Because we spend four years of our lives within this community, I'd like to be a part of this opportunity that allows for students to have some say in what occurs. As an attentive, detailed, involved, outgoing, and concerned individual, I believe I'd positively contribute to the 2016 Governing Council if elected. Currently, I'm a first year with St Michael's College, and I intend to double major in the humanities to one day become a teacher. <http://kalacyn.wix.com/personal>

Anntara Khan

My name is Anntara Khan, I am a first year student and am running as a member of constituency one (department of art-sci). I represent many qualities such as honesty, perseverance, attentiveness, dedication, leadership, and discipline. I have previous experience in student body government as a member of Student's Council in high school. Among my other experiences through which I have developed valuable skills such as organization, communication and flexibility are, Editor of School Newspaper, Student Council Liaison for Prom Committee and Girl's Rugby Team. If I am elected I will try my best to make this university proud.

Daniel Kim

Addressing the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among students is key to my candidacy. At U of T, I am an active member of Students for Barrier-Free Access and a Peer Mentor with the English Language Learning program. I also have over 7 years of experience as a public worker at the Toronto Public Library. As a candidate for Toronto School Board Trustee in the 2014 municipal election, I gained insight from residents into student needs. With a strong track record in public service and experience with leadership, planning, organizing and problem solving, I want to become your advocate.

Marc 'Marlo' Laurin

The University of Toronto is Canada's oldest, largest, and highest ranked university. Therefore it is no simple task of upholding our reputation, delivering superior education and ensuring opportunities for learning and growth are available to students. I will ensure the interests of all students are represented when advocating on the issues that affect us. Engaging our community and promoting positive change through involvement, awareness and action is a top priority. My hope is that every student can enjoy and benefit from their educational experience here at the University of Toronto. www.votemarclaurin.com

Pearl Mak

Pearl Mak is a third year student specializing in Finance. With a business background, she is trained to incorporate innovation with practical analysis. As the Chief Publications Manager at MESA, she started UTSC's first business review and injected new branding strategy in creating professional image for the publication. She believes in the power of opinion; that the council represents the voices of different individuals; that being a part of the council means servitude in providing better welfare for students. If change is necessary for students' development, she hopes to be the initiator.

Eglantina Moglica

My name is Eglantina Moglica. I am a second year psychology and neuroscience major seeking your vote in securing a position as a full-time undergraduate student representative. As an immigrant, sister, part-time employee, and full-time student, I feel well suited in understanding and advocating for the needs of a myriad of the student populace. If elected, particular attention will be given to expanding accessibility for mental health services, minimizing obligatory student fees, improving access to health and dental coverage, and refining communication between executive staff and the student body. Make your vote count by voting Eglantina Moglica into Governing Council.

Fatima Mohamed

My name is Fatima and I'm in my third year and studying Political Science and History. If elected as a member of the governing council, I will work to mend the relationship between all u of t campuses. I will lobby for the implementation of an indigenous peoples' course as well as equity (social justice) course and recognizing their importance to the institution. I also advocated for mental health awareness and expansion of resources available to students. I hope to make a difference with your vote and achieve lasting change. Thank you for your time.

Laban Mwangi

I am an international student in the Faculty of Arts and Science seeking to major in Computer Science and Physics. I possess strong analytical, organizational and leadership skills developed and strengthened through various roles of leadership in high school and internships in a high performance corporate environment. Until recently, international students have not been eligible to vie for governing council positions depriving the university a unique perspective in governance. Given a chance, I will blend my international experience, personal competencies and skills to actively and honestly contribute to the governance of the University. Thanks as you choose to vote. https://www.facebook.com/Mwangi-LK-for-student-Governor-1000572636684560/?skip_nax_wizard=true

Abdulla Omari

Hello, I am Abdullah Al-Umari, a second year political science student that has served as a Director for the UTMSU, UTSU, and The Varsity Publications through the 2015-2016 term. I am running to promote a reinvestment in the student experience across the three diverse campuses that make up UofT; focusing on Mental Health, Ancillary tuition costs and department based support systems for Arts Science Students. I hope to use the governance model to hold the Administration accountable as I have striven to as a Director, and give the perceptive of a Muslim Student to Governing Council. <https://www.facebook.com/GoverningCouncilElection>

Danielle Rolfe

Danielle is a Full-Time student at the University of Toronto Mississauga campus. On campus, Danielle is the Internal Associate and Conference Co-Chair for the UTM Undergraduate Economics Council (UEC). She is involved with UTMSU as a Clubs and Societies Auditor and a member of the Women's Ice Hockey Team at UTM. She is interested in providing guidance on the University's long term goals, based on the needs and desires of the student body in order to enhance the academic, social, and financial qualities of the students of UofT. Ms. Rolfe is in her second year pursuing her studies in Economics <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/daniellerolfe>

Bingchen (Tony) Shan

I am a third-year student, at the department of statistics. Over the past two years, I have taken on leadership roles in student clubs and other extracurricular activities. From first-hand experiences, I understand how uneasy it can be to transition into university from high school for both local and international students. I am running for governing council striving to improve our experiences on campus. Relying on my leadership skills and personal experiences, I would like to represent my fellow students on university matters, as an undergraduate student, undergraduate TA, and summer-time researcher.

Daman Singh

Hey UofT! I’m Daman Singh and I want to improve your university experience. I currently sit on both the UC Lit and the UTSU’s Board of Directors and use these positions to try to make the undergraduate experience for students as strong as it can possibly be. I want to help build on UofT’s world-class prestige while making sure that the university commits itself to fair and equitable policies for its students. Together, we can push for a stronger university, with fairer class sizes, better mental health resources, lower tuition, more opportunities for career development and much more. URL: <http://damansingh.com/>

Mike Dequan Tian

My name is Mike Dequan Tian. I am an international student from China. I have been to Canada for almost 5 years. International students always pay approximately 5 times more than Canadian students for tuition. However, we never had any voice or representations in the Governing Council previously since holding the Canadian Citizenship was a requirement of nomination until this year. We are the minority of this university who has always held less rights and ignored by the Governing Council. As a member of this minority group, I think it is time to bring our voice in!

Catherine Tu

When asked to describe herself with one word, Catherine responded with "unconventional." Growing up with limited resources around her, Catherine always managed to find creative solutions for everything. Currently studying commerce, Catherine hopes to become an influential business-woman, and by sharing her story, encourage those who are struggling to never give up. As an outside-of-the-box thinker Catherine can't wait to start illuminating new ideas, and coming up with innovative methods that will make every student and staff member even more proud to be part of the University of Toronto.

Anif Wasif

HELLO UofT! This is Anil Wasif and I wish to make UofT an even greater place for all. As an international student I feared running for such an honor, but Canadian values have convinced me to do so. My vision is looking through your eyes in order to advocate for lower food prices on campus, increased student employment across departments and a first year grade recovery scheme. Small but crucial changes, this is not all, I am always available for anything that you wish to share with me. I want to be your voice, your choice. Elect me at www.wasifforgovernor.com

Gordon Xiong

Being a governing council member is not to make any administration decision, but to review, assess and deliberate any matters brought up by the administration staff. Therefore, I will not promise anything specific to be done, because it is simply not part of the job. However, I am standing for my strong perspective on improving academic environment and alumni network for current students. And also, I will put in my best effort to make final exam grading details available through Crowdmark, with personal connection built in the governing council. Contact me anytime at gordon.xiong@mail.utoronto.ca. Our voices can be heard.

Peter Zhang

Hi my name is Peter Zhang and I’m a third year immunology and health & disease student at the University of Toronto St. George campus at New College. I am happy to announce that I am running for the Governing Council and I want to talk a bit about my experiences. I am currently serving on the NCSC as a Social Director and on the UTSU on its board of directors, representing New College. I am excited to be on the campaign trail this year getting to know more people so feel free to ask my questions along the way!

Full-Time Undergraduate Students – Constituency II (Professional Faculties)

Farheen Ahmed

Farheen Ahmed is a Materials Engineering student with career prospects in sustainability. She is an Operations Coordinator at the nonprofit organization Youth for Humanity and leads the University of Toronto’s Solar Ambassadors team. This past year, she presented to faculty about effectively using technology in courses and reviewed course objectives for a team improving two core first-year Engineering courses. If elected to the Governing Council, she will advocate for lowering tuition fees to affordable levels, reducing international tuition to the domestic tuition level, reducing ancillary fees, improving campus mental health services and strengthening anti-sexual-assault policies. Learn more at farheenfathimaahmed.blogspot.com.

Ramz Aziz

I am a first year student at the Faculty of Law, and would be honoured to serve as your representative on the Governing Council of the University of Toronto. I previously served in the same capacity on the Board of Governors at Dalhousie University, where I brought a progressive voice to virtually every aspect of university governance, including capital projects, collective bargaining, campus sexual violence, fossil fuel divestment and academic quality. Based on this prior experience, I am confident I will be able to channel your concerns to ensure our university remains an institution of stellar repute and excellence.

QUESTIONS? Please contact the Chief Returning Officer, Anwar Kazimi at 416-978-8427 or anwar.kazimi@utoronto.ca, or the Deputy Returning Officer, Patrick McNeill at 416-978-8428 or patrick.mcneill@utoronto.ca.

Raffi Dergalstanian

Raffi Dergalstanian is a student of Chemical Engineering, completing his Third Year. He is serving as the Chief Returning Officer for the Engineering Society, and is also one of the three Engineering Reps for the UTSU. His experience in representing and serving students will prove to be a valuable asset when discussing and voting on issues such as: reviewing policies, placement of fees and financial relief. As an Engineer, he will approach problems with the most efficient solution and provide the best service to students.

Aidan Fishman

Between work, fun and maintaining your GPA, do you ever feel like a fish out of water? If so, Aidan Fishman is your candidate! I'm running for re-election to Governing Council because I believe that students in professional faculties like engineering, law and music need a strong, experienced representative looking out for our interests. As an undergraduate member, I fought successfully to expand campus wi-fi access and hold fee-collecting groups accountable to students. We can't stop now – please send me back to push for a better university, Every school (of fish) need its leader – vote the Fish for Governing Council!

Jorge May

My journey at the University of Toronto has thus far been fruitful and diverse. As a student at the Faculty of Music, training to be a teacher, I recognize the importance of specialized subjects and professional faculties university wide. If elected, I will strive to support the needs of my constituents, using my experiences and skills already gained through serving my fellow students in a range of capacities across the St George Campus in various student societies. This university needs a voice that recognizes the difference of studying as a professional faculty student. I will be that voice.

Tyler Weil

Fellow students, in the past five semesters I have seen this school grow. Once just a launch pad for our future endeavours, it is now home to me. As an active member of the Engineering and New College communities, I love seeing the efforts of engaging students go the distance and contribute to change. My experience includes managing a student-run café, serving on the Engineering Society and New College Residence Council, and head leading in the 2015 F!rosh Week. A vote for Tyler is a vote for commitment toward bettering our home's policies.

Part-Time Undergraduate Students

Susan Froom

As a mature student in philosophy and political science, I know part-time students need lower tuition fees, more bursaries, childcare, more accessibility, evening courses and student services. I've advocated for these and more as an executive of the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students, on University-wide committees like Council on Student Services, Hart House Board of Stewards and Governing Council, where I serve on Executive Committee, and University Affairs Board. I have experience lobbying through provincial and national student groups. For a student advocate with experience, skill, and commitment on Governing Council, vote SUSAN FROOM Feb 8-19 at voting.utoronto.ca www.facebook.com/froom4GC

Billy Graydon

Billy Graydon is a student of Computer Engineering, completing his Professional Experience Year. He has served on the faculty's Academic Appeals Board, and is currently the Speaker of the Engineering Society Board of Directors. Vying for one of only six undergraduate positions on a council 50 strong, he will be a strong voice for undergraduate issues: financial relief, making policies friendlier to part-time and PEY students and re-directing fees away from corrupt student unions. A staunch denouncer of political correctness, he will approach matters head-on to ensure that undergraduate students get the fullest out of their representation on Governing Council. <http://uoft.me/votegraydon>

Amir Hossein Moazzami

My name is Amir Hossein Moazzami, I have served as Vice President representing Part-Time students for 3 years; introducing a Mature Students Orientation, a transit pass for Part-Time Students (UTM) and support programs for Student Parents. I have studied under several programs, and feel I can represent the interests of my constituents from their diverse backgrounds and fields of study to Governing Council as the role of Part-Time students grows at UofT. My experience with Students Unions has made me accustomed to handling input and ensure all opinions are valued; a quality I intend to bring to UofT Governing Council.

Graduate Students, Constituency I (Humanities and Social Sciences)

Alla Babushkina

I am in my 6th year of a Ph.D. program at the Centre for Medieval Studies, and I have been involved in representing the members of my department to CUPE 3902 as a steward for the past three years. I'm deeply troubled by the financial position we find ourselves in as graduate students and workers when cost of living goes up every year while our funding does not keep up with inflation. If elected, I will use my voice and position to question this status quo at every opportunity. This February, please vote Alla as your Constituency I candidate. www.facebook.com/alla4gc

Elizabeth R. Bernath

Elizabeth Bernath studies in the School of Graduate Studies I-II, and aims to represent divisional constituents from her previous experience in university leadership. At present, she holds the position of Vice-President, Graduate Student Caucus, Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English. In this capacity, she liaises with graduate association representatives and administrators in each department of English in Canada. As well, for five years, she has served as President, Tenants' Executive, for the University of Toronto, St. George, Charles Street family residence, representing over 700 households, and serving as a member of the Student Family Housing Advisory Board.

Gabriel Boulianne Gobeil

Academically, Political Science doctoral student Gabriel Boulianne Gobeil explores the ramifications of artificial intelligence on war, seeking to understand how new technologies can be regulated to benefit actors besides states. Gabriel's community leadership has been demonstrated as Chief Steward Francophone for the uOttawa Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 2626; steward for UofT CUPE 3902; and volunteer in the 2015 Canadian federal election. Gabriel reflects judiciously and distinctly on important matters, as he would on those of concern falling within the fiduciary jurisdiction of the Governing Council. As a Graduate Student Member, he will contribute to good governance at UofT. <http://bit.ly/1Pf3SUB>

Christopher Cully

As a Master's student in the Department of Social Justice Education at OISE, I have successfully worked to build community among students, faculty and staff to ensure strong student representation in governance processes. As a student representative on the Graduate Education Council of OISE, I have advocated for the inclusion of a diversity of student voices and perspectives. As your Governor, I will bring together my experiences as a secondary school educator in History, English and Indigenous Studies, and as a graduate student representative to contribute to building a supportive and constructive educational environment at the University of Toronto.

Alex Nyikos

My main priority as a member of the Governing Council would be to make the body more visible and accessible to students of all backgrounds. It has a huge potential to deliver for us, and could benefit from wider involvement. I support divestment from fossil fuels, and feel that the university can and should adopt more tangible policies to reduce its carbon footprint and promote sustainability on campus. As an undergraduate at New York University Abu Dhabi, I served as Treasurer and Vice President of the student body, and accomplished major curriculum changes and student life improvements in those positions.

Annastasia Oraegbunem

Annastasia Oraegbunem is a Virgo-born three years earlier in 1990's, an energetic mother of three children whilst holding a Bachelor of Science in Education – Biology from the University of Nigeria Nsukka in ninth year of the 21st century with over three years' experience in teaching. Participated as a Registrar for the Mothers' Day campaign for Breast Cancer Society of Canada, in 2015. Currently enrolled in a Master of Education, Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Toronto. Thus, got involved in LHAE-Departmental Student Association executives and Graduate Student Research Conference Planning Committee for 2016. For more about me click <https://twitter.com/IamAnydos>

Bogdan Smarandache

My name is Bogdan Smarandache and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Medieval Studies (CMS). I am currently serving a third term as student representative for Division I on the Graduate Education Council of SGS and have served as president and secretary of the student committees at CMS. I offer the Governing Council my perspectives on policy and higher education at UofT as informed by my understanding of issues affecting graduate student life, including the effects of the rapid expansion of graduate studies in Ontario and the working conditions and financial pressures faced by student workers.

Graduate Students - Constituency II (Physical and Life Sciences)

Christine Moon

I want the graduate student's voice to be heard in a meaningful way at the Governing Council. I am committed to increasing funding, TA opportunities, and mental health supports for graduate students in the sciences. As an undergraduate at Brown University, I was a member of the Sexual Assault Advisory Board, a peer mentor, and a residence don, and have represented the student voice in many ways. Currently I am a student at the Institute of Medical Science, conducting research at Princess Margaret. I committed to my community at UofT, and I am confident in my ability to represent you.

Sarah Wheeler

The University of Toronto is a breeding ground for excellence and cultivates an international playing field ideal for the progression of knowledge. As such, upon achieving my BSc from U of T in the spring of 2015, the decision to continue my studies at our university, pursuing of an MSc in Physiology, was the obvious choice. Graduate students at U of T are provided with the unparalleled opportunity of studying at Canada's premier institute for higher education. Through active participation in governance I commit myself to ensuring that this legacy be maintained, and transparency of authority be upheld.