



### **Why run for Governing Council?**

*Catherine Riddell, marketing and communications manager for Executive MBA Programs and Rotman Initiative for Women in Business at the Rotman School of Management, and an administrative staff governor tells Kelly Rankin, editor of the Bulletin, why she decided to run for her seat on Governing Council.*

### **Why did you run for Governing Council?**

There were a few factors that contributed to my decision to run for an administrative staff seat on the Governing Council: my interest in the well-being of the University, encouragement by others, and a desire to push myself out of my comfort zone (I was not comfortable with the idea of campaigning). Prior to my decision to run, I had served as a co-opted (appointed) member of the Business Board for two years. That opportunity helped me get my feet wet and

experience the tremendous learning opportunities, and new perspectives, that can be found in University service.

Last fall, I was encouraged by several members of the Business Board to run for Governing Council. After seeking more information about the role, I decided I would go for it. I ran because I knew that participating in the election would be a good experience, and I really wanted the chance to contribute at such a high level of decision making. I also knew that I could manage the time commitment required, if I was elected. The challenge was getting outside of my comfort zone to actively campaign! I think that was the hardest part. But once I decided to do it there was no looking back; and I was truly overwhelmed by the outcome. It was thrilling to be elected by my peers to such an important role.

### **Please describe your role and responsibilities**

As a member of the Governing Council, I serve as one of 50 stewards who oversee the business and affairs of the University. Governors do not manage the University - rather, they are responsible for making sure the University is well-managed. We ensure that the decisions made as a Council are in the best long-term interests of the University, while advancing and upholding its mission. We must understand the University's vision, strategies and objectives, and exercise informed judgement while voting on matters requiring a decision. We are also required to sit on two other governance bodies in addition to the Governing Council. This year, I am serving on the Business Board ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing\\_Council/bac/bb\\_1.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/bac/bb_1.htm)) and the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing\\_Council/bac/APP\\_1.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/bac/APP_1.htm)).

### **What is the time commitment?**

The Governing Council and Bodies of Governing Council each meet approximately six times per year. Governing Council meetings begin at 4:30 pm, and meetings ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Homepage+Images/schedule\\_nextyr13\\_14.pdf](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Homepage+Images/schedule_nextyr13_14.pdf)) of the Bodies of Governing Council typically start between 4pm and 5pm. All meetings last for about two hours. Governors are also expected to attend some (but not all) of the special events that come up, and any special meetings that are called. Preparing for meetings takes a

couple of hours of my personal time. I have found that it's a bigger commitment of my personal time than it is my work time, but I was ready to dedicate the time necessary as I would have for any other volunteer commitment. The perspective I have gained has been well-worth the effort.

**What advice would you give someone who is interested in running for election?**

Go for it! Don't overthink it, and don't let your nerves (or imposter syndrome) get in the way.

Start by familiarizing yourself with the processes and the issues by attending meetings, reviewing the vast amount of material on the Governing Council website, talking with the current governors of various constituencies (administrative staff, alumni, government appointees, students and teaching staff), and seeking out those who have run in the past.

The Organizational Development and Learning Centre (ODLC) also offers a session called "Understanding the University Governance", which is very helpful. If you want to do it, be confident in your decision and take the risk wholeheartedly. You may hit some road blocks along the way, and encounter those who are unwilling to support you, but that's the nature of democracy.

Few, if any, have ever won an election with 100 per cent of the votes, but many have won elections by giving 100 per cent of their effort. The best part is that running is a great experience on its own: you gain confidence and get to know a lot of new people. It's a wonderful opportunity to challenge yourself.

*Elections for three alumni, eight student, and five teaching staff seats on Governing Council will be held early in 2014. Invitations to Governing Council information sessions will be sent by email to specific constituencies. Find out more on the Governing Council [elections website](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/elections.htm). ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing\\_Council/elections.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/elections.htm)).*

*The meeting dates are as follows:*

- Nov. 4, 2013, 11:10 a.m. – 12:40 p.m., St. George Campus, Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall
- Nov. 4, 2013, 2013, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), Council Chamber
- Nov. 14, 2013, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m., University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), MW 130
- Nov. 18, 2013, 4:10 – 5:40 p.m., St. George Campus, Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall
- Nov. 26, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), Council Chamber
- Dec. 4, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), Council Chamber

*Read the recently approved Election Guidelines for 2014.*

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/electguide2014.pdf>).

*The next Organizational Development and Learning Centre course, "Understanding the University Governance," is scheduled for Nov. 5; registration is required.*

([http://www.odlc.utoronto.ca/index.php?option=com\\_jevents&task=icalrepeat.detail&evid=1951&Itemid=65&year=2013&month=11&day=05&title=understanding-the-university-governance&uid=fddd49fdcb279e01ce301691c8edb3f&catid=46](http://www.odlc.utoronto.ca/index.php?option=com_jevents&task=icalrepeat.detail&evid=1951&Itemid=65&year=2013&month=11&day=05&title=understanding-the-university-governance&uid=fddd49fdcb279e01ce301691c8edb3f&catid=46))