

PRESIDENT CANDIDATES

Caroline Seiler



Hi everyone! Thank you for a great term as the VP Internal for the 2020-2021 academic year. We have shown our resilience during COVID and the move online this year. I'm excited to prepare for in-person work and school again!

This past year has been busy for the GSA - we shifted to online work and focused on improving the virtual experience for our students. We reduced our fees by reducing the capital build fee to \$0 and reduced the bus pass fee by \$34 this year. Although COVID has hit everyone, as the VP Internal I worked to help students by increasing the number of free academic workshops available. Through collaboration with students from multiple faculties, I ran workshops on Data Science, Leadership, Science

Communication, and Writing Skills, all of which are important to prepare students for work after graduation. These workshops were all free and had up to 200 attendees each. Next year as President, I would ensure that these workshops continue, and I would encourage the next VP Internal to conduct a survey of students' academic needs so that we could provide additional workshops for students.

As GSA President for the next year, I would focus on listening to student voices. As VP Internal, I held Academic Affairs Committee meetings where I listened to students discuss their academic concerns. For example, one concern students had was about the student/supervisor relationship. To address this issue in the short-term, I booked a workshop on the student/supervisor relationship to help students learn techniques that may help them coordinate these situations. As President, I would further push the GSA to help revise policies so that students have greater support and protection.

Further, as GSA President, I would focus on increasing representation from each faculty. As VP Internal, I worked with the Health Sciences Graduate Student Federation to achieve association status with the GSA. This gave them additional funding and a greater platform in the university. I also worked with Faculty Representatives from Social Sciences to help them hold more Welcome Week events for students in their faculty. As GSA President, I would continue to work with Faculty Representatives from faculties without associations, such as Social Sciences, Business, and Humanities to create faculty associations and increase their representation.

I would also ensure that students have academic and professional opportunities available to them. As VP Internal, I coordinated Welcome Week and the Graduate Resource Fair and Clubs Fest using the platform Gather.town, which was well attended and included representatives from over 25 different groups. Regardless of whether Fall 2021 is in-person or online, I would have a plan for how to run Welcome Week in 2021 and I would ensure that students are made aware of the professional and academic opportunities available at McMaster.

If elected, I plan to build on these previous efforts and focus on improving your academic experience in 2021-2022. Thank you for considering my application to be GSA President this year!

Spencer Naylor



My name is Spencer Naylor, and I am running for the position of Graduate Student Association (GSA) President. I am a 4th year PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science, where I am writing my dissertation studying the divergent development of home care policies in Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

Throughout my time as a graduate student, I have been an active participant in student governance, first as a member of the McMaster Political Science Graduate Student Association (MPSGSA), where I helped to develop and improve the Constitution and acquire additional department funding. I eventually ran to become Co-Chair of the MPSGSA, a position I have held since the summer of 2019. As Co-Chair, I organized and ran the first online election of the executive membership, pushed for the Department of Political Science to pass the first statement of solidarity with CUPE 3906's strike mandate, and assisted with drafting a plan to tackle anti-Blackness and other forms of racism on campus, which was later endorsed by the MPSGSA, GSA Council, and CUPE 3906 membership. My tenure as Co-Chair has also involved an increase in the number of workshops "how-to" conferences for graduate students and record-high attendance at our monthly meetings.

I have also participated as a member of the Bylaws Committee within the GSA, a role which I became particularly active in over the past year. As a Bylaws Committee member, I contributed to the development of an anti-oppression policy to replace the organization's outdated "neutrality" policy, as well as updating budgetary measures to improve the flexibility of executive spending to adapt to the changing circumstances associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. This experience has motivated me to become more involved in the GSA, and I am proud to have been part of progressive change to see the GSA evolve into an organization that actively advocates for anti-oppression policies. Under my tenure as President, I will continue to advocate for future progress of this nature within the GSA.

As GSA President, I intend to apply what I have learned from my past roles in student governance to improve the experience of all graduate students at McMaster. This past year has been difficult for most graduate students; with the COVID-19 pandemic widening pre-existing gaps between students in terms of accessibility to resources for academic support, mental health & wellness, and other on-campus services that have been hampered by the transition to online learning. These are all important issues for graduate students I intend to tackle head-on, such as by converting unused travel grants into access-to-technology grants for those struggling with online classes. As GSA President, I will build on my past successes in facilitating faculty-level commitments to anti-oppression and racial justice on campus. I recognize there is still work to be done to address anti-Blackness, work towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and improve the university's commitment to environmental sustainability. With your vote, I will continue to support student initiatives that seek to address these issues as I have thus far.

VICE PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE VICE PRESIDENT EXTERNAL CANDIDATES

Harneet Hothi

My name is Harneet, and I am currently a graduate student in the Health, Aging, & Society program in the Department of Social Sciences at McMaster!

Through my previous experiences on Students' Council and leadership roles all throughout my undergraduate career including roles on the McMaster First Year Council, Bachelor of Health Sciences Student Association, and the McMaster Student Union Advocacy Committee, I believe I have developed the skills necessary to efficaciously fulfill the responsibilities of this role. These experiences have equipped me with the ability to lead and assist in the planning and execution of events that cater to our diverse student body, link students with necessary resources, both academic and extracurricular, and most importantly foster an inclusive and welcoming environment. Importantly, I've gained the needed experience in making important decisions on budget allocation and upholding initiative quality and pertinence to student needs.

The desire to positively ameliorate the graduate student experience and understanding of the importance of efforts led by the graduate student association make this position of particular interest. Hope everyone votes in this election!

Sarah Elshahat

My name is Sarah Elshahat and I am PhD student at the Faculty of Social Sciences. I have been honoured to serve you as Faculty Representative at the GSA council (FRC) since last year. It would be my pleasure to serve you as Vice-President External this year to raise your needs, ensure equity across campus and develop inclusive academic and non-academic programs in collaboration with different organizations in and outside McMaster to maximize their support to you All.

Since my election last year, I have been working in close liaison with the GSA executive team to serve you. I have raised your concerns and advocated for your needs at both the GSA council and the Student Issues Action Committee that has effectively been chaired by Sydney Valentino, our Vice-President External. For example, I have been involved in an initiative that aims to improve housing conditions and ensure affordable and accessible housing for All, where I have advocated for your rights for equal housing opportunities, with considering the specific needs of students from equity-seeking groups. I have also had the pleasure to work closely with Caroline Seiler, our Vice-President Internal to organize various events and initiatives to support you and improve your experience at McMaster. For instance, I organized an inclusive Faculty Trivia Event and Mentorship session, with prizes for winning teams, to build the community and foster a sense of belonging. Moreover, I am currently working to organize a virtual social event with cultural foods to motivate students to celebrate their diversity across McMaster.

I have also been calling for more collaborations with other organizations on campus to maximize their support to students. For example, I collaborated with CUPE 3906 to host a session that educated many students about their rights and benefits and involved many useful resources. Furthermore, based on students' requests throughout last year, I am currently working to develop an inclusive peer support program in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies and CUPE at McMaster and other leading universities in Ontario. This program shall give all students the opportunity to connect with fellows in and outside McMaster, exchange knowledge and ideas and learn about various internal and external opportunities.

If elected for this position, I intend to continue representing your interests in the GSA Council and Committee meetings and escalate your concerns to help you All continue your studies and work in an inclusive and safe environment. I also intend to consult with you to design informative programs and meaningful events that meet your preferences and address your needs. I also plan to increase the collaborations between the GSA and other potential organizations in and outside McMaster to enhance their support to graduate students and enable you to learn about various valuable opportunities that will benefit you in your studies and in your future endeavors as well. I would appreciate your support by voting for me to enable me to continue serving you All!



ELECTION 2021

VICE PRESIDENT SERVICES CANDIDATE

Wei Zhao



Hello everyone! My name is Wei Zhao, a level IV Ph.D. student in the department of Computing & Software. My current research is about target localization and recognition by using millimetre-wave radar. This is my 7th year in the McMaster University, and I am excited to announce that I am running for the GSA VP Services again!

Seven-years' study in McMaster allows me to witness a tremendous change to both our campus and our people. Seven-years' study in McMaster makes me to meet and know about our campus and our people well. And Seven-years' study in McMaster tells me what exact appeal is

from our people and where should be improved. Together with our great effort, our study and life here become far more convenient and happier than seven years ago. As been promised in my last years' election statement, most of the goals have been achieved! The new GSA website has been built and put online on our new server for nearly a year. Many news and events can have a good place to propagate. All the GSA clubs now have a detailed introduction on the website, and I have applied a specific McMaster email address for each club. Under COVID-19 pandemic, I started the MFin Defer Petition to help the new students in this program, where almost all of them are from the other half of the earth and 12-hours' time lapse makes it impossible to teach online. In addition, after my many communications with Studentcare, students who are studying outside of Canada for this whole academic year can opt-out all the GSA insurances!

The dawn of victory to overcome the pandemic is just around the corner! I am moving forward to my next plan. First, I am going to finalize the new opt-out policies of GSA insurances. Not only students studying abroad can get reimbursed, but also those who graduate in Fall and Winter term are eligible. Besides, visiting students in McMaster will enjoy the benefit soon! Then, I will continue to work on providing better services to our clubs, especially events organization and funding support. The related procedures will be much clear and simple in the future, even if it may involve many people. Next, I have many good ideas for new student welcome. An updated version of new student handbook will be put on the GSA website in the summer. I will hold several workshops to teach new students the common knowledge in Canada and how to have a smooth transfer to the life here. I will also connect the future new students to our existed clubs. I believe it will be easier for them to fit in the groups with similar culture, research area and activity. From there, they can better understand the life here and get appropriate help!

I am looking forward to providing you even better services for the next term! Thank you very much for your consideration!

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

- SOCIAL SCIENCES CANDIDATE

Ghada Sasa

My name is Ghada Sasa. I am currently the Graduate Student Representative on the Board of Governors (BOG), which is McMaster University's highest decision-making body. I serve on its Planning and Resources Committee (2020-2022), which manages financial and planning affairs. To improve my representation of graduate student interests, I have collaborated, over the past year, with various campus organizations, such as GSA, CUPE 3906, McMaster Political Science Graduate Student Association (MPSGSA), De Caire Off Campus, and MacGreenInvest. I heeded their demands, conveyed them to the BOG, and we worked together towards realizing them. Ultimately, other community members and I succeeded in (1) overturning the GSA's 15-year-old neutrality policy and replacing it with an anti-oppression policy, which mandates the association to be a politicized and progressive force on campus; and (2) drafting a plan to tackle anti-Blackness and other forms of racism on campus, which was later endorsed by MPSGSA, GSA Council, and CUPE 3906 membership, demonstrating a strong and united front for racial justice. Prior to gaining a seat on the BOG, I lobbied the Department of Political Science to pass the first statement of solidarity with CUPE 3906's strike mandate. As Social Science Faculty Representative Candidate (FRC), I will advocate for extended funding and deadlines for all graduate students in my faculty and beyond, in light of the pandemic and beyond, organize cross-departmental socializing events, and work with other FRCs and members on the GSA to support progressive movements, such as Black Lives Matter.

I am a third-year PhD candidate in International Relations at McMaster University and my thesis explores the colonial history of protected areas, such as national parks and nature reserves, and means of decolonizing modern environmentalism to achieve social and environmental justice.

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

- BUSINESS

Ce Ji

My name is Ce Ji, candidate of Business Faculty Representative.

Many years ago, elected Vice President of the student union in the high school, I became a student servant for the first time. Although there were not so many clubs or activities in high school that I could collaborate with or organizing, the experience of socializing and uniting relatively unfamiliar students and facilitating communication between students and teachers, has been proven to be very beneficial for my work in university.

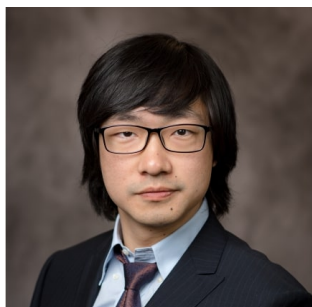
During my undergraduate years, I served as a student representative at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. Within the one-year term, I coordinated with various school clubs and associations and assisted in several events' planning. I also worked on propelling student union reform and successfully updated the internal communication system with others, which distinctly improved the efficiency of collecting suggestions from students. Externally, I pushed on strengthening a school-enterprise alliance, realizing the sharing and utilization of resources and enlarge outside investments. Besides, I assisted in the perfection of the student union's personnel training system, improving its internal efficiency and productivity.

My new chapter of life started when I was admitted to the McMaster's MFin program in 2020, in which situation, I planned to dedicate part of university life to student union's work again, representing and serving beloved students and friends. About future work, I plan to focus on smoothing the channel through which students' opinions are collected and the means that this information is transferred to the university. With more convenient and efficient feedback methods, overall satisfaction to the university and school is expected to grow significantly. Efforts will also be deployed to attract more external investment in student union so that more meaningful activities can be organized. In addition, more students' voice on what kind of activities should be organized will be heard. Based on the demand, I will try my best to select events which are conducive to students' future development and make them happen.

In the end, I know that student work could be complicated and sometimes frustrating, but I promise to attain your expectation and never betray your trust. Thank you very much for supporting me.

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL - BUSINESS

Si Liu



My name is Si Liu, and I'm currently a second-year Ph.D. student in operation management at the DeGroote School of Business, and also the communication director of the DeGroote Doctoral Students' Association. I'm very interested in being the faculty representative in Business and serve both GSA and the Community of graduate students well.

To start with, I'm very experienced in serving, especially in universities. I am the president of the students' association of the college and the vice

president of the students' association of Zhejiang University when during my undergraduate. During my master's study in Europe, I was voted as the vice president of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology. During my other master's study in the U.S., I became the founding president of the Michigan Tech Badminton Club. With such rich experience acting in different leadership roles, I have the confidence to connect faculty with graduates well.

Another thing I want to mention is that I have an international educational background and I'm very skilled at communicating with people from different backgrounds. I had my bachelor's from China, a master's degree from Sweden, a master's degree from the Netherlands, a master's degree from the U.S. I have traveled to more than 40 countries and enjoy staying in a multi-cultural environment. It enables me to smoothly build a bridge between people from different cultures, etc.

Overall, I'm confident in becoming a successful faculty representative from business and continuously serve our community with high quality.

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL - BUSINESS

Lingze Meng



Hello everyone, I am Lingze Meng and you can also call me Newton. I currently study MFin program in DeGroote School of Business. I want to apply for the faculty representative of business.

Before studying in McMaster, I studied at Shanghai University and served as an officer of the Department of Culture and Sports in SILC Business School for two years. During my tenure, I participated in organizing college students to participate in two school-level sports meets, and organized college-level basketball

and football leagues for two times. In SILC, I also joined 4 clubs including environmental protection club, drama club, eloquence club and debate club. I have participated in charity sales activities, played in The Miserable World, participated in college-level theatrical performances, and played in debate competitions. I have been a volunteer for nearly 10 large-scale events, including Shanghai F1 Grand Prix, China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair, International Academic Conference, and various music festivals. I also worked as a volunteer teacher to popularize the knowledge of the universe to children in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China. Participating in so many activities is because I like to communicate with people and get to know more people by participating in different kinds of activity. I learn by communicating with them. In this process, I have learned a lot, and I have overcome many problems through the joint efforts of my partners and me. Therefore, I think that in addition to learn the knowledge from classrooms, I should also learn in some other scenes which are more people oriented. I also try my best to solve the difficulties encountered by others and myself. For me, this is both an experience and a growth. I think I am qualified for a faculty representative of business students not only because of my experience, my ability, but also because I have a heart to progress and grow together with everyone.

Due to COVID-19, most of us cannot experience wonderful real study lives in McMaster University at present, but I still want to try my best to solve problems that students may encounter, especially in this tough period. For me, this is also an opportunity to experience and better understand McMaster and students on this campus. I am willing to communicate with business students to make GSA know more about the problems or demands of them. At the same time, I am also glad to use my ability, knowledge, and experience to help GSA solve these problems and meet these demands. Thus, I regard applying for the faculty representative of business as a chance to have a closer relationship with more students in McMaster. I hope to become a member of GSA and try my best to make contribution.



ELECTION 2021