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Statement of Interest

Hello! My name is Christopher/C Yendt (he/they), I'm a Ph.D. Candidate and researcher whose work focuses on the intersection of queer identities, mental health, leadership and the student experience. My passion for leadership and student advocacy began during my undergraduate career and has continued over a decade of involvement across multiple institutions where I have been drawn to opportunities for leadership to address issues facing other students and challenging systems of marginalization and oppression. My mission is to plant seeds for trees that I will never sit under, creating paths lined with trees that provide shade to those future travelers on their own journeys. My vision is a future of action driving change that is impactful, meaningful, lasting and of benefit to others. I've had the privilege to serve as a GSA President in two different provinces over the last five years, along with other involvement representing students at the institutional, provincial and national levels.

As the President and CEO of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at Brock University, I was responsible for leading the development and implementation of a new strategic plan and securing student support for a seven-million-dollar building. As the GSA's President at the University of Manitoba, I led an organization restructure of staff and executive roles, developed new agreements with campus partners and championed the integration of post-doctoral fellows to become one of the first GSAs in Canada to represent graduate student and post-doctoral fellows. It is this passion and extensive experience within student government that I wish to bring as a Community Member to the role of External Director with the Graduate Students' Association of McMaster University.

In addition to my student government work, I am passionate about governance and community more broadly. Since joining my first board at twenty, I have served over fifty concurrent years on boards across the non-profit and public sectors. This involvement has included terms on the Board's and Senate's of Brock University and the University of Manitoba; the Brock University Alumni Association, Compass Community Health, Rainbow's End Community Development Corporation, Canadian Mental Health Association-Niagara, and the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce. I am an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT), a registered consultant with the Association of Mental Health Professionals (OAMHP) and a Certified Director with the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD.D). Thank you for your time and consideration.