Graduate Student Nominee Statements for Board of Governors [elect 1]

Laila Harris
Hello! My name is Laila Zahra Harris and I am an M.A. Candidate in the Latin American & Caribbean Studies program in the College of Arts. I have 9+ years of experience at the University of Guelph, including an M.A. in Public Issues Anthropology, and a B.A. (hons) in Anthropology. I am also an Interdisciplinary Research Fellow for the Digital Humanities @Guelph THINC Lab, and Graduate Teaching Assistant in the School of Languages & Literatures.

I believe that a strong leadership means engaging with issues in ways which encourage the unity and well-being of a community. My leadership experience includes 4+ years as a Board Director for the Women’s Healthy Environments Network, and my current role as an Academic Mentor for the University of Guelph’s CHROMA Project. I am also a mother of 2 children, ages 3 and 5, which is perhaps my most challenging leadership role yet!

I really love the University of Guelph, with its stunning old architecture and the vibrant energy you can feel as you walk around campus. I would appreciate the opportunity to contribute to university governance by helping to influence policy and addressing the issues that impact the quality of student experience and education.

Melanie McCaig
Attention my fellow Graduate Students: YOU can have a say in the Future of Education at Guelph! My name is Melanie McCaig and I would be honoured to be your representative on the Board of Governors. I promise to work very hard on your behalf to help shape University governance and conduct, as well as the supervision of expenditures, business affairs, and proceeds for the benefit of current and future students.

I am a PhD Candidate in Computational Sciences. After completing a B. Comm. and MA at Guelph, my current mission is to understand how collaboration creates value in the agricultural industry through advancements in technologies such as the Internet of things, blockchain and artificial intelligence.

I have experience in representing students having worked closely with Provost Charlotte Yates on the Dean Selection Committee, the MA program curriculum committee, and a CL recruitment committee.

I have experience communicating with other students as a Financial Accounting Seminar Leader. To date, I have taught over 500 students. I have also been a graduate teaching assistant for Data Analytics.

In summary, I urge you to vote for Melanie McCaig. I would be honoured to be nominated to represent all graduate students. Thank you for your consideration!

Xueqi Wang
I am a second year PhD student in the Department of Integrative Biology working to provide alternative methods to facilitate and supplement current biodiversity and long-term population monitoring programs in the aquatic environment. I am a strong advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) through involvement within my home institution, community, and world-renowned conferences. I am the first graduate student co-chair for the Integrative Biology Departmental EDI committee and am actively working on refinements to update existing departmental mandates in the pursuit of a more diverse, equitable and inclusive department. I am a committee member of the University of Guelph GenEq Advisory Group and I have successfully organized several local and international conferences including the 2018 and 2019
Symposium for Women in Ecology and Evolution that attracted over 300 attendees from the US, Asia and Europe. These involvements have facilitated my successful election to be the 2019 - 2021 Graduate student/Post-doc councillor to serve as a voting member on the board of the Canadian Society of Ecology and Evolution. I hope to serve on the Board of Governors to incorporate my passion for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion into higher levels of governance at my home institution.