

2025-2026 TGSA By-Election

Candidate Profiles

Vice President Student Affairs

Anthony Mensah

Program: IDSR

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

I am writing to express my interest in serving as Vice-President, Student Affairs of the Trent Graduate Students' Association (TGSA). As a PhD student, I recognize that graduate student life involves more than academic achievement. Building meaningful connections, accessing support, feeling represented, and developing a sense of belonging are equally important to a positive graduate student experience. I am interested in this role because I want to contribute to a more connected, engaged, and supportive graduate student community.

My academic and professional experiences have equipped me with skills relevant to this position. My experience as a teaching assistant has strengthened my communication, organizational, critical-thinking, and interpersonal skills. Researching student housing in Peterborough has improved my understanding of the problems and issues faced by students and has taught me how vital it is to take into account diverse opinions when implementing inclusive initiatives.

If elected, I would approach this role with reliability, transparency, and accountability. In committee assignments, I will provide thoughtful, student-centred input while remaining open to learning from fellow representatives and university stakeholders. Also, I will raise awareness through TGSA's email, website and social media platforms about various resources available for graduate students, such as food security initiatives, housing support and many others. I will also organize events and activities for graduate students in order to make them more connected outside their departments. These activities will involve collaboration with other commissioners and the Durham campus representatives. I believe student leadership should not only respond to community concerns but also collaborate with others to find sustainable solutions.

I am prepared to bring my dedication, organizational skills and student-centred approach to the TGSA Executive team. This entails turning ideas into tangible initiatives and student concerns into constructive action. I ask for your support and the opportunity to serve as your Vice-President, Student Affairs. Together, we can build a more connected, inclusive, and vibrant graduate student community where every student has opportunities to participate, feel a sense of belonging, and make their voice heard. I look forward to working with you to improve the graduate student experience for everyone.

International Student Commissioner

Radhika Rani

Program: ENLS

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

My name is Radhika, and I am a first-year PhD student in the Environment and Life Sciences (ENLS) program at Trent University. Originally from Punjab, India, I am interested in joining TGSA as an International Student Commissioner because, as an international student myself, I understand the importance of feeling a sense of belonging in a new country.

Before moving to Canada, I moved to the United States in 2022 to pursue my master's degree and gained work experience there. Having already experienced the challenges of starting over in a new country, my transition to Canada felt smoother. However, I still remember the many firsts of living in the US. Seeing snow (I was actually very excited) for the first time was wonderful for someone who had never experienced it before. On the other hand, I also remember spending \$1300 (approximate) on tooth extractions because I did not fully understand how the healthcare system worked. I bet these experiences reflect the realities of being an international student.

My experience as a College Senator in the Graduate Student Senate at the University of New Hampshire has prepared me to work with student organizations and represent graduate student perspectives. This role strengthened my communication and listening skills and taught me the importance of understanding students' concerns and connecting them with appropriate resources.

As International Student Commissioner, I would like to collaborate with TGSA members and Trent International to support international graduate students by sharing information about UHIP and other available resources, promoting Trent International programs and events, and bringing students' concerns forward.

I hope to create a welcoming and supportive community where international graduate students feel comfortable asking questions, sharing concerns, accessing resources, and getting involved in

university life. Having navigated the experience myself, I would be excited to help others find their place and feel that they truly belong at Trent.

Abby Christy

Program: ANTH

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

My name is Abby Christy, and I hail from the United States! I am interested in becoming more involved with TGSA as the International Student Commissioner because of my desire to provide continued fair and equal representation for international graduate students coming to Trent University. In my undergraduate program in the US, I worked for two years as a tutor for the university and worked closely with the ESL (English as a Second Language) Program. In my role, I interacted with international students at all degree levels from undergraduate to doctoral. There were also many varying age ranges for these students from 17-year-old first years to older adults who are coming back to school to further their education later in life. I got to know their friends, families, and communities. This gave me ample experience working with international students from all walks of life. I also spent four years volunteering my time as a university honors peer mentor, ushering incoming honors students into university life. I spent my summers coordinating events, acknowledging academic expectations, and providing updates and resource information in the lead up to the beginning of each fall semester. I got to know these students and acted as their first friend on campus as well as their source of information for all campus facilities/resources. Both of these roles have made me well prepared for connecting with international students and introducing them to the resources available on campus. I also feel confident in my ability to familiarize myself with the ongoing issues of not only international students but new students as a whole. What I learned from these positions is that I not only have a desire to help people, but also a love of learning from the communities that I am working with. I believe that positions, like the ones being offered by TGSA, are opportunities to not only gain experiences and skills but also allow us the ability to learn from the diverse array of people that are in the Trent University Graduate Program.

Gagandeep Singh

Program: M.Mgt

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

I am applying for the International Student Commissioner position because I believe international graduate students should have a strong, informed, and approachable voice within

the GSA. As an international student at Trent University, I understand that studying in Canada involves more than academics. International students often have to navigate healthcare, insurance, finances, immigration-related pressures, unfamiliar systems, and the challenge of building a sense of community far from home. I would like to use my experience and perspective to help make those challenges easier for other students to navigate.

My background in clinical research and healthcare has taught me to listen carefully, understand individual concerns, communicate information clearly, and connect people with the appropriate resources. My current experience at Trent has also given me a better understanding of the student environment and the importance of accessible and reliable support. I am comfortable communicating with people from different backgrounds and would approach this role with openness, confidentiality, and respect.

As International Student Commissioner, I would focus on identifying recurring issues affecting international graduate students and bringing those concerns forward constructively to the Board of Directors. I am particularly interested in helping students better understand UHIP and the UHIP Health and Dental Benefits Plan. I would make information easier to access by actively promoting available resources, reimbursement opportunities, Trent International programs, services, and events through appropriate student communication channels.

I also believe representation should involve listening, not simply speaking on behalf of others. I would make an effort to hear students' experiences, identify common concerns, and work collaboratively with Trent International, and other relevant partners to find practical solutions.

Most importantly, I want international graduate students to feel that there is someone they can approach without hesitation. I would bring a friendly, dependable, and solution-oriented approach to the position and would be committed to making international students feel informed, represented, welcomed, and supported at Trent.

Yicheng Tao

Program: CUST

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

As an international student who has been studying in multiple countries, I deeply understand the academic, financial, and health challenges—as well as issues of inequalities—that international students, especially graduate students, face at Trent. I want these voices to be heard; I want international students to receive adequate and professional support. Therefore, I am applying for the position of International Student Commissioner at the TGSA.

I previously worked at The Center for International Education at a university in the U.S., where I coordinated communication between international students and the university, answered inquiries, and promptly disseminated the latest updates and resources. I also helped organize various cultural exchange and community-building events to represent a diverse international community. As an international PhD student at Trent, I have actively helped coordinate

academic conferences and contributed to website development within the department. I have proudly developed strong communication and collaboration skills from these experiences, and now I want to bring my passion to a larger community.

My goal is to build connections, amplify voices, and provide support. I want to make sure that every international graduate student's rights and interests are protected and that everyone feels seen, welcomed, and supported. I look forward to collaborating with members of the TGSA and Trent International, and I will keep learning from them to better serve and represent the international students. A sense of community is not just a verbal promise; I want to build genuine trust and connection by attentive and patient listening, open and inclusive communication, and proactive action. By graduate students and for graduate students, let's make changes together.

Durham Representative

Emerald Oluwanifemi Akinronbi

Program: M.Mgt

Statement of Interest (350 words maximum):

I am interested in becoming the Durham Representative because I care about the student experience and believe that every student should feel heard, supported, and included in their university community. As a Master of Management student at Trent's Durham campus, I understand the importance of having representatives who listen to students' concerns and work towards making campus life better. Through my experience as a Board of Directors Member with the Trent Durham Student Association, I have had the opportunity to represent student perspectives, contribute to discussions, and support initiatives focused on improving the student experience.

My involvement as a Global Ambassador, Orientation Leader, and Creative and Design Coordinator with the Black Student Association has also helped me develop my communication, teamwork, and organizational skills. These experiences have taught me the value of connecting with students, sharing information, and helping create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

I understand that this role involves representing Durham graduate students, supporting student groups, helping organize campus events, and participating in committees. If selected, I would bring my earlier experience, willingness to listen, and genuine interest in student engagement to the position. I would also be committed to learning and following TGSA's bylaws and relevant university policies.

I see this as an opportunity to continue contributing to the Trent Durham community, build stronger connections among graduate students, and help ensure their voices are represented. I

would be excited to work with the TGSA Board and fellow students to make our campus experience more engaging, supportive, and inclusive.