



NBCGSS Election

Candidates' Biographies – March 2022

Chairperson

Rahim Jafari

I am a PhD candidate in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (NRES) program. I started my study at UNBC in September 2018. Since I am interested in being involved in the academic setting, I became a graduate student representative in Provost's Advisory Committee and CSAM College Council. Then I joined the NBCGSS board of directors in 2020. We did our best to deal with students' needs and resolve their problems as much as we could. In 2021 I rejoined the GSS as director of internal relations and an international student representative. As a GSS board member for two years and a grad student representative in several committees, I am pretty familiar with UNBC's structure and setting.

I had a passion for working with students' groups from the very beginning of my education. In my bachelor's, I was a member of the Student Society for four years. While studying for my master's degree, I was in various leadership roles, including the president of the Graduate Student Society for two years and the editor in chief of the Civil Engineering Student Journal.

I campaigned for the \$125 ancillary fee in the past two years. After having many meetings with different offices on campus, I have managed to convince them to postpone the fee for almost two years now. They are planning to implement it again in Sept 2022. One of my goals as chairperson is to continue advocating this fee. Hopefully, we can stop it for the third time in the coming fall.

I proposed a Food Bank Pilot project for grad students. We managed to start it with the help of some of the students, staff, and faculty members. It is still running, and we are providing food weekly in the grad lounge. My other goal is to make sure this project keeps running and becomes permanent for grad society.

I have been working and advocating for a recreational room as well. The Graduate Lounge has already been a space for grads to have lunch or lay down for a couple of minutes between classes and meetings. However, Grads also deserve to have a place where they can come together and

have a little fun after an overwhelming day. My other goal is to keep campaigning for it, so hopefully, we can have a recreational room soon.

All this being said, I know there are other problems that students are dealing with. That's why I would like to run again as chairperson so I can keep advocating for all grad students.

Sincerely,
Rahim Jafari

Director of Community Development

Sorour Nasimi

I am saying hello to all UNBC students.

My name is Sorour Nasimi. Being a first-year grad student at UNBC and director of community development at NBCGSS for four months, I recognized some of the unknown UNBC potentials that can be achieved and developed for the students' good and comfort. I appreciate all the students who read my bio and voted for me last time, and I hope I could be helpful and influential so far.

I'm studying Environmental Engineering and my main research focus is water crisis in rural and remote areas. In addition to my academic life, I found myself hard-worker, determined, well-organized, and responsible. I love volunteer work since it allows me to meet each one of you. I love working with you to have cheerful, enjoyable moments on campus, and I enjoy helping graduate students balance their academic life and extra-curricular activities. Moreover, I am always on campus, so I can respond immediately when something new happens.

Personally, I reduce the massive pressure of PhD life by watching movies, listening to rock music, walking, and gatherings and games. But I understand students must be motivated for these activities, especially when you are new in town and don't know anyone. So let me do that for you with on-campus and off-campus events!

Four months of being NBCGSS board member was a very short time for me regarding the Christmas holidays, late orientation, and reading break. However, during this time and considering Omicron restrictions, with the help of other GSS members, I successfully could

coordinate important events such as movie and dinner nights on Feb and the biggest event of NBCGSS, the Semi-Formal party after 2years, which is in less than 2 weeks.

I would like to run for this election because I think I can make an effective contribution and fill the existing gaps to facilitate the relationship of grads with NBCGSS, and make life on campus more exciting. I tend to work on these ideas as my following goals:

- Trying to get a permanent space in addition to graduate lounge and equip it with ping pong, snooker, foosball, and other table games.
- Having more entertaining or educational movie nights.
- Coordinating workshops and music lessons for interested students.
- And with the restrictions lifted and summer getting closer, more hikes and walks into the woods near campus.

I appreciate if you vote for me and give me the opportunity to join this society as the Director of Community Development. So I can improve the level of students' engagement and assist them to go through hard moments of being a graduate student by having a little bit of fun. Please feel free to email me with your inquiry (nasimi@unbc.ca).

All the Best,
Sorour Nasimi

Mya Schouwenburg

I am currently working on my MSc in Chemistry and Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at UNBC. I completed my BSc in Chemistry at UNBC and I had the opportunity to study abroad at Umeå University, Sweden. I believed that a community environment amongst students benefits you socially, physically, and mentally. This promotion of overall health also benefits you academically. My goal is to organize events that promote inclusiveness, social and ethnic diversity, and overall health and well-being. I feel that now is my opportunity to share my interests, experiences, and knowledge to help build and expand the Graduate Society at UNBC. As someone born and raised in Prince George, I have a strong interest in the outdoors and community events. I believe I can bring ideas to the table to help support and foster a sense of community amongst graduate students.

Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Zhaleh Nazarpour

My name is Zhaleh, and I am a Master's student in Business Administration. I am interested in social justice, gender equality, and anti-racism actions. I am passionate about raising awareness of the UNBC community regarding human rights and the benefits of equity (especially for visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and women), diversity, and inclusion. I have been the director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for one year. During that time, I have sat in some different committees and helped and supported the Period Promise Project. I have liaised with Northern Women Center, PGPIRG, and NUGSS. It would be my honor to support graduate students as the director of EDI.

Director of External Relations

Saad Ahmed

I am currently enrolled in the MSc. in Business Administration program with a concentration in marketing research at UNBC. I completed my undergrad program in marketing from NSU in 2019. After my undergrad, I worked in Asiatic JWT, one of the leading marketing agencies in the world. While working there, I had the opportunity to handle different clients like Google, Microsoft, Samsung, and so on.

I also worked as a business analyst in a California-based software development company called Cisscom. I am blended with technological skills with Agile/Scrum experience, marketing orientation, and a core research background to evolve strategies.

Although the professional experience gave me exposure to the real world, I wanted to dive deep into the field of marketing. From this thirst for knowledge, I was admitted to UNBC in 2020. Currently, I am working in the Northern Sports Centre, where I am taking the responsibility of organizing events.

Why do I think of myself as a good fit for the position?

- In my undergrad, I was a member of one of the finest marketing clubs of Bangladesh (TMC).
- While studying undergrad, I had a track record of successfully implementing 11 business competitions.
- I had a track record of bringing sponsorship for every 11 events.
- Currently, I am working at Northern Sports Center and successfully organizing inter-university basketball competitions.

So, I think I can contribute a lot to NBCGSS through my professional experience with your combined support.

My Goal for joining NBCGSS:

"My goal is to create a strong network among the students, faculties, and professional corporates to leverage the benefits of connectivity for career development and empowering the society at large."

Moral: Let's bring a positive change with a cultural transformation!

Director of Internal Relations

Sohail Akram

I am Sohail Akram, a Ph.D. student of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. I want to continue as Director of Internal Relations at the NBCGSS. Before starting my study at UNBC, I completed Erasmus Mundus Master from Europe. In my life, I have always aspired to be a leader. Integrity, cultural integration, vision, creativity, and time management are some of the qualities of leadership that inspire and encourage me. As a Class Representative (CR) during my bachelor's and master's degrees, I was responsible for gathering my classmates' opinions, concerns, and ideas about their academic and non-academic experience and presented them in our monthly faculty and department meetings. I started initiatives to bring my classmates together, such as organizing biweekly cricket matches, monthly field excursions, and get-together.

During my four-month term as Director of Internal Relations at the NBCGSS, I am still trying to convince the UNBC Administration to remove the scholarship cap or increase the threshold limit (recently 15000 CAD, annually) for the graduate students. I am also trying to increase the scholarship & funding opportunities for graduate students.

I am also working as Student Senator at the UNBC Senate and raised the graduate student's concerns and questions in the Senate Committee of Scholarships and Bruises. Since September 2018, I have been a member of the International Forestry and Student Association (IFSA). I have attended numerous events and conferences as an IFSA Youth Delegate that helped me strengthen my critical thinking skills and community outreach capabilities. These volunteer experiences provided me with several opportunities to know the students' problems and issues and their potential solutions.

My first purpose of continuing as Director of Internal Relations at NBCGSS is to remove the scholarship cap through a detailed discussion and dialogue with the faculties Deans and Research Office and try to find an appropriate solution. The second goal is to create awareness among the UNBC administration about the Graduate student's economic problems, especially International Graduate students' financial and logistics issues when they arrived in Prince George. The third and final idea is to choose an appropriate insurance provider that promises to provide excellent medical & reimbursement services to Graduate students.

Stephen Owusu-Serbeh

Hello,

My name is Stephen Owusu-Serbeh. I am graduate student at UNBC, doing a Masters in International Studies. I have a Bachelors Degree in French and Political Studies. I love reading and very passionate about environmental sustainability.

As an elected Director of Internal Relations in the Graduate Student Society, I would use this office as a means to increase more graduate student inclusivity and awareness of policies and engage relevant stakeholders In and outside of the University in promoting welfare of graduate students.

Best regards,

Stephen Owusu-Serbeh

Hossein Zeinalzadeh

This is Hossein Zeinalzadeh who is a grad student in Environmental Science (NRES). Hossein is a chemical engineer. In BSc, he was also co-director of Nanosociety. Moreover, he was RA in the university dormitory which helped students in different problems related to dormitory.

Regional Students' Representative

I am Mehdi Aghajohnpour Pasha. I am pursuing my second master's degree in business administration with a finance major. I graduated from the University of Mazandaran with a bachelor's degree in accounting in 2012. During my undergrad program, I was the Secretary of Accounting for UMZ's Undergraduate Student Organization from 2010 to 2012. Also, I was Director of the Student Commencement Executive Committee in 2012. Then, I got my master's in accounting in 2015 from UMZ.

After my graduation, I worked as a tax accountant for a tax organization from 2015 to 2021. Working for more than 6 years in a tax organization gave me a lot of accounting and finance experience. In addition, I had the chance to work with a variety of clients. Based on my academic and professional experiences, I have been "Nominated" as the Director of Regional Students

Representative (NBCGSS) because I believe I can make a significant contribution to NBCGSS to provide more and better services to UNBC students.

Mehdi aghajohnpour pasha

MSc in BA

Director- at-Large

Jhoan Chavez

Hi everyone,

I am Jhoan Chavez, nominated for Director at Large - NBCGSS. My purpose is to enhance our society by developing programs to increase engagement since the first semester of our programs. I have a development plan (1) mentoring to settle down smoothly (experienced mentors) and (2) getting to know the UNBC/PG community and the environment (outdoor activities and community).

Being immersed in our day to day activities might be overwhelming. However, I am sure that getting to know available support for us on campus will allow students to accomplish their academic goals at their pace within a supportive community.

Let's be there for you and new ones.

Mostafa Dorosti

Hello dear grads,

My name is Mostafa Dorosti, a first year grad student in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at the UNBC. I would like to take this opportunity to ask for your vote to fill one of the upcoming NBCGSS Board of **Director at Large** vacancies. It would be an honor to represent you and contribute towards supporting grad students.

As a graduate student, I have figured out that social media can play an important role in providing useful information for us. The information that helps us to pursue our goals and lift barriers in our ways, such as the introduction of relevant job positions, events, and webinars. I believe NBCGSS is the right place and can provide a great opportunity by sharing this information. However, currently, there is such a gap in the NBCGSS plans, and the social media pages are not active enough. I am aiming to bridge this gap by bringing a dynamic space to the website and social media platforms. I will do so using my experience in several positions as well as skills gained through 10 years of working as a graphic designer. Since most of the responsibilities necessitate the presence of the board members on campus, distance and working remotely can prevent to work efficiently. While I am on campus, which allows me to be more

accessible and helpful for serving NBCGSS. This position would provide me with the opportunity to fulfill my objectives, the most important of which are listed below:

- Providing more insightful information for graduate society through the website and social media platforms.
- Working on the platforms and making them more visually attractive.
- Holding different events, webinars, and workshops by collaborating with other universities and organizations.
- Working with other GSS members towards providing more social and recreational activities to connect grad students across campus with each other and the university.

Your vote is extremely important and I hope that you will give me your support as you submit your ballot so that I am able to help the NBCGSS be more active and effective than before and connect to each other as a family of grad students. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at dorosti@unbc.ca, and I thank you in advance for your vote.

Kind Regards,
Mostafa

Mahboobeh Jafari

Hi!

My name is Mahboobeh Jafari and almost everyone knows me by my nickname, Mahi. I have started my graduate studies in September 2019, and am doing my master's in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (NRES). I see myself as a person with a multi-dimension personality that likes to explore different things in life... even my hobbies are as diverse as drawing to rock climbing. Going through the responsibilities of the NBCGSS available positions, I found myself quite interested in some responsibilities of different directors such as organizing equity campaigns, collaborating with women's center, Keeping grad society's website updated, coordinating social events and so on. Therefore, I believe I am a good fit for the director-at-large position as this director will assist all the other directors with their goals.

During the past 2 years, all of us have gone through Covid shenanigans (haha) to different extents and maybe some of us have felt it a lot harder. For me, as an international student, I found NBCGSS helpful in different terms including easing the communication between students and staff and administrations or even the events being held at uni ever since the restrictions have been eased off. I have seen many efforts from NBCGSS to advocate for grad students and offer many services to support students going through their journeys of studying at UNBC. This has given me the motivation to be a part of NBCGSS board of directors to advocate for grad students

or help them enjoy some fun events at the university after a heavy week of studying ;). This is the first time I am applying for a position at NBCGSS but am looking forward to being a part of it if I am elected.

Steven Von Cuevas

Steven advocates inclusivity. In 2018, he earned a degree from the University of the Philippines Diliman with a Bachelor of Science in Tourism with a Latin honour distinction, Magna Cum Laude. He had the opportunity to complete his practicum as a marketing and operations intern with the Philippine Department of Tourism in Los Angeles, California, USA. Following that, he travelled through South East Asia, immersed himself, and taught in Vietnam for a year, earning an Australian Certificate in TESOL. His undergraduate thesis explores the policy implementation of a halal accreditation and certification system in the Philippines to support tourism growth. As a member of lgbtqia2s+, he is keen to explore the multidisciplinary impact assessment of development, social, and public policies in various spaces, with an emphasis on the minority and vulnerable groups. His most recent professional experience was as a concierge in a 5-star hotel in the Philippines for two years. He joined the graduate cohort in the Fall of 2021 and is now enjoying Prince George by doing community service and part-time work at the UNBC Sports Center and a senior living facility. Recently, he has accepted a role as a graduate representative for the Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences, and Humanities (FISSH).