



NBCGSS Election

Candidates' Biographies – March 2023

Chairperson

Ekpeno Ukut

Ekpeno John Ukut is a Theatre Artist, a Communication for Development (C4D) expert, and a celebrated author and award winner who has contributed meaningfully and passionately to the growth and development of people and communities over the last ten (10) years.

I believe no human being deserves to be overlooked regarding health and well-being because we can't add value to our families, communities, and beloved nation without good health. As a result, over the past ten (10) years, I have dedicated my life to the service to humanity by prioritizing other people's success and well-being ahead of mine. The knowledge that I have contributed to the happiness and smiles of others brings me joy and satisfaction.

Service to humanity comes with a sacrifice, and I stand as a bridge through which others find their life path daily. I am the Founder of **Kick Out Cancer Foundation (KOCAF)**, where we have assisted more than one hundred (100) cancer fighters and survivors in Nigeria over the last six (6) years. And I am also the Founder of **The Helpers Network (THEN)**, where we are gradually helping teens and young men in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa find the right path to life through *The Adams Project Africa (TAPA)*. Also under THEN, our new project, *Angels At Dawn (AND)*, have been responding to the cries and sufferings of the less privileged living within our communities in Nigeria, Panama, Puerto Rico, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, India, and Pakistan by off-setting medical bills and sponsoring children to school. So far, I have led these organizations successfully to deliver on their vision & mission statement.

My educational background includes a MA in Development Communication and a BA in Theatre & Performing Arts, both from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, where I was a one-time Vice President of Student Union Government (SUG). I am also a British Council

trained Community Development Strategist through the *Active Citizens program*. I am a certified Talent Manager from the prestigious Music Business Africa (MBA). And I am currently studying for a MA in International Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

My published books are *Pearl of Hope* and *Odudu: The Bane of a Nation*.

Director of Community Development

Musfiq Tajwar

I am Musfiq, pursuing an MA in International Studies at UNBC. I am a human rights activist passionate about activism, volunteer work, and community development. Before joining UNBC, I completed my bachelor's degree (LLB) in Law from BRAC University and also, and I have completed my postgraduation in International Law (LLM) from Bangladesh University of Professionals.

I have worked with the United Nations Migration Agency (IOM). I have worked with ActionAid, USAID, and DANIDA in humanitarian response at refugee camps to implement community development projects.

I want to join the NBGSS team to share my passion for community development, and my experiences supporting the graduate student community at UNBC. I believe in sustainable community development for that, I wish to work with the NBGSS team to create a vibrant and supportive graduate student community that looks after itself and the border community of Prince Gorge.

I was privileged to work with teams with members from multiple countries, ethnicities, and gender identities. If I can serve NBGSS, I will utilize my time at the office to enhance society's community outreach.

Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Akil Arasan Vinayagam

I am writing to express my interest in the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion position at the Northern BC Graduate student society and nominate for the 2023 election. I am a grad student from the department of physics with a passion for driving positive change in our community, I am excited to contribute my skills and experience to support the NBCGSS mission.

As an event organizer for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workshop series at Trent Undergrad Physics society (TUPhS), I have gained experience in creating and facilitating programs that promote diversity and inclusion. I have also developed and implemented strategies that fostered a more inclusive environment and ensured equitable access to resources for all members of the community.

During my role in TUPhS, I have gained extensive experience in leading initiatives that promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the science community at Trent University. I have a demonstrated track record of developing and implementing strategies that enhance access, equity and inclusion for underrepresented groups. I have also developed and facilitated workshops that promote cultural competence, allyship and inclusive practices. And attended EDI training programs organized by Human Resources at Trent University.

As a Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, I would bring my expertise in developing and implementing initiatives to create a more diverse and inclusive community. My strong leadership skills, combined with my ability to build relationships and collaborate with diverse stakeholders, make me confident in my ability to successfully lead the organization's efforts to promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

In addition, my experience at Trent Undergrad Physics society has equipped me with an understanding of the unique challenges facing student societies and the importance of tailored programming. I am deeply committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion, and I am excited about the opportunity to apply my skills to make a positive difference.

Thank you for considering my application. I am excited about the prospect of joining the team and contributing to the Northern BC Graduate students' society.

Sincerely,

Akil Arasan Vinayagam

Director of External Relations

Rosarydasan Rozanna Devamalar

I am Rozanna, a woman, mom and goal oriented individual who thrives to bring change to humanity and the environment. I am a student of International Studies (Masters) program.

With 13 years of experience in the cooperate sector in client services, account management in managerial level and within the government of Canada for the south Asian region, my ambition is to bring change by resolving developmental and global issues focusing on sustainability.

Working with the external world representing the company, heading and coordinating projects with sponsors and well-wishers, focusing on clients' health, mediating between management and the employees are some of my experiences focusing on external relations. My expertise includes but not limited to client communication, public speaking, change management, process and events implementation. Painting, singing, dancing staying fit are my aesthetical strengths that has always helped my ideas influence people.

Coming with a Bsc. (Hons) in Business Information Technology (first class and batch top) from the university of Greenwich, UK, Post graduate diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership and Master of Social work (MSW), managing, leading and being a team player with diplomacy, honesty and ethics are my capacities in creating networks. I have my own initiative "Hope for Humanity" through which I head, coordinate projects for the needy through sponsorships.

Being an ambassador, mediator has always been my dream. That's my passion and my career will be revolving around this. Therefore, I chose to run for this position of Director of External Relations. I believe that there should be ambassadors to link the bridges between resources to bring the balance the humans and world needs. I hope I will be able to represent our students in the external world by being a member in this NBCGSS platform.

Without you I'm not one!

Uniting hearts and spaces, transcending boundaries!

Director of Indigenous Students' Affairs

Penina Sara-Lynn Harding

Candidate for the NBCGSS Director of Indigenous Student Affairs 2023-24 academic year

Profile:

Penina Sara-Lynn Harding is Secwepemc from the First Nation community of Esk'etemc which is a 3-hour drive south of the City of Prince George, BC. She is currently a 3rd year PhD Candidate – Natural Resources & Environmental Studies. She transferred from the Master of Arts – NRES degree program to the NRES Doctoral degree program on May 1, 2020. She convocated from the BA Geography, Major in Public Administration & Community Development in May 2018 and is a mother of 4 children.

Linktree: https://linktr.ee/Academic_Aunty

Areas of Specialization:

- (1) Indigenous Environmental Planning,
- (2) Indigenous Research Methodologies, and
- (3) Experience of Place.

Dissertation Title:

“Documenting Esk'etemc Experience of Place to Prepare for Generative Land-Use Planning”

2023 Winter semester – in research ethics approvals phase,

Summer to end of Fall semesters – Interviews and transcription work

2022-2025 SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship Recipient

2021 Graduate of the TikTok Accelerator for Indigenous Creators - National Screen Institute Alumni

2021 Recipient of the BC Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research Doctoral Scholarship

2019-20: President – Northern BC Graduate Student Society (NBCGSS)

My Top 5 Priorities for the role of the Director of Indigenous Student Affairs over the 2023-24 academic year include:

1. Establishing a set location, day and time to be present and available to meet with all enrolled Indigenous students – Graduate students will receive the first priority due to the nature of the responsibilities of the NBCGSS to represent all UNBC graduate students.
2. Establishing a working group with other elected and recognized Indigenous student leaders to collaborate on Indigenous student-led initiatives within the UNBC community.
3. Once Monthly reporting to the Board of Directors of the Northern BC Graduate Student Society.
4. Creating opportunities for meaningful acts of Reconciliation in collaboration with UNBC Faculty, Staff, and senior administration.
5. Providing advice and support to the Board of Directors of the Northern BC Graduate Student Society in the expansion of services for Indigenous graduate students
6. Winter 2024 Goal to Repeal and Replace the Title of Director of Indigenous Student Affairs with “Director of Indigenous Student-Led Initiatives”

Director of Internal Relations

Muhtad Ullah Khan

I am Muhtad Khan, a dedicated professional with years of experience managing businesses and finances. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. During my studies, I researched poverty and its causes in urban city centers which was awarded a Silver Medal from the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar. I am pursuing a master's degree in development economics, which has equipped me with the knowledge and skills to understand business development in emerging economies better.

Furthermore, I pursued a certification in Entrepreneurship from the National University of Singapore, where I gained valuable insights and knowledge about starting and running a business. I applied these learnings and established a company in the United Kingdom, where I served as Managing Director. Later, I launched another company, Gigyani Enterprises LTD, where I served as the CFO. In this role, I was responsible for overseeing financial operations, ensuring the smooth running of the business, and developing new accounts. My extensive work experience has honed my bookkeeping, financial management, and practical communication skills.

In addition to my professional experience, I have been actively involved in volunteer work, including The Page-Turner at the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar, and Rethink Peshawar 2018 in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy, Lions Club, and International.

My experience, skills, and passion for business and sustainable development will enable me to make meaningful contributions to UNBC and NBCGSS platforms.

Regional Students' Representative

Bahareh Amiri

#Postgraduate student in gender studies.

#Graduated with a bachelor's degree social science and law.

#Graduated with master degree in social sciences.

#10 years of work experience in the field of social services and women empowerment.

#Member of Iranian sociological association

Bahareh Amiri