

ELECTION 2015

Graduate/Professional Student Nominees to the York University Board Of Governors



Michael Kenny, Education (Ph.D)

My name is Michael Kenny and it is a pleasure to introduce myself to you. As a student, I completed by BES and MES degrees here at York University. I am currently a full-time student in my first year of the PhD program in Education. I have been extensively involved in campus life over the years and I keenly have kept myself aware of the issues that our university faces. I am interested in serving on the board because of the experience and passion I can bring in service to York University.

I have a keen interest in social justice, equity, sustainability and planning issues. I will work towards improving the quality of experience of all students. I bring extensive experience to the board: I am co-founder and Executive Director of the environmental organization Regeneration. I have served on numerous boards, including as the Co-President of my church, Don Heights Unitarian Congregation, President of the Don Valley West NDP Riding Association and President of the York University Greens. I also previously ran as a candidate for the Ontario NDP.

Further, I believe universities are crucial in shaping societal ethics, and as such, universities should take the ethical lead by divesting from fossil fuel companies and weapons manufacturers. Besides the obvious environmental, ethical, and human rights benefits, the university also stands to gain from an improved reputation and increased enrollment should it take an ethical stand. I hope that my contribution will lead towards a more vibrant, equitable and sustainable campus.



Dan O'Hara, Political Science (PhD)

I have worked extensively with clubs, organizations, and institutions at York University to study the rights that we have as students (particularly around issues of free speech), and to inform students of the protections afforded to us from abuses of authority by administrative processes. As your graduate nominee, I will use this position not only to work to ensure that students can defend themselves, but also to expand the scope of student rights in York's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

Moreover, after several years of organizing, I am familiar with the network of political, cultural, and social clubs and initiatives on campus. This rewarding—though sometimes intensive—experience, has stemmed from my advocacy and organizing around a plan that would see York cut financial ties to weapons manufacturers. A position on the Board of Governors is the next logical step to advance the initiative for a York free from investments in killing machines, and to ensure that our university is not complicit in harming the families of its own students. Additionally, I will work to further the sustainability efforts that have been ongoing at York, promote transparency and affordable education, and work with other students to make sure our campus is fair and equitable for everyone.

Lastly, my research as a Political Science PhD student traces recent transformations in the structure of university governance, with particular attention paid to the changing relationship between administrations and students. My academic work, then, is not a distraction from this position, but a natural complement to it.

The commitment to social justice is built into our university's own Mission Statement. Let's make sure that York lives up to it.