

ELECTION 2017

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



Michael Kenny, Education (Ph.D)

My name is Michael Kenny and I am a 3rd year PhD student 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 will be an advocate for social justice, equity and sustainability. I will work towards improving the quality of experience of all students.

I bring extensive experience to the board: I am a co-founder and Executive Director of the environmental organization Regensis. I have served on numerous boards, including as the Co-President of 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. I am a co-chair of the Affordable Housing Committee at York University, whose mission is to facilitate the creation of high-quality affordable co-op housing on York University's "Lands for Learning."

I believe universities are crucial in shaping societal ethics, and as such, universities should take the 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 enrolment should it take an ethical stand.

I hope that my contribution will lead towards a more vibrant, equitable and sustainable campus.



Joel Roberts, Social and Political Thought (PhD)

Relations between the Board of Governors and the University community at large are at an all-time low. Organizations that represent our community – students, faculty, and workers – feel increasingly excluded from the major decision-making processes that affect them. My motivation for running for the Board's graduate student representative position is simple: to fight for a Board that prioritizes and listens to its community members, not private donors, financial consultants, or other external stakeholders.

My own beliefs align with the majority. I am opposed to the ongoing corporatization of our university, which prioritizes a hollow 'efficiency' over that which matters most: accessible, collective learning and the chance to create a more inclusive and sustainable world. Towards this end, I will work to improve relations with workers and teaching staff, oppose tuition and other fee increases at both graduate and undergraduate level, and pressure the board to divest from weapons companies and fossil fuels.

As a second-year PhD student, teaching assistant, student activist and proud member of CUPE 3903, I have developed an in-depth knowledge of York's social and political landscape and the many struggles facing students. With your support, I want to channel our community's energy, creativity and passion for social justice around decision-making tables that are too exclusive.

Let's take back our university!