

CANDIDATES PLATFORMS

VAISANEN, LEAH

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE



Greetings, my name is Leah Vaisanen. I am of Dene and Vietnamese descent, and I would like to acknowledge that I am on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw people whose land I am grateful to be able to learn and share my knowledge. I am in my third year, majoring in Political Studies and minoring in Indigenous Studies. I am first-generation in my family to attend post-secondary, and as an Indigenous woman, I have always been passionate about being involved in the community.

The role thus far, has brought me to connect with the community, advocate for the Indigenous students, and bring cultural knowledge onto the campus. I am honored to seek re-election as your Indigenous Students Representative, committed to being a voice for our community.

Moving forward, my platform will focus on strengthening our voice within the student body, fostering greater cultural representation, and expanding support networks.

Together, let's celebrate our beautiful culture, address the challenges faced by Indigenous students, and ensure that our voices are heard in shaping a more inclusive environment.

Re-elect me, and let's continue this journey toward a more empowered Indigenous student community. You is kind, You is Smart, You is Indigenous!

LYANA, SARAH MEI

CHAIRPERSON



I have a passion for advocacy and making sure that marginalized groups have an elevated platform for their voices to be heard. Having served on the VIUSU Board for the past two years and the BCFS Representative for the past year, I'm familiar with the inner workings of student advocacy and have established strong professional relationships to continue this work.

KELLENDONK, CAITLIN

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS



Hello Friends,

My name is Caitlin Kellendonk and I am originally from the unseeded traditional territory of Sinixt and would like to acknowledge that I now have the beautiful opportunity to live work and play on the traditional land of the Snuneymyxw. As your Director of External Relations, I am committed to advocating and fighting for equity, affordable living for students, consent awareness and decolonizing education. I prioritize advocating for meaningful student representation in all decision making processes at VIU.

I genuinely care about our entire student body and seek your vote to continue in this role advocating for a more inclusive and student-focused experience at VIU that is equitable and affordable for all.

JOHNSTONE, KURTIS

DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL RELATIONS



Hi everyone! My name is Kurtis Johnstone and I am a fourth-year student in the Digital Media Studies Program here at VIU. I have spent the last year working as the Director of Internal Relations here at VIU Student's Union and I have had the opportunity to connect with student clubs, and so many of you, and it has been a truly rewarding experience. I have learned so much from all of you, and I am grateful for the relationships I have formed along the way. Going forward, my focus remains on promoting collaboration between student clubs, creating opportunities for student involvement, and fostering an engaging experience within our campus community. I believe that student clubs play a vital role in building a stronger, more connected university community, and I am committed to supporting their efforts in any way I can. If elected, I am hoping to continue advocating and supporting our campus clubs as well as fostering positive relationships among our diverse campus community.

Thank you,

PHILLIPS, SHANIA-ROSE

WOMEN STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE



I am a vibrant 4th year education student who will be transitioning into 5th year in the fall of 2024. Qualifications I bring as a candidate for Women Students' Representative includes authenticity, integrity, and a strong passion for collaboration with fellow students of all faculties. I am altruistic to what I believe in, and as such, I am an advocate for equity, inclusion, and compassion.

As a future educator I am invested in creating a collaborative community, opportunities for growth, and embracing diverse identities of all students. I feel my experience, strengths, and values will support VIU's student body. I am a growing learner, and I know I am bound to make errors. What is for certain is that when I do make mistakes, I know that they are opportunities for me to learn and grow from. I feel that with this perspective, I will lead with curiosity and humility in a way that you need.

VELISEK, MAGGIE

WOMEN STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE

Hi VIU Students!



My name is Maggie Velisek, I'm a Liberal Studies major, and I'm running for Women Students' Representative. I was born and raised on a homestead on Sinixt land (West Kootenay, BC), and currently I live and study in Snuneymuxw.

I pride myself in being considerate, thoughtful, and easy to talk to, and I want to use my skills to help foster a healthy community of student support and advocacy at VIU. My focuses in advocacy are feminist perspectives, mental health issues, human rights and environmental issues—all of which I believe can be furthered by strengthening connections with community.

I'm passionate not only about promoting awareness of women's issues but also the issues that all dismissed and underrepresented groups face (no one is free until we are all free!), and I believe in the importance of having a safe and understanding space for anyone to have their voice heard.

When I'm not thinking about how to change the world, you can find me journaling, making art, learning a language, or simply standing in the sunlight with my eyes closed!

BRAYBROOK, REESE

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Hi VIU community!

I'm Reese, and I'm running for Director of Events! I am a Criminology student with a Marketing minor and a Event Planning diploma.

As some of you might know, I've been helping with different clubs and events on campus for 3 years now.

My goal as Director of Events is not only to have monthly events for big occasions (Black History Month, Super Bowl, Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc.) but also to have sober events on campus to cultivate inclusiveness within the VIU community.

I also want to be able to celebrate smaller things, like study days, and stress busters (because who doesn't like a break during the chaos of exams?)

I want to see everyone at events and have an open space for all students! I hope you entrust and vote me into this position!

Thank you for the support!



GUYONNET, MAEVA

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Hello everyone! I'm Maeva Guyonnet, and I'm excited to announce my application for the Director of Events!

I'm currently in the first year of my Master's degree in Sustainable Leisure Management at VIU, and I have a background in communication and event planning.

You would have probably seen me on campus during some Fun@VIU events, as the Co-Chair of this student-led program at VIU since October. To me, the biggest success of an event is to see students make connections, feel involved on campus, and have fun!

Before moving to Nanaimo, I worked as a communications manager for a large French company, spending these two years organizing all types of events. During that time, I built a real passion for event planning and team management.

As Director of Events at VIUSU, my objective will not only be to guarantee the success of our events but also to make sure that each student feels involved and part of a community.



HANSEN, NICOLE

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Hi all! My name is Nicole (she/her).

I'm in my fourth year at VIU, and, fingers crossed, I'll be graduating in June 2025 with a double major in English and History. I have been so grateful to be a part of many amazing clubs and groups on campus. I have learnt so much from being a current executive on both the History and Poli Clubs and previously working as a Wellness Peer, Thrive Leader, and VIUSU representative for the Arts and Humanities department.

I am running for the Director of Events for two main reasons: I love organizing parties and events (my life is colour-coded to the extreme), and I wanted a role that would allow me to make more significant changes on campus. If elected, I promise to work my hardest to ensure everyone's ideas to improve our events and our school are heard.

Working as the Director of Events would also allow me to use my previous experiences to organize events focusing on inclusivity and accessibility, enabling more people to enjoy the campus and community I have grown to love.

Let's all work together to make our campus feel more like a community for everyone!



SAJJAD, SULEMAN

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS



Hey everyone, I'm Suleman Sajjad, and I'm excited to introduce myself as your candidate for Director of Events. I'm currently pursuing my MBA, and I bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the table.

I've been involved in organizing events for a student-run business society in my undergrad. It's been an incredible journey, leading teams and ensuring that each event is a success. I'm eager to bring all I've learned to this role.

One thing that's really important to me is inclusivity. As an international student, I have the privilege of interacting with peers from all over the world. It's this diversity that makes our school community so vibrant, and I'm committed to organizing events that reflect and celebrate our differences.

I believe that school isn't just about academics - it's also about the experiences and the connections. That's why I'm passionate about creating events that cater to everyone's interests, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to make the most of their time here.

I'm here to listen to your ideas and suggestions, so together, we can create a calendar of events that truly represents our diverse student body. Let's make this school year one to remember!

SWANSON, RACHEL

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS



Hello Everyone!

My name is Rachel Swanson and I am running for the Director of Events position. I am a third-year education student passionate about creating welcoming and safe spaces for everyone. I am the Co-executive for Fundraising and Events with the VIU Dance team and would love to be able to bring these experiences into the VIUSU position to help build on the amazing events we already run. I have experience communicating with local businesses and creating fun and inclusive events.

I am passionate about creating spaces for everyone and becoming involved in this amazing VIU community as well as the community of Nanaimo as a whole. Events are a great way to bring students together and create bonds and friendships to last a while.

If elected, I will help build on the current events run by VIUSU and also build on them by creating opportunities for students to explore this beautiful City of Nanaimo.

I would be honoured to be your Director of Events and look forward to seeing the connections build and relationships grow as we have some fun!

BAGAM, NAGA POOJITHA

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



My 2 years of leadership experience as a Student representative at my Bachelor's University, and few other roles which include Department co-ordinator, IETE representative and volunteering roles, has helped in learning to develop and implement strategic initiatives that enhance educational outcomes. I have a comprehensive understanding of financial management within higher education, having successfully overseen budgetary processes and resource allocation. I was in charge of organizing social awareness activities, donations camps, running a technical club, conducting college events like the university fest, cultural programs, sports competitions and placement co-ordinator where I was in charge of communicating with different companies in the business world.

I believe I will be able to use my skills to the best in this role. Within my tenure, I promise to hold up the rules, regulations and the values of the land we are living on. I shall be the your voice and your representative in order to make sure your concerns are heard as well as as addressed to the best of the ability.

DSOUZA, LARISA

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



My Name is Larisa Dsouza and I am seeking to be Director at Large at the VISU elections. I am currently pursuing an MBA and am in my second semester. My Interests include music, movies, reading, and traveling. Before doing MBA I did my master's in finance. My previous experiences working with a variety of individuals have helped me refine my leadership abilities. Creativity, communication, and collaboration can be attributed to my leadership style. It is more about a commitment to working together. If elected, I will support the voices of the students and influence positive transformations. This is an opportunity for me to represent our vibrant and diverse student body.

JATTO, HAFSAT

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



My name is Hafsat Daniella Jatto, I go by the pronouns she/her. I am currently an MBA student at Vancouver Island University. I have a BSc. in Estate Management.

I love playing games, reading, listening to music, dancing, sightseeing, and trying new things.

I am running for the Director at Large position to be a voice and liaison for my fellow students. What motivated me to run for this position is the amazing experience I had as a member of the Student Union Senate and the Event Planning Committee during my Undergraduate Program.

As a student I am aware of the challenges students encounter at a university; Integrating into a new society and finding new friends are just a few examples of the challenges students try to tackle. One of my goals will be to prioritise mental health support and well-being, while promoting positive relationships among students. This is why I am stepping in to make your student life easier, enjoyable, and awesome!

It will be an honour and privilege to serve you with my skills, experience, passion, and zeal to meet the interests and needs of the student community at Vancouver Island University.

Please vote for me. Thank you!

JAYARAM, JAYABALA

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



Hello, Namaskaram, Bonjour, Hola,

Hailing from Kerala, the "God's own country," I am Jayabala Jayaram, your dedicated candidate for the roles of Senate Representative and Director at Large at VIU. Currently in my second semester of the Master's in Educational Leadership program, my journey began with volunteering at RockVIU, leading to the Vice-Chair position in the Student Leadership Circle—a role aligning with my passion for leadership, networking, and fostering positive impacts within the VIU community. As I progress through my education on this picturesque campus, my goal is not only to serve as your voice through advocacy and leadership but also to foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration. I thrive on building bridges between diverse student groups, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. If elected, I commit to standing by your side, actively engaging with the student body to understand and address concerns. I aim to implement initiatives supporting academic success, enhancing student life, and promoting a sense of belonging for everyone. Together, let's maintain VIU as a warm and welcoming home, emphasizing unity, representation, and student well-being, creating an environment where every student's experience is enriched and empowered.

SHARMA, SHIVAM

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

1. Student-Centric Approach:

My primary focus will be on enhancing the student experience. I will work tirelessly to create a supportive and inclusive atmosphere that empowers students to excel academically and thrive both personally and professionally.

2. Facility Improvement and Safety:

I will ensure that our school facilities are safe, conducive to learning, and equipped with the necessary resources. This includes addressing maintenance needs, improving security measures, and creating a positive physical environment for everyone.

3. Industry Connections:

Building strong ties with the business community is crucial for the success of our graduates. I will actively cultivate relationships with industry leaders, organize networking events, and facilitate internships and job placements to enhance our students' employability.

4. Technology Integration:

I will champion the integration of cutting-edge technologies into our teaching methods, ensuring that our students are well-prepared for the digital future.

5. Transparent and Inclusive Leadership:

I believe in open communication and collaboration. I will establish regular forums for feedback, involve stakeholders in decision-making processes, and foster a culture of inclusivity that values diverse perspectives.

6. Fiscal Responsibility:

I will work diligently to ensure the responsible use of resources, seeking innovative ways to enhance the school's financial sustainability and efficiency.



THOMAS, JOMY

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Greetings everyone, I am Jomy Thomas, a second semester Masters student in Educational Leadership. Before I decided to come to VIU to pursue educational leadership I had worked for two years as an Assistant Professor and taught English to college students in India and have relevant experience in the higher education sector. I am running for two important positions in the upcoming elections; Director at Large for our union and Student representative to the senate.

As a director at our union, my objective will be to create a strong and inclusive union where all our voices are heard and acted upon. As your senate representative, I will ensure that our collective interests as students is clearly and articulately represented in senate meetings. With my background in higher education and educational leadership as well as active involvement in events on campus, I am positive that I can represent our interests as students in both these positions.

Your support is invaluable, and I humbly request your vote to enable me to serve you.

Together, let's raise our voices for a university where every student's perspective matters.

Thank you for considering me as your advocate in these crucial positions. Together, we can.



JOHNSTONE, KURTIS

BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPRESENTATIVE



Hi everyone! My name is Kurtis Johnstone and I am a fourth-year student in the Digital Media Studies Program here at VIU. I have spent the last year working as the Director of Internal Relations here at VIU Student's Union and I have had the opportunity to connect with student clubs, and so many of you, and it has been a truly rewarding experience. I have learned so much from all of you, and I am grateful for the relationships I have formed along the way. Going forward, my focus remains on promoting collaboration between student clubs, creating opportunities for student involvement, and fostering an engaging experience within our campus community. I believe that student clubs play a vital role in building a stronger, more connected university community, and I am committed to supporting their efforts in any way I can. If elected, I am hoping to continue advocating and supporting our campus clubs as well as fostering positive relationships among our diverse campus community.

Thank you,

LYANA, SARAH MEI

BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPRESENTATIVE



I have a passion for advocacy and making sure that marginalized groups have an elevated platform for their voices to be heard. Having served on the VIUSU Board for the past two years and the BCFS Representative for the past year, I'm familiar with the inner workings of student advocacy and have established strong professional relationships to continue this work.

JAYARAM, JAYABALA

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE



Hello, Namaskaram, Bonjour, Hola,
Hailing from Kerala, the "God's own country," I am Jayabala Jayaram, your dedicated candidate for the roles of Senate Representative and Director at Large at VIU. Currently in my second semester of the Master's in Educational Leadership program, my journey began with volunteering at RockVIU, leading to the Vice-Chair position in the Student Leadership Circle—a role aligning with my passion for leadership, networking, and fostering positive impacts within the VIU community. As I progress through my education on this picturesque campus, my goal is not only to serve as your voice through advocacy and leadership but also to foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration. I thrive on building bridges between diverse student groups, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. If elected, I commit to standing by your side, actively engaging with the student body to understand and address concerns. I aim to implement initiatives supporting academic success, enhancing student life, and promoting a sense of belonging for everyone. Together, let's maintain VIU as a warm and welcoming home, emphasizing unity, representation, and student well-being, creating an environment where every student's experience is enriched and empowered.

JOHNSTONE, KURTIS

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE



Hi everyone! My name is Kurtis Johnstone and I am a fourth-year student in the Digital Media Studies Program here at VIU. I have spent the last year working as the Director of Internal Relations here at VIU Student's Union and I have had the opportunity to connect with student clubs, and so many of you, and it has been a truly rewarding experience. I have learned so much from all of you, and I am grateful for the relationships I have formed along the way. Going forward, my focus remains on promoting collaboration between student clubs, creating opportunities for student involvement, and fostering an engaging experience within our campus community. I believe that student clubs play a vital role in building a stronger, more connected university community, and I am committed to supporting their efforts in any way I can. If elected, I am hoping to continue advocating and supporting our campus clubs as well as fostering positive relationships among our diverse campus community.

Thank you,

KELLENDONK, CAITLIN

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE



Hello Friends,

My name is Caitlin Kellendonk and I am originally from the unseeded traditional territory of Sinixt and would like to acknowledge that I now have the beautiful opportunity to live work and play on the traditional land of the Snunemyxw

As your Director of External Relations, I am committed to advocating and fighting for equity, affordable living for students, consent awareness and decolonizing education. I prioritize advocating for meaningful student representation in all decision making processes at VIU.

I genuinely care about our entire student body and seek your vote to continue in this role advocating for a more inclusive and student-focused experience at VIU that is equitable and affordable for all.

LYANA, SARAH MEI

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE



I have a passion for advocacy and making sure that marginalized groups have an elevated platform for their voices to be heard. Having served on the VIUSU Board for the past two years and the BCFS Representative for the past year, I'm familiar with the inner workings of student advocacy and have established strong professional relationships to continue this work.

THOMAS, JOMY

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE



Greetings everyone, I am Jomy Thomas, a second semester Masters student in Educational Leadership. Before I decided to come to VIU to pursue educational leadership I had worked for two years as an Assistant Professor and taught English to college students in India and have relevant experience in the higher education sector. I am running for two important positions in the upcoming elections; Director at Large for our union and Student representative to the senate.

As a director at our union, my objective will be to create a strong and inclusive union where all our voices are heard and acted upon. As your senate representative, I will ensure that our collective interests as students is clearly and articulately represented in senate meetings. With my background in higher education and educational leadership as well as active involvement in events on campus, I am positive that I can represent our interests as students in both these positions.

Your support is invaluable, and I humbly request your vote to enable me to serve you. Together, let 's raise our voices for a university where every student 's perspective matters. Thank you for considering me as your advocate in these crucial positions. Together, we can.

EVANS, HAYES

REPRESENTATIVE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS COMMITMENTS



Hello VIU Community,

My name is Hayes Evans. I 'm excited and honoured to have the opportunity to run for the student representative position on the Indigenous Commitments Committee. As an Indigenous man and first-generation student, my experiences have fostered a deep passion and understanding for Indigenous culture and inclusion.

As a student representative, I will use my voice to help bring awareness, inform the senate and faculty of issues that arise, and advocate for policies that align with the experience of Indigenous students on campus. I am eager to bring my passion to this meaningful role and help contribute to solutions that promote inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.

I am from the Sq'ewqel (Seabird Island Band) First Nations Community. I want to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation on whose land I have the opportunity to live, learn and share knowledge. Being a student representative for this committee will provide an invaluable experience of what it means to serve Indigenous communities and give back to the people who have supported my journey. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please remember to vote February 27th - 29th, 2024.

PRUCE, OLIVIA BRONTE MARIE

REPRESENTATIVE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS COMMITMENTS



Hello VIU,

It is my pleasure, and an honor, to be here with you today. Thank you for considering me as one of your Indigenous Student Representatives. I am a member of Métis Nation British Columbia; my maternal side comes from the Red River, specifically St. Eustache Manitoba. My fathers family comes from Russia, Poland, Ukraine; hence my last name Pruce which comes from the name Prussia; which is no longer. The root of the name Pruce means neighbor. I carry my fathers name with me to ensure that I remain a friendly person wherever I go.

I was born and raised in Kamloops BC, moving to Vancouver Island in 2014. I graduated from Pacific Christian School in 2018, and began nursing school at VIU in 2019. After two years of pushing through my education during a global pandemic, I decided that my mental health was more important than a nursing degree. I cleaned houses and worked as a nanny for local families, for cash, to get by financially. I eventually found a job part time at a spa in reception. I was inspired again to return to school to pursue esthetics and spa therapy. Though my initial university experience

VAISANEN, LEAH

REPRESENTATIVE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS COMMITMENTS



Greetings, my name is Leah Vaisanen. I am of Dene and Vietnamese descent, and I would like to acknowledge that I am on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw people whose land I am grateful to be able to learn and share my knowledge. I am in my third year, majoring in Political Studies and minoring in Indigenous Studies. I am first-generation in my family to attend post-secondary, and as an Indigenous woman, I have always been passionate about being involved in the community.

The role thus far, has brought me to connect with the community, advocate for the Indigenous students, and bring cultural knowledge onto the campus. I am honored to seek re-election as your Indigenous Students Representative, committed to being a voice for our community. Moving forward, my platform will focus on strengthening our voice within the student body, fostering greater cultural representation, and expanding support networks. Together, let's celebrate our beautiful culture, address the challenges faced by Indigenous students, and ensure that our voices are heard in shaping a more inclusive environment. Re-elect me, and let's continue this journey toward a more empowered Indigenous student community. You is kind, You is Smart, You is Indigenous!