

2026-27 Arts & Science Council: Fall 2026 By-Elections

The following is a list of candidates and their statements for the Fall 2026 Arts & Science Council by-election.

Arts & Science Council, Full-time First-Year Student Member

(18 eligible candidates; 3 seats available)

Yahya (YaYa) Amer

I believe as a first-year student that getting involved changes someone's university experience. I understand the difficulty in finding belonging because I was once isolated myself. Student leadership gave me community and confidence that I want to use to create that opportunity for fellow first-years.

I have experience turning ideas into action. As Student President and NSSSA Head School Rep, I helped usher in nearly \$1 million to a youth leadership nonprofit. I also co-chaired Relay for Life, raising \$15,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society.

At the Arts & Science Council, I want to help students feel excited about involvement.

Farwa Asghar

Hey everyone! Let's be completely honest: coming to UofT is just as terrifying as it is exciting. Whenever I hear people talk about how brutal first year is, my stomach drops, and I get incredibly nervous. It's comforting to pretend we have it all together, but most of us are just trying to survive. I'm running for Council not because I'm fearless, but because I care. I will fight for fair assignment spacing and real mental health support. If my voice shakes while standing up for us, so be it. Let's look out for each other. Vote for me!

Snow Cao

I have been involved in the student union since junior high school, so I am experienced and familiar with what our students and school need. My previous experience has also given me a broader perspective. I am engaging and approachable, and I already know many people at school. I have channels for students' feedback and concerns, which allows me to bring together different perspectives and propose practical solutions. I hope to strengthen communication between students, the student union, and the school.

Pok Man Deng

I would bridge between students and the Council, take your feedback to the table.

Track where each piece of feedback goes, respond you the progress and results.

Ananya Dongre

As a first-year Arts & Science student who moved to Toronto from Florida, I'm navigating a new university, city, and community while discovering where I want my degree to take me. As a commuter living off campus, I've experienced firsthand how different university life can be when you don't live on campus. I want to bring that first-year and commuter perspective to Council. I would be someone students can approach, someone who listens, and someone who ensures their concerns are heard, taken seriously, and represented.

Daniela Grottoli

Daniela Grottoli is a first year Social Sciences Student at the University of Toronto, participating in the Munk One program, and was selected as a Wolf Scholar during this past academic year. Having interests ranging from robotics to music, Daniela is committed to furthering the interdisciplinary nature of the Arts and Sciences Faculty, by engaging members in collaborative events to draw connections between different fields. Having founded the KidSport Sudbury Chapter in her home town, as well as working at Future North as a French Editor, Daniela has gained meaningful experience in communication, teamwork and leadership.

Kathy Hu

Hi everyone! My name is Kathy Hu, and I'm really excited for the chance to run for Arts & Science Council. Through student council, campaign work, and community programs, I've had lots of experience listening to different perspectives, working with others, and representing people's ideas. I hope to bring that same experience to the Arts & Science Council by being approachable, open-minded, and willing to speak up for students. I want to make sure student perspectives are considered in discussions around academic policies, curriculum, and other decisions that affect our experience at UofT. :)

David Liu

I want to contribute to the Arts & Science community by bringing curiosity, responsibility, and a genuine willingness to listen. As a first-year student, I hope to represent students thoughtfully while learning from the diverse experiences and perspectives around me. I value open communication, collaboration, and turning ideas into meaningful action. I would approach this position with an open mind, take students' concerns seriously, and work constructively with others to help make our community more welcoming and connected. Most importantly, I want to contribute not simply as a representative, but as someone who is approachable, engaged, and willing to put in the work.

Divya Madhavan

With years of experience in advocacy, including working with legislators and representing over 1200 students on the student council, I bring a proven commitment to advancing student interests. I'll take the time to understand your needs and advocate for them because I believe every student should have a say in the decisions that shape their education and experience at UofT. In a university of this scale, it's easy for voices to go unheard and opportunities to get lost, and I aim to help bridge that gap. I'm always happy to hear from you at divya.madhavan@mail.utoronto.ca.

Yuxi (Mariecy) Mao

I am a first-year Rotman Commerce student interested in how academic decisions shape students' university experience. As the founder and president of my school's first student club, I learned to analyze my peers' needs, collaborate with different parties, and improve plans when challenges arose. I hope to bring these skills and a first-year perspective to collaborate with my peers and incorporate the gaps and barriers they face on a daily basis into the courses and programs they interact with. I would be excited to contribute a student perspective to the Council while learning more about curriculum development and academic governance.

Freddie Michalchuk

Hi, I'm Freddie! I'm a first-year going into Rotman Commerce, where I'll apply my strong work ethic to, hopefully, flourish in terms of academics. My fear as a student is being part of a program that doesn't reflect my needs, hindering my university experience, and I know I share that concern with others. I want to be a part of this council because I'm a good communicator and a great representative. I'm not afraid to devote my energy to helping others succeed, and I hope I can do that here!

Adam Schwulst

As a two year term serving school board representative from Pennsylvania, I, Adam Schwulst nominate myself for the position of first-year Committee member as I have experience in the field. During a constitutional crisis, my own high school was in a 10 million dollar deficit. Closely following this reveal: I began working with my local representatives to draft legislation which would effectively spread high school funding more equally across Pennsylvania. I plan to effectively support the interests of my peers and my colleagues!

Maheen Shaikh

Living right here on campus, I'm in the middle of our daily student life, the good, the stressful, and everything in between. Between past student leadership and facilitating dialogue at an international camp, I've learned how to bring diverse perspectives together and get things done. I'm running for Council to make sure student voices drive real changes in academic support and wellness. I'll always be around, approachable, and ready to advocate for what we actually need.

Saurabh Sharma

I moved to a new country in Grade 11 knowing no one and graduated two years later as valedictorian. Living inside a rigorous curriculum meant navigating its core trade-offs daily, balancing depth against breadth, and rigid structure against independent exploration. That experience gives me a direct, practical view of how academic policy shapes the student experience. Beyond policy, I know how to execute: managing logistics and volunteer teams under tight deadlines as a festival stage manager taught me to turn high-level plans into concrete results. I bring that combination of lived insight and operational discipline to this council.

Victor Vo

I would bring analytical thinking, leadership, organization, and a strong commitment to student representation. Through academic study, leadership, employment, and community involvement, I have developed experience evaluating information, coordinating teams, solving problems, and communicating with diverse groups. My work with New College SEA, ASSA, Track & Field, and Chess Club has strengthened my ability to organize initiatives and collaborate effectively. As a Psychology student, I am particularly interested in contributing thoughtful, evidence-based perspectives to curriculum discussions while listening to and representing the needs of undergraduate students.

Jingtong (Flora) Yu

The notion of “that’s just how it is” has never resonated with me. In my senior year of high school, I noticed people in my grade usually skipped lunch and found it hard to get seats at the library during recess. I advocated and collaborated with our principal to modify existing policies and eventually gained the option to eat upstairs and study rooms exclusively for seniors. I hope to apply the same initiative and ability to identify problems by questioning what can be improved, and using my perspective as a first-year student to turn student intentions into actions.

Xiru Zhao

Firstly, as a university student, I strongly understand how to study effectively. I can comprehend how a course is designed to teach students and explore where it could be improved. Secondly, as a first-year student, I have a fresh perspective about course selection and enrollment, happening just last month to me. Finally, as an international student, I have an experience of taking courses within a different cultural and life context. Overall, I believe that these qualities can contribute to course enhancement, generate innovative ideas, and bring unique views on the curriculum.

Yilan (Elaine) Zhao

My name is Elaine Zhao, and I am a first-year Social Sciences student and an international student. Having experienced different academic and cultural environments before coming to UofT, I understand how confusing it can feel to adjust to a new community and find the right support. I hope to bring empathy, initiative, and a first-year perspective to this position by listening to students’ concerns, especially around communication and accessibility, and helping turn those needs into practical improvements within the Arts & Science community.