

# 2023 Elections

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences Candidates

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ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION



# Elections Timeline

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The 2022 Faculty Representative elections of the Association shall consist of the following periods:

- Campaigning Period: March 3 to March 9
- Polling Period: March 9 and March 10
- Newly elected officials notified: March 11

# Voting Platform

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**The link to the voting platform is: <https://elections.augsa.com>.**

With 2023 elections taking place on March 9th and 10th, there will be an election process for each of the following faculties:

- Faculty of Business
- Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Science and Technology representative positions have been acclaimed.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Stephanie Obara**  
Graduate Student  
EdD Program

Stephanie is a first year student in the Doctor of Education in Distance Education program and graduated from the Master of Nursing program at Athabasca University in 2018. She is a Registered Nurse and teaches in an undergraduate nursing degree program in British Columbia. She is a member of many professional associations and has administrative experience on various post-secondary education committees.

Stephanie would be honored to serve fellow graduate students. She believes strongly in the association's mission to ensure accessibility, affordability, and quality education. She brings experience advocating for students and can confidently provide voice on behalf of our student body with an aim to support overall student well-being and success. She recognizes the importance of building community across distance (and difference) and seeks to collaboratively explore creative solutions when presented with student concerns.

Stephanie Obara  
Doctoral Student, Athabasca University EdD program

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Carson Flockhart**  
Graduate Student  
MC Program

Carson Flockhart is a Career Consultant at Calgary Alternative Support Services with 12+ years helping members of the community with various disabilities to overcome barriers and find success in their lives. Carson exhibited a special ability to build strong relationships with these individuals and he uses this experience to help them understand themselves towards living their best life. By focusing on the use of humor and humanity to build courage in clients, Carson has been able to put a Degree in Psychology to good use. Over the years, Carson's strengths at the YWCA Edmonton has garnered recognition for the great work done helping individuals to achieve their goals. Carson may spend their days in Calgary, but it's the ability to see the new hope in individuals eyes that he is passionate about. These experiences have driven him to complete a Masters in Counselling to continue this journey. When they're not at work, Carson enjoys raising his new son and engaging in table top gaming with his partner.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Heather Schwarz**

Graduate Student  
MEd Program

Heather Schwarz is a student in the Masters of Education (Open, Digital, and Distance Education) program at Athabasca University. She has taken numerous courses through Athabasca and has a deep appreciation for the institution's unique ability to serve the diverse educational needs of students across Canada and worldwide. She is committed to advocating for the students of Athabasca as an AUGSA representative to ensure that student voices are heard and Athabasca University continues to evolve through various challenges. The AUGSA plays an important role in representing student voices to the board of Athabasca as well as the Alberta government, and Heather wants to help ensure that the interests of the students are considered as decisions are made.

Heather holds an undergraduate degree from Dalhousie University and has worked in administrative positions in the legal field. She is an advocate for personalized education at all levels and has served on the board of the B.C. Home Educators Association. She has lived in six provinces across Canada and currently lives in New Brunswick with her husband and two children.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Joanna Low**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

Hello, my name is Joanna Low. I first attended AU as a young mom, completing my BA in Psychology. I am back 25 years later and proud to be working on my MA – Interdisciplinary Studies.

As a member of AUGSA, I am committed to amplifying the student voice by bringing forward the perspectives of our diverse group of students, advocating for a sustainable and accessible future for a broad scope of programming, and helping facilitate a strong student council.

I am an experienced non-profit leader and forward-thinker who maximizes organizational effectiveness from a community-centred approach. My work experience includes being the Executive Director of a National Sport Organization, Manager of Accounting and Membership, and 25 years of experience in non-profit consulting.

In addition to my professional experience as a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), I have served on several non-profit boards, including Chair of Kin Canada Bursaries, Vice President & Director of Fund Development for a local charity assisting families in crisis, and a Founding Director for M.A.D.D. Canada - Calgary.

The strength of AU is the people that bring it together, and as a representative of AUGSA, I will work hard to bring their needs to the forefront.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Laura Marchese**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

My name is Laura Marchese and I'm a MAIS (Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies) student. I am roughly halfway through the program, which for me means I still have a few years left. I would like to be your Representative on the Council because I have a strong interest in helping students succeed and reach their goals. In a previous master's program that I attended in Germany, I also acted as a member of Council and advocated on behalf of student concerns. I have spent over a decade working in post-secondary institutions in Canada and so I am quite familiar with the inner workings of institutions and how to best get things done. These days, I am a stay-at-home mom to three year-old twins, in addition to being a master's student. This gives me flexible hours and availability to serve the student body and I would love to be selected as your representative and make my years of experience and passion for helping others work for you.



## Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Khagendra Bhandari**  
Graduate Student  
MEd Program

Meet Khagendra Bhandari, a current AUGSA council member and a dedicated candidate for the next term. Khagendra is committed to representing all students, regardless of their background, identity, or interests, and he understands the unique challenges that students face in academic and professional settings.

Originally from Nepal, Khagendra has a passion for making a positive impact on the community. He holds a Masters degree in English from Nepal and is currently pursuing a Masters in Education from Athabasca University. Khagendra has also completed a Bachelor's degree in GIS from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, which has equipped him with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed as a council member.

As a council member, Khagendra has already demonstrated his commitment to helping students succeed in university and promoting a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for all students. He believes in the power of listening to the concerns and perspectives of all students, and he is committed to working collaboratively with other council members to ensure that the needs and interests of all students are represented.

Khagendra is passionate about making a difference in the lives of students, and he is committed to utilizing his skills and knowledge to create a more supportive and empowering environment for all students.



# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Miranda Woodland**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

Miranda Woodland (she/her) is completing her first year of graduate studies in the MAIS program.

Miranda believes in a collaborative approach to decision-making and ensuring all positions are heard. She is adept at streamlining processes by ensuring clear expectations and goals for the individuals and organizations she works with.

Miranda has supported many financial projects, both in past employment and volunteer roles, with a background in restructuring. Professionally, she was an articling member of the Canadian Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals and the Turnaround Management association until 2022 when she pivoted to full-time studies to pursue a career in adult education. Additionally, she was appointed as Vice President to the Green Party of Canada (GPC) Fund Board in April 2022 and was elected as a director of the board in June 2022.

Miranda has trained in multiple DEI and conflict resolution programs. Prior to her appointment to the GPC Fund board she was an elected member of the GPC Ombuds and Appeals Committee. She has run investigations, and values equity and fairness in all processes she is involved in.

Miranda holds a Hon. BA in bioethics and political science from the University of Toronto – St. George.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

I am a Registered Nurse currently pursuing my Graduate Certificate in Instructional Design at Athabasca University. I am a fierce advocate and have a passion for working with vulnerable populations. I also hold two Baccalaureate degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour and a Baccalaureate of Nursing. As a member of the council, students can count on me to bring forth issues that impact adult learners in our faculty. I believe that higher education is a right and I am ready to advocate for equity in our educational spaces to promote success for students from all walks of life.

**Shams Lalani**

Graduate Student  
GCID Program

## Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Jeanne Kim**  
Graduate Student  
EdD Program

Jeanne Kim is a doctoral student in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, specializing in Distance Education. Her current research interests include 21st -century skills, micro credentials, and heutagogy, examining their impact on how we teach, learn, and work.

She is an instructor at Selkirk College's School of Business (Castlegar, BC, Canada) facilitating courses in project management, strategic management, and international business since 2009. Her face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses are designed for inclusivity, equity, and diversity with the learner placed at the centre.

With over 20 years of experience as a project management professional (PMP) in the corporate sector, Jeanne brings a wealth of practical knowledge and expertise in leadership, change management, teamwork, and problem-based learning to her teaching, research, volunteer endeavors, and project management career.

Jeanne strongly believes in giving back to the communities where she learns, works, and lives. She has held executive board positions for regional economic development organizations and successfully managed several municipal election campaigns. Most recently, Jeanne retired as Treasurer and Vice Chair for the Generation to Generation Society, which she held for 15 years. She continues to volunteer her time and resources to initiatives and non-profit organizations in her community of Trail, BC.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Yemi Adegbite**

Graduate Student  
EdD Program

My name is Oluyemi Adegbite (Yemi Adegbite) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am a middle school math and science teacher with the Peel District Board of Education for the last 19 years. In Nigeria, I was a professor in the department of Political Science, at Osun State College of Education, Ilesa, Osun State in Nigeria. I had a B.Sc. in Political Science and M.Sc. International Relations from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. I had another Master of Science degree at Walden University in Minnesota, USA.

Mr. Yemi Adegbite was the President of the Students' Union at OAU in Nigeria and also the Secretary General of the Academic Staff Union of Colleges of Education (COASU), Ilesa Chapter in Osun state during my time as an academic staff at the college. As a teacher with the Peel District Board of Education for the last 19 years, I served as the steward of my union in my school representing my colleagues in dealing with the school administration. My passion for serving people will put me in good stead to serve my fellow students to the best of my knowledge as a council member.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Lindsay McNena**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

Lindsay McNena is a MAIS student in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and is also a Registered Psychologist in Alberta. Lindsay offers graduate students the following:

- 5 year's familiarity with AUGSA and the types of student issues important to our members
- 4 years of advocacy experience at provincial and federal level for AUGSA students, including provincial advocacy board positions
- Knowledge of various AU committees, faculty meetings, and the general functioning of AU/Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Experience collaborating with the provincial government and AU on working groups related to advocacy and student concerns (like mental health grants or tuition increases)
- Strong communications background, both written and in presentations
- A passion for student politics, advocacy, and serving AUGSA members
- The ability to work as a member of multidisciplinary teams in both leadership and contributing member roles
- Has reviewed and understands the current bylaws, policies, and council positions of AUGSA

Lindsay believes in the value and strength of student voices, and that council members should listen, support, and advocate for what students want and need. AUGSA's graduate student population is unique and deserves representation which reflects that and shows the value of AUGSA students to AU, the province, and educational stakeholders.

## Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Dionne Edgecombe**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

Hi, I'm Dionne Edgecombe. I am in my second year of studies in the Master of Arts – Interdisciplinary Studies program, focusing on Work, Organization, and Leadership. This graduate program is the second leg of my learning journey with AU. I completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree at AU in 2017.

My academic background combining business, social sciences, and humanities, along with diverse career experience, will help me represent your interests on Council because I am balanced in my approach to complex issues. Athabasca University is great because it allows students to achieve academic goals while balancing their career, family, and personal responsibilities. I am sensitive to all AU learners' unique circumstances and competing demands. If elected to AUGSA Council, I will strive to reduce barriers and improve your graduate student experience through engagement and advocacy.

Outside of academics, I enjoy a strong connection with my community, serving on the board of a Métis-run non-profit and volunteering with organizations that help those experiencing poverty and 2SLGBTQIA+ groups. I love to run, hike with my dog, travel, and tend to my many plants in my free time. I hope for the privilege of serving you on the GSA Council!

## Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

Heather McGilvary is a Doctorate student from the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Heather has been involved with AUGSA for a number of years while pursuing her academic studies, working remotely as an E-learning specialist, and supporting her loved ones to achieve their own hopes and goals. Heather recognizes that the journey of an adult learner is unique throughout all ages and stages of life—yet alone we just endured a worldwide pandemic! Thus, working with AUGSA, Heather is keenly equipped with the skills to advocate for current and future graduate students at Athabasca University.

**Heather McGilvary**

Graduate Student  
EdD Program



# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Jesse Bowdige**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

My name is Jesse Bowdige and I'm currently a graduate student of the Masters of Arts - Interdisciplinary Studies program, with a focus area of Work, Organization and Leadership.

Upon graduating high school, I completed my Bachelor's Degree in Business, majoring in accounting. I worked as a project and equipment cost accountant for 3 years, with the intentions to pursue my Chartered Accountant designation.

I developed the interest to help others and serve the communities I call home, so I elected to deviate from accounting and shift my studies to pre-hospital emergency medicine. I have worked as a Firefighter for the City of Edmonton for 11 years, specializing in the development of first responder medical programs to assist the communities we serve.

Outside of work I enjoy running ultra-marathons in the summer, and snowboarding or backcountry skiing in the winter.

Vote for Jesse Bowdige!

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Hans Kreitner**  
Graduate Student  
MAIS Program

My name is Hans Kreitner, and I am interested in a Council Committee position representing the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Athabasca University. I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) program, centering my learning in the Work, Organization, and Leadership focus area. I hold undergraduate degrees in Business (UFV) and Psychology (TRU) and am currently employed in the field of Human Resource Management where I regularly participate in various committee assignments such as Health and Safety, Labour Management, and Job Evaluation. I believe my previous experience as a Faculty of Trades and Technology committee member at Kwantlen Polytechnique University and as an industry advisor supporting the Faculty of Applied and Technical Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley will help me effectively deliver the expectations and responsibilities of the Faculty Representative role.

# Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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**FHSS Representative**

**Julie Thomsen**  
Graduate Student  
MEd Program

My name is Julie and I am taking a Master of Education in the Open, Digital, and Distance Education at AU. In my day-to-day job I provide marketing education and instruction to ~200 agents at a real estate brokerage and manage the brokerage events. When I'm not at work you can find me at my local pottery guild making subpar mugs, refurbishing computers at the Electronic Recycling Association, or giving digital literacy tutoring to adults at Prospect Human Services. I love helping others feel comfortable in digital environments, and this is something that would make me a great council member for you at AU! My business bachelor's degree, management and marketing experience would be a great asset to the council for ensuring your requests be well communicated and executed. Check out my website to learn more: <https://learnwithjulie.my.canva.site/>