

## STUDENT ELECTION TO COUNCIL – VACANCY 2021

### CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

#### **ALISON CARTER**

Hi, my name is Alison Carter and I am an undergraduate Student at the Shepparton campus completing the Bachelor of Human Services and Master of Social Work. I am interested in the position of elected student member on the university council because I want to make a difference for students where 2020 has been a challenging time if I'm elected I will be the person who other students can come and have a talk if there are any issues that need to be looked at I will be there for all students from all backgrounds.

#### **ROBERT DELMENICO**

I am a former accountant who has decided to change into the IT profession. I currently serve on a Hospital board and have a wide range of experience in organisation management. COVID-19 has thrown many great challenges at the University sector and there are greater challenges to overcome. I would bring a fresh perspective to the council through my past experiences and my qualifications.

#### **JESSE FELSINGER**

My name is Jesse Felsing, a Mature age Business student who wants to leave the legacy across La Trobe and other universities across the nation in an age of government attacks on education by not only working with LTSU 2021 Office-bearers, student clubs & societies, and the wider community across the university. I want to make a major impact not only to transform La Trobe into a serious alternative to G8 Universities by putting the students first with their voices starting with rebuilding relations between the LTSU and the students as the main priority with the by-product of improved student-university relations, in turn, attracting students and win over the critics via getting things done. I will encourage the alumni to return to La Trobe to Mentor and bond with current and future students to ensure the LTU community as a whole goes forward in the right direction by carrying out innovative ideas with feedback from all fronts not only empowering current and future students and staff of La Trobe University and by extension taking pride and setting a standard for all universities across the nation by finding ways to ensure we can increase capacity and resources despite funding cuts with putting needs of students first in order to fulfil the drive to make the university the elite in Australia if not the world. I acknowledge that the solutions can be complicated will work together with all stakeholders across all parties for a best solution If elected, I will create a sub-body in parallel to the LTSU in order to make them uphold the promises, to generate and bring up great ideas not just from myself but across the university by encouraging Increased representation in all student clubs and society and the LTSU itself. I took an initiative by being open with student and staff with lessons from unsuccessful LTSU and Academic board bids and if elected I will assure the current and future students and staff that their faith is well placed by answering to the students and the university stakeholders alike and leave behind a university that is not only well-placed into the long term future but in a far better state. This is not for me but for us that covers all from La Trobe Students and Staff to the executive and together, we will leave a legacy as a collective with pride.

#### **SAMMY FENTON**

- 1) Love meeting people and getting involved in Uni life
- 2) Involved in student representation over 10 years
- 3) Studied International Relations & Arabic previously
- 4) Ran I.T. Business 4 years
- 5) Studying Law: knowledge of policy, procedure and laws

#### **OLIVIA (RULAN) GAO**

My name is Olivia and I am a third-year dental student. I want to play an active role in the ongoing improvement of La Trobe University and its many facets. I see the position as a member of the University Council as an excellent way to positively engage in the decision making that will affect not only the current students but also future students. As part of the executive committee member for both the La Trobe Bendigo Badminton Club and Bendigo Ukulele Society, I was able to improve my communication and leadership skills. Meeting students from different disciplines allowed me to have a better understanding of their university experience and I would love to relay such information to the University Council to induce positive improvements. Being a part of the Open Day teams at the Bendigo campus for the past two years allowed me to meet future students and hear their perceptions about university life. It will be a privilege to influence the university decision making to fulfil future students' expectations. I believe that it is necessary to allow the students' perspectives to be heard without discrimination. Thank you for taking the time to read this and good luck with your studies.

#### **ARAFAT HASAN**

Hello, I am Arafat Hasan. I am an international student from Bangladesh pursuing my master's in accounting at La Trobe University, Bundoora campus. I am in my final year and am really keen to run for the council. I want to learn and have a first-hand experience of how the council works. It is my understanding that students from my nationality are usually under-represented in official positions such as the academic board and the council. Thus, my motivation for running is also to represent my country. Apart from that, I am actively involved in the La Trobe community, volunteering in many roles. Would love to get elected as I am not affiliated with any political groups within the university and if victorious it would probably motivate others like me in the future.

**STUDENT ELECTION TO COUNCIL – VACANCY 2021****CANDIDATE STATEMENTS****SANJITH KONDA HOUSE**

Hey La Trobe! My name is Sanjith Konda House, and I'm a second year [business] student at the Bundoora Campus. I'm so excited to be running for University Council and believe that with my experience and passion I'd be a fantastic fit for the student representative role.

Since starting my studies at La Trobe last year, I've thrown myself into university life and taken up many opportunities to contribute to our Bundoora community in both volunteer and leadership roles. I've volunteered with the Mature Age Students Association (MASO), the La Trobe Student Union, and during this pandemic have aided Two Birds One Scone in packaging and delivering food to students who need it.

This year, I was grateful to be elected President of the La Trobe Indian Students Club (LISC), one of the largest and most active Clubs on our campus. During this pandemic, I've worked hard to bring as many of our Club members together over Zoom on a regular basis, to help us feel connected even when apart. I also sit on the LTSU Clubs and Societies Council, where I aid in approving affiliation and assessing grant applications. This has helped me get to know and understand the needs of many students and Clubs on our campus.

It's because of this experience that I believe I'm the right person for a spot on the University Council. I care about La Trobe, and as we face unprecedented hardship during this global pandemic, I want to be a representative voice for students at the highest level of this University. Students deserve this. If elected, I already have a strong plan for what I'd like to achieve both in this pandemic, and to set students up for COVID-free future.

I will work to promote transparency between the top tiers of the University and students. We all deserve to know the state of our education during this pandemic, we all deserve equality, justice and a quality of education that matches how much we are paying for it.

I will work to support all students with any concerns that arise this Semester. I want to be a representative voice that you can trust; someone that you can come to and know your concerns will be heard and will be fought for at every Council meeting.

I hope you will choose to vote for me as your student representative University Council.

**TEJUS MENON**

Hey Everyone! I am Tejus, a first year Bachelor of Podiatry (Honours) Student. Let me first ask all the 2020 intakes- Have you immersed yourself in Latrobe this year? Do you know more than 10 people from your course or even the easiest way from the Agora to the HLT buildings? Some might have achieved a lot this year but most including me have been on campus for less than a month due to COVID-19. I want 2021 to be the year where we "freshies" are able to get to know each other and live the life of a "TRUE LaTrobian". I strongly believe that this would not be possible without working with University and addressing real issues that we have faced in 2020 and work towards realistic solutions that the student body can benefit from in 2020/21. The strengths that I bring to this role are leadership, communication skills and a hands-on approach. I have always been passionate about being "the change" which relies on support from our surroundings. It takes a leader to set an example and make a change and still further, expect others to change and follow. All this cannot be achieved without clear and proper communication. I believe in "walking the talk" and hence, practice a hands-on approach while expounding an idea or while working on a project. My years of experience and exposure of having pursued my academics over 3 different continents have been an excellent opportunity to identify and empathize with the student community. My achievements in 2019 include: - I was the Finalist at the Sir John Monash Youth Leadership Award for my active citizenship while at school and for being a voice for the youth in the community. Nominated by Melbourne High for the Annual Gembrook Community Awards and awarded the Youth Champion Award to recognize my contributions to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation Model and United Nations Students Association Network Australia (MUNSA) If I am chosen for this position, I promise you that I will work to my fullest of abilities and continue to hone my skills to make the university a more welcoming place for everyone. Thank you!

**KEREN MUTHAKANI**

I like to hear and solve issues brought by people regarding any concern. This really helps me to learn many new things and paves way for exploring. Being a masters student at Latrobe, I'd like to be engaged into practices relating the university council with my knowledge of problem solving. The internal functioning and decision-making strategies could be observed and practically implemented. The scope of bringing a positive impact on students is high (by being a student council member). Hence, I intend to apply for this position. I would like to act as bridge between students and the university. Keeping up the expectations of management and students is my agenda. I will try and give my best in all the tasks undertaken.

**STUDENT ELECTION TO COUNCIL – VACANCY 2021****CANDIDATE STATEMENTS****HAYLEY CATHERINE O'CALLAGHAN**

I am interested in being an elected student member on the university council as I believe that I can offer representation from an area of the University that does not have a lot of exposure in these forums. In studying Health science, I am undertaking a double Major in Athlete welfare and counselling and rehabilitation counselling, in these studies I have been alerted to the multifaceted struggles that individuals inside a elite sport stream face. Sometime, university feels like an elite sport, from the constant balance act we play with our personal life and studies, trying to 'train' for our big end of semester exams and assessments can prove difficult at the best of times. I would like to be able to transfer the skills that I have learnt inside the context of my degree to be able to assist and better serve the mental health needs of the greater community of Latrobe University. I have a very vested interest in benefitting the wellbeing and mental health of all those who I come into contact with. I have vast knowledge in leadership, In being a head coach for many years now and previously represented on Deakin University executive team for the Cheerleading and Dance club. I do not shy away from a challenge, but I always have the better interest of others and the greater situation at heart; this is why I feel I would be not only a great advocate for the students of Latrobe but an excellent source of support, in attempt to pioneer a culture that understanding the complex, multi-dimensional life of a university student, while putting the right mechanisms in place to further our greater university in sight of support, care and fulfilment for students.

**AMBER PATTERSON-OOI**

My name is Amber Patterson-Ooi and I would like to nominate for the position of student member to the La Trobe University Council. I am interested in the position because my core values are in alignment with that of the University: I am dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and inclusivity and I advocate for the values of innovation and resilience in these challenging times. As an alumna of other Australian universities, I can offer valuable life experience of what it takes to transition from new graduate into industry. Having returned to study as mature age I can draw on both my previous life experiences and current student life. I have worked in Arts, Education and Not for Profit sectors both nationally and internationally. If elected to the Council I will draw from my previous work-life experiences as well as continue to listen and learn from the students and staff that I am currently surrounded by. I am an active member of the Student Excellence Academy and have recently contributed to the student newsletter by writing several articles that focused on student health and well-being: a topic that is fundamental to the outcomes of studying under our present circumstances. As the current Secretary to the La Trobe Archaeological Society I contribute to key decision-making processes in order to foster our community and advocate for the advancement of education within the humanities. I believe that humankind are currently presented with both opportunities and challenges within education. What will be the long-term impacts upon education from the COVID-19 pandemic? How are students and staff best supported in both online and on-campus study modalities? With these questions in mind, if elected to the Council, I will seek to listen, learn and contribute to finding ways for La Trobe University to continue to strive for excellence in all areas.

**SUDIPTA SAHA**

Greetings everyone! I am Sudipta Saha, a postgraduate student at Latrobe and currently studying in Master of Information technology. I am running to be the Student member of the council.

As a postgraduate student commencing this year at La Trobe I feel there are so many areas that need immediate attention and improvement from the governing body. And who knows better than a student who started their journey this year in Latrobe! Everyone is aware of these issues but am here to stand and committed to bringing the changes that we deserve and that's the only reason I want to be a part of this decision-making team of the council. It's not possible to describe in a few words how much I want this. But you gotta trust me! As a postgraduate student, at this stage I believe, I possess that level of understanding and experience to raise an issue and can be dealt with the governing body.

I want to be the voice of the students who care about their academic performance and the services provided by the university. Because at the end of the day we care about our academic progression. I want to make sure that the University is providing the quality of education that we need in fact to perform at our best in the exams even if it's conducted online. As we are unsure about when we can come back to normal university life. Therefore, it's vital to make sure the services provided are aligned with the changes we need depending on the situation. Overall, I would say, I want to be a part of this council of the university because this is the place where all the rules and regulations are generated, and I want to stand and speak on behalf of your voices. Let's bring it on!

**RUBY TIMS**

I'm interested in the position of elected student member on the council due to the roles high responsibility, contribution and involvement in the universities plan, direction and overall mission, I believe I would provide and insightful, open minded aspect to the council, appropriately representing the La Trobe University students in all aspects including; academic & management desires, bringing forth collaborative ideas for all. I possess the necessary skills; communication, collaboration, unbiased, acting in good nature, care, diligence, participation and task completion in a timely manner. I think this would be a testing leadership role, but a great opportunity.