



DAGS

Dalhousie Association
of Graduate Students

2021 Election Nomination Form

DEADLINE – June 1st 2021 – 11:59pm

Electronic submissions are the only acceptable submission format. Send nomination form, emails of support, and all questions and concerns regarding DAGS elections to cro@dags.ca.

Instructions:

Please fill out the following questionnaire and email in digital copy to cro@dags.ca by June 1st 2021 at 11:59pm. DAGS will be posting your answers for students to get an idea of your campaign platform.

Please either direct or forward a minimum of two graduate student [DAGS members] emails to support your nomination (@dal.ca email required). These must have the senders' name, B00#, and articulate their support.

An email attestation can only count as a signature from the student's Dalhousie email address.

Important Dates:

- Nomination forms due to cro@dags.ca – June 1st 2021 at 11:59pm
- Campaigning – June 22nd 2021 to June 28th 2021
- Voting – June 29th to June 30th
- Results – July 2nd, to be declared on the dags.ca website

Questions or Concerns?

Contact the CRO: cro@dags.ca

Name: Pooyan Moradi

B00 #: B00816399

Program: Medical Neuroscience

Year of Study: 3rd

QUESTIONS:

Please introduce yourself (100 words):

I am 3rd year Ph.D. student in the Department of Medical Neuroscience at Dalhousie University. I started my research career uncovering the mechanisms of the Epileptic brain and finding noble treatments to revert the epileptic activity. Currently, I am studying the underlying mechanisms of Blood-Brain barrier impairment and its mediating role in different diseases, including Epilepsy, Dementia, and Alzheimer's. Leadership has been a part of who I am for most of my life. I thrive on being challenged in leadership roles and taking the initiative. Despite moving to Canada just under four years, I have proven myself to be capable of managing and leading numerous student government activities with minimal to non interruption to my thesis work. During my student experience in Halifax and Dalhousie, I have thrived to improve student life quality and being a voice for graduate student community.

Please identify your top five (5) platform points:

1. Promote Mental Health and Resilience in Graduate School.
2. Review and improve Dalhousie Health and Dental Insurance plan for Graduate Students.
3. Advocacy for student researcher rights:
 - a. Financial stability and transparency for graduate students
 - b. Supervisory relationships
 - c. Healthy work-life balance
4. Racial and gender equity in Health Professions and Medical Sciences.
5. Promote Post-graduation Career workshops for minority groups (LGBTQ, First Generation, Black and Students of Color)

What are your qualifications and/or experience that relates to the position you're running for?

Student government involvements:

1. **Director of Health Professions and Medical sciences**, Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) - Years active: 3

Activities and responsibilities:

- Attended all the board and council and FGS dean meetings in 2020-2021. Provided bi-weekly report to the Board and Dr. Marty Leonard. Actively involved in DAGS initiatives and event planning.
- **Organizer at Dalhousie Mental Health Awareness Week working group (March 2021):**
 - Delivered input and feedback from graduate students' viewpoint to the committee regarding graduate students concerns and Mental health challenges (only graduate representative in the executive team).
 - Involved in Mental Health event planning, contacting panel speakers, social media coverage and poster design.
 - Organizer and Moderator: **"Imposter Syndrome and Burnout"** session during MHAW2021:
A panel discussion about imposter syndrome and burnout with Dr. Susan Lavoie, Student Health and Wellness and Dr. Leslie Anne Campbell, Sobey Family Child & Adolescent Mental Health Outcomes Chair,

Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. This panel discussion followed up with a question-and-answer period around issues of imposter syndrome, social anxiety and how to overcome it, graduate school burnout and how to prevent and manage it.

This event had very high attendance and was acknowledged by the university with an honorarium. (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/workshops-events/mental-health-awareness-week-0.html).

- Lead director in **Graduate student Insurance Survey** (in progress):
 - Survey and collect data on Graduate students Health and Dental Insurance satisfaction.
 - Investigate potential alternatives for more affordable and adjustable Insurance Providers for graduate students at Dalhousie University.
 - Meeting with Dalhousie Student Health and Wellness office to present data and discuss results (August 2021)
- Volunteer and organizer in **DAGS COVID-19 Support** (March-April 2020):
 - As the DSU Foodbank liaison, managing communications with DSU team for delivering food packages for students in quarantine.
 - Contacted and talked virtually with new and returning students in quarantine. Provided information on DAGS Covid support, DSU foodbank packages and Mental Health resources at Dal.
 - Mentored a specific new graduate student in the Faculty of Medicine and helped to discover his program structure and main contacts. Introduced student to research programs at Dal and how to get involved.

2. **Council member and FMGSS representative, DAGS - Years active: 3**

- a. Actively participated in bi-weekly meetings (2018 – present)
- b. Participated in reviewing student and Society grant requests and approved funding for the student travels and society events.

3. **Faculty of Medicine Graduate student Society (FMGSS), Years active: 4**

- **President (2020-21):**
 - a. **Conducted COVID-19 research impact survey:**
 - Collected feedback from all the departments at the Faculty of Medicine (FoM).
 - Summarized and presented feedback to the FoM Vice president Dr. Valerie Chappe.
 - Discussed and presented the impact of university lockdown on research and degree completion to the Dean's office and compared Dalhousie vs other U15 universities.
 - b. **Moderated bi-weekly meetings** despite university lockdown to connect students and maintain Graduate student's Mental Health by organizing multiple online events (Christmas Door decoration contest, Virtual Halloween door decoration, Trivia, and game nights) and purchasing gift cards for students.
- **Vice President (2019-2020):**
 - a. Organizer at **FMGSS career day:**
 - Reviewed local and regional industry employers, sent out invitation letter for industry representatives and speakers.
 - **Presented event summary and received approval for 1000\$ DAGS society grant.**
 - **Contacted and received 300\$ grant from Department of Medical Neuroscience.**
 - Moderated event financial process (Contacted FoM Financial services, Dal bar services, purchasing gift cards, supplies etc.)

- b. Coordinated and participated biweekly meetings with the group.
- **Departmental and DAGS representative (2018-present):**
 - a. Facilitated communication between FMGSS and DAGS.
 - b. Facilitated communication between FMGSS and Department of Medical Neuroscience.
 - c. **FMGSS Financial Transparency Working Group** (in progress):
 - **Helped with designing study goals and communicating with departments.**
 - **Conducting research to review the current stipend value and wage gap for living in Halifax.**
 - **Comparing other U15 universities vs Dalhousie in Financial transparency and student stipend adjustments (in progress).**
 - **The results of this study will be presented to the FoM Dean's office to initiate a Faculty wide revision of Financial Transparency and student Literacy.**
- 4. **Social representative, Medical Neuroscience Graduate Student Society (MNGSS),** Years active: 1

Initiated and organized Department of Medical Neuroscience Townhall (2020-present):

This event is an on-going semester-based meeting which tends to help students voice their concerns and questions regarding their work progress and graduation dates which are impacted by COVID-19. Furthermore, a separate Meet and Greet session is followed up after each Townhall for new and current graduate students.

Why do you think you are a good candidate?

- ✓ Compiled more than 4 years of Student government experience at Dalhousie University and Halifax community
- ✓ Highly motivated to improve student life quality and Mental Health awareness
- ✓ Demonstrated leadership through organizing various events, discussion sessions and working groups.

What are the top three (3) things you'd like to accomplish during a term at the DAGS?

1. Organize Mental Health discussion sessions (July, September, and December 2021):
 - a. **Toxic productivity and Burnout** in graduate school
 - b. **Imposter Syndrome** in Academia and coping strategies
 - c. Facilitate on going Mental Health counselling for Graduate Students.
2. Facilitate **Researcher-PI training** sessions (August-September-December 2021):
 - a. Geographical, Cultural and Gender-based trainings
 - b. Financial transparency informational sessions
 - c. Building health supervisor-student relationships
3. Conduct **Health and Dental insurance survey** (July-September 2021):
 - a. Survey university students for the insurance coverage experience.
 - b. Collect and summarize feedback on Insurance Policies.
 - c. Negotiate with DSU and insurance providers to generate an improved insurance plan tailored specifically to Graduate Students.

4. Expand **Financial Transparency and literacy program** originally initiated in Faculty of Medicine to all faculties across the university (September 2021):
 - a. Improve financial and stipend information in graduate programs for upcoming and current students.
 - b. Collect information and compare Dalhousie vs other U15 Universities.
 - c. Review and collect information on raising Living costs in Halifax and livability for graduate students.

What issues matter most to you?

I am very passionate about making graduate school a less stressful and dreadful experience for current and new students. Graduate school can be challenging, and Graduate students need Mental Health, Financial and Mentoring support throughout their degree until completion and after school. I am passionate about making this happen and be a part of the help for grad community at Dal.

Please List any Campaign Links (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Website):

<https://www.facebook.com/pooyan.92>

CONSTITUENT SUPPORT: TWO (2) EMAILS REQUIRED)

In light of COVID-19, the requirement for ten constituent signatures will be waived for this election. Nominees will instead require a minimum of two emails from Dalhousie graduate students who are DAGS members to support their prospect of governance. Emails should include the name and B# of graduate student emailing, and be sent from Dal email address [within the domain of @dal.ca] to cro@dags.ca.

Thank you for your application

