

# 2018 Arc PGC

## CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

*THIS INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE CANDIDATES & THE RETURNING OFFICER ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS ACCURACY.*

### **PRESIDENT OF THE PGC – Medha GUPTA**

As part of the Postgraduate council, I would like to contribute to our university life and make sure that we get the best of opportunities, experiences, accessibility to resources with all the fun that UNSW and the city of Sydney has to offer. I hope to form part of a VISIBLE and APPROACHABLE representative body that helps connect new students, seniors who are all set to graduate and alumni to share experiences and ideas. Having lived in USA and now in Australia, I have come to obtain a global perspective and intercultural competence through my vast experiences with diverse people, helping me become independent, open to new opportunities, and being challenged in ways I could have never imagined. Through these experiences, I understand how essential university life is and I would like to use this knowledge to make life better for all domestic and international students.

### **PRESIDENT OF THE PGC – Gaurav VATS**

I introduce myself as a friend, companion, mentor and follower of the UNSW postgraduate community. Being a doctoral student and a student representative at UNSW (Vice President-Postgraduate Council, member-University Research Committee, former member-University Council and Honorary Degree Committee), I very well understand the issues, concerns and priorities of the students and am quite familiar with the approaches to deal with them. This is also evident from my previous experience (General Secretary and the coordinator for trainings and placements at Indian Institute of Technology). To me, being a part of postgraduate council is not only a moral obligation but also a matter of trust and foresightedness. Given my experience and the research accomplishments ('IEI-Young Engineers Award (2016-17)', 'ISCA-Young Scientist Award (2015-16)' and 'IIT Bombay Postgraduate Research Award (2014-15)'), I firmly believe that you will not hesitate to support me in enriching the solutions for postgraduate community by shaping the strategic directions of the university towards a better environment in terms of opportunities and skill development.

### **COURSEWORK STUDENTS OFFICER – Somansh AGRAWAL**

Hi

I am Somansh studying Telecommunications Engineering (Master's by Coursework) at UNSW and contesting for the role of Coursework Officer in the PGC. I am easily approachable and always ready for a friendly game of ping pong or 8- ball pool. As a board member of STEEP (Society of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications), my experience in representing a portion of Postgraduates in the School of EE&T has been an amazing one in terms of understanding students and their needs. As part of the PGC, striving towards a connected and a visible postgraduate committee within UNSW will be my primary agenda. I would also commit to guiding fellow postgraduates in both academic and extra-curricular pursuits to make their stay at UNSW a memorable one.

If you want to know more about me or my plan of action, you can always chat by connecting with me on Facebook!

Cheers

### **COURSEWORK STUDENTS OFFICER – Kristen ZHANG**

My name is Kristen Zhang and I am a 2nd year coursework postgraduate in Materials Science.

As a MSE coursework peer mentor, 2nd-year coursework representative, member of Chinese Student Association, PGSOC, and a volunteer in Blitz TV, I regard these experiences as good chances to engage in the multi-cultural environment at UNSW. I have engaged with different activities including Welcome BBQ, STEM Panel Discussion, and WE TALK where I have gained more in interpersonal skills and great involvement in the societies. I will use my experience to encourage more coursework students to participate in the student community, to establish more meaningful opportunities for the coursework students' integration into UNSW.

## **EQUITY OFFICER – Naqash AFZAL**

Being an enthusiastic and well-balanced individual, I would like to express my interest for the position of equity officer in PGC. I am a PhD student with majors in neuroscience. My vision is to help students socially and help them to make their time memorable at UNSW by creating an environment possessing certain features i.e. freedom of expression and race independent. Working in international environment for last 4 years and being multi-lingual, I am fully trained to mingle in the international culture and to understand the problems faced by the graduate students. Besides academic, I am active in extracurricular and co-curricular activities and have won several distinctions and awards. My interests include parliamentary debates, Hiking, rock climbing, badminton and soccer. As a self-motivated individual, I am really looking forward to contribute for the betterment of PGC and the student life at UNSW.

## **EQUITY OFFICER – Malavika BALACHANDRAN**

My name is Malavika and I'm pursuing my masters in Engineering science. I'm running for the role of equity officer and I'll be focusing on making sure that all students, irrespective of gender or race will have equal and fair participation in the council and any other events conducted by the council. I believe that I'll be perfect for this role considering my vast experience as a woman engineer in the industry. Also my excellent interpersonal and communication skill will make me a great asset to the team.

## **EVENTS OFFICER – Ankit GANDHI**

I'm a UNSW student from past one year and during that period I have proactively participated in every opportunity that came on my way, whether it is studies or extracurriculars. I have given my participation to every field and totally understand the process. So, here I Ankit Gandhi nominate myself to be a Event Officer. I know that there are already so many events happening every week by so many other societies but still as a part of PGC i'll try to different our events with other society events, in a way of fun activities where you will build new friendships. So, elect me so that I can make your events meaningful.

## **EVENTS OFFICER – Cesar MENENDEZ MUNIZ**

I am 2nd-year PhD student in the School of Materials Science and Engineering. After being part of the previous PGC team as a councillor, I decided to run to become the next Events Officer. The work made by previous PGC teams have made events like the Wine and Cheese Night, Meet and Greet or the monthly celebrated Coffee Catch-up to be part of the postgraduate life on campus. The main target of this candidature is to make sure that our Postgraduate students (we) have a place and time to gather together and facilitate the connexion among students with different backgrounds who also belong to different schools across campus. In any case, I am not running alone. I am part of a bigger team with wide experience in executive positions in PGC and other different societies on campus who have already succesfully worked together in many scenarios.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICER – Ankit GANDHI**

I'm a UNSW student from past one year and I completely understand the hardships of all international students. Therefore this year, I am nominating myself for the post of International student officer at UNSW. There are so many problems international students face during their course of studies and PGC would only be helpful to those students if the helper is part of that community and understand the issues. So, here I Ankit Gandhi, an international student of UNSW accept the challenge and take initiative to help and put forward the issues of international students to the top. Help me to win on this position, so that I can help you!

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICER – Malavika BALACHANDRAN**

I am Malavika Balachandran and I'm running for the role of international students officer. With this position, I will make sure that the needs of the international student population are catered to and they have the best experience here in UNSW. Being in my third semester, I know the life of an international student quite well and I will be able to bring out positive changes to the lives of the current students. Working as a team is one of my greatest strengths and with my excellent communication and leadership skills, I will be able to do a great job in this position.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICER – Ram MOHANTY**

I'm Ram Prasad Mohanty, an international PhD in Computer Science Engineering student. I am nominating my name for the position of the International Students Officer at the PGC. I would like to tell you that I have research and professional experience which gives me the unique ability to apply skills, in all forms, and aid students. Some of my experience includes Peer Mentoring for the Mature Age program. I always try my best to support and guide students facing difficult situations.

As an international student, I have had the same personal experiences of the various problems and inconveniences as all of you out there. So, as a friend of all you international PG students, I would like to be your common voice on various issues and hence ensure that all of us have a more pleasant study and social environment, here at UNSW.

Thank You!

## **RESEARCH STUDENTS OFFICER – Hemna GOVINDARAJU**

Within the span of the past several years at UNSW I have evolved from a fledgling undergraduate student in BMedSci (Hons), to Research Assistant; and now I'm at the top of the mountain (or that's what I tell myself), as a higher degree research student. Throughout my time I've also engaged with the wider campus as the President and Founder of The Bookworm Society. Safe to say, I am incredibly passionate about research, and our unique community. Over these years, I've come to realise how important it is to use the resources available to us that so many of us are unaware of. It is my intent to use these resources to help our better socially engage our diverse community, improve our skill as researchers, and showcase and prepare for the vast range of opportunities that lay beyond our time at UNSW.

## **RESEARCH STUDENTS OFFICER – Xiao LU**

I nominate myself, Xiao Lu, for the 2018 Postgraduate Council for my commitment to serve as a representative for all of you, my fellow postgraduates.

I am a third year PhD candidate majoring in engineering at UNSW. As a female research student in engineering, I advocate: 1) more services provided for postgraduates especially regarding academic skills and mental health and 2) more extensive assistance available for woman-identifying students.

Being in the final year of my degree means that I have acquired enough knowledge of what it's like to be a postgrad, identified the needs and issues, and more importantly, plenty of time to contribute to improve the wellbeing of my fellow postgraduates.

I'd like to transfer my skills gained from my experience of supporting international students and mentoring female students in STEM and truly dedicate to provide any help you may need on your postgraduate journey.

## **RESEARCH STUDENTS OFFICER – Arslan KHALID**

Hi, I'm Arslan. A PhD student from School of materials science and Engineering. I'm the PGC 2018 Events officer. Over the past two years, I have been involved in a lot of social and academic activities at our university. I have gained vast experience from these activities and grown as a representative. Being a postgraduate student, I'm aware of issues faced by postgraduate students. I believe with that experience, I'm able to help my fellow postgraduate students.

## **RESEARCH STUDENTS OFFICER – Myron GODINHO**

Postgraduate research is an arduous task that can involve meticulous attention to minor details and long periods of working alone. As a PhD student myself, I am convinced that it need not be quite as isolating and narrowly-focused as it can sometimes be.

As the PGC Research Student Officer I will work to provide more opportunities for research students to interact with each other, facilitating better mental health, improving support networks, promoting interdisciplinary discussion, and enabling holistic student development. New initiatives I propose are introductory mindfulness classes to improve stress management and critical thinking skills. Through my involvement in the UNSoc (and Chair of the Security Council at the recent AMUNC 2018), I would like to facilitate forum-style discussions on key global policy issues of cross-disciplinary relevance. Postgraduate research students are the technical experts of tomorrow, and building these leaders is the emphasis of my candidacy.

## **WOMEN'S OFFICER – Xi SHI**

I am currently a second-year PhD student in School of Materials science and engineering. Joining Postgraduate Council (PGC) has been my first choice after one-year work in Postgraduate Society of Materials school with the reason that I want to challenge myself and mingle with more people all around the university. Since I am currently also the postgraduate representative of EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) of Materials school, women's equity with correspondingly more representation at each level of events has been part of my work objectives, in line with the "enhancing gender equity" which is outlined in UNSW 2025 strategy. I am aiming to organize events which can preferably benefit women, promote more female representation as well as help them have an enjoyable study period at UNSW.

Sincerely Yours,  
Xi Shi

## **WOMEN'S OFFICER – Xiao LU**

I nominate myself, Xiao Lu, for the 2018 Postgraduate Council for my commitment to serve as a representative for all of you, my fellow postgraduates.

I am a third year PhD candidate majoring in engineering at UNSW. As a female research student in engineering, I advocate: 1) more services provided for postgraduates especially regarding academic skills and mental health and 2) more extensive assistance available for woman-identifying students.

Being in the final year of my degree means that I have acquired enough knowledge of what it's like to be a postgrad, identified the needs and issues, and more importantly, plenty of time to contribute to improve the wellbeing of my fellow postgraduates.

I'd like to transfer my skills gained from my experience of supporting international students and mentoring female students in STEM and truly dedicate to provide any help you may need on your postgraduate journey.