

Committee: **Board of Health (London-Middlesex Health Unit)**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Arzie Chant**

Occupation: **Graduate Affairs Coordinator**

Work experience: **I have been an employee of the University of Western Ontario for 17 years, providing support and academic advice to students at undergraduate and graduate programs. I began my career in a position working with students in Western's residence system, where much of my time was spent dealing with behavioural issues among students in their first year of post-secondary studies. After 6 years, I moved into an academic support role, where I also advised undergraduate students on program requirements, course options, accessing personal or medical support on campus. I currently work with graduate students (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) and senior undergraduate students to counsel on strategies for academic success and applying for graduate education. My role also sees me coach students on how to handle challenging interpersonal situations and seek personal or medical support for challenges common among post-secondary students.**

Education: **My degree areas are predominantly in the medical sciences, with an additional focus on ethics. I hold an undergraduate degree from Western's Faculty of Science, and am presently completing concurrent B.Sc. degrees in areas of human health. Specifically, my degree programs are: Honours Specialization in Biochemistry and Chemistry, with a major in Microbiology and Immunology Honours Specialization in Genetics, with a major in Medical Cell Biology.**

Skills: **I have extensive education in fields germane to human health (e.g. microbiology, immunology, biochemistry), and have experience working with diverse individuals in reaching a shared goal. I possess excellent communication skills, and speak assertively but not aggressively. I am able to approach issues dispassionately, in a non-judgmental manner that focuses on finding solutions. In this opinion, these skills are critical for those engaged in public health, as personal feelings about controversial issues (e.g. opioid use, harm reduction programs, etc.) must be set aside in order to serve the public good.**

Interest reason: **In my view, all citizens should become engaged with the goal of improving their community. I have pursued several such opportunities in the past, and I believe that my skill set is particularly well suited for the Board of Health, both in terms of my extensive scientific literacy and my competencies in addressing controversial or emotionally charged situations with tact, sensitivity, and aplomb.**

Contributions: **Individuals on the Board of Health benefit from having an understanding of health related issues, but also in possessing a calm, non-judgmental approach to serious, often emotionally charged issues. Such individuals must be able to make decisions that are informed by facts and a desire to improve the situation rather than by considerations of whether they believe the behaviour of others to be right or wrong. My career experience relies heavily on these same skills, while my educational experience has provided me with a thorough understanding of topics relevant to public health. Additionally, my volunteer experience has brought me into contact with marginalized people (e.g. LGBT people) and some of the problems that they face, which I believe will also be useful to the Board.**

Past contributions: **During my studies and career at Western, I have served in multiple roles and on several bodies to represent the interests of students, staff, or specific segments of the community (including marginalized groups). These have included: USC Equity Commissioner (2002-2003) USC Pride Resources Commissioner (2003-2004) USC Commissioner for First Nations Students (2005-2006) 5 terms on the UWO Senate 3 terms on the University Discipline Appeals Committee 2 terms on Western's Graduate Education Council 1 term on the Grad. Education Council's policy sub-committee 10 years as a UWO Staff Association steward**

Interpersonal: **Several of the bodies that I have served on since moving to London in 2001 have been charged with the responsibility of addressing contentious issues. In so doing, my approach has been to attempt to identify the diversity of experience and concerns around the table to better understand the ultimate opinion that parties hold. This has been particularly true during my service on Western's Senate and Graduate Education Council, which are often charged with the responsibility of establishing policies which must effectively serve a large, diverse population. My own communication skills are rooted in dispassionate assertiveness without aggression, to ensure that my position is heard without**

**risking making others uneasy in sharing their own views. I am also tactfully probing of others views, to ensure that stakeholders from distinct groups around the table are heard.**

Interview interest: **Yes**