

Committee: **London Transit Commission**

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, applying for graduate education, and adjusting to life in London. My role also sees me collect and analyze large amounts of current and historical data about our academic program to spot trends in enrollment, progression, and completion.**

Education: **My degree areas are predominantly in the 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. I have also completed two college certificate programs in office administration and computer essentials.**

Skills: **I have extensive education in science, including courses in statistics, math, and computer science. While most of my focus has been in the area of the health sciences, I believe the skills developed during that time to critically examine data will be useful in contributing to a system as complex as London's transit system. Additionally, 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 service, as personal feelings about controversial issues 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 well suited for the Commission, both in terms of my data literacy and my competencies in addressing controversial or emotionally charged situations with tact, sensitivity, and aplomb.**

Contributions: **As a transit user during the entirety of my nearly 2 decades in London, I believe that I have a sense of the needs of riders and the challenges the LTC faces. London is also currently coming to terms with how to best plan for the transit needs of the future as the City continues to grow. This has been a challenging task fraught with emotion from various stakeholders. The Commission would benefit from members who approach current and future planning tasks with a focus on what the evidence suggests is best for the needs of Londoners, visitors to the City, business success, and environmental sustainability, rather than parochial concerns. At the same time, members of the Commission must be able to thoughtfully engage members of the community to hear their concerns and to share information, so as to both incorporate community feedback into planning and build community support. My career and previous volunteer experience have relied heavily on these same skills, while my educational experience has provided me with a strong understanding of analytical skills critical to this sort of high level decision making.**

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**