

Co-President

Ayush Kumar

Hello! My name is Ayush. I'm an incoming 4th year student studying Cog Sci (computational stream) and Statistics and I am running to be a CASA Co-President next year. I first got involved with CASA last year as the COG250 rep and instantly fell in love with the CASA community. I really enjoyed all the events CASA had whether it be the Pub/Boardgame nights or the annual Cog Sci conference. I believe the support CASA provides to the cog sci community through our events and office hours is what has helped make my experience in the Cog Sci program so enjoyable. This past year was an abnormal year for CASA and all of us as a whole. As this year's communications director, I created the CASA discord server to help Cog Sci students stay connected while we are all away from campus. I enjoyed getting to know everyone through our online game nights this year and look forward to meeting everyone in person. Next year will be my last year in the Cog Sci program, so I would like to make a lasting impact on the student association that has shaped my undergrad experience so much. This upcoming year I would like to continue providing students with the support they need whether it be online or in person and make our student body more connected through events that can bring us all together!

Sophia Wan

If you've attended any of the workshops this year, I had probably prepared the notes and slides for it. You might also remember me from CASA games nights, general meetings, or movie nights as the one who doesn't know how to tell a joke. (Some of you might also recognize me as your MAT137 TA but shhh.) If you don't, then allow me.

My name is Sophia, and I am running for CASA co-president. I'm an incoming third-year studying cogsci, economics, and computer science. I've loved the CASA community since my first year at UofT. With our diverse academic (and non-academic) backgrounds, comes all sorts of perspectives; those who remain in the program tend not only to have interesting perspectives, but also to be incredibly open-minded. To me, the CASA office has become not just a place for academic help, but also a safe space where I've made many friends.

For better or for worse, I pushed for us to establish a Discord server last summer -- although as comms director, Ayush dealt with much of the work that accompanied it. (Sorry Ayush!) He and the rest of our exec has done a wonderful job, and we hope to continue refining it.

Next year will, frankly, be a tough one; it'll be one with the uncertainty of university reopening, a big conference, and a small number of returning executive members. We'll need leadership that's experienced, resourceful, and patient. As CASA's outgoing events coordinator, a former high school tech crew president, and a TA, I believe that I fit the bill.

Treasurer

No candidate statement received. By-elections to be held in Fall 2021.

Communications

Mary Ditta

Hey! I'm Mary, a CogSci & PCJ major and a Computer Science minor, running to be your Communications Director.

In my first and second year, figuring out how to become involved with such a large program felt daunting. And after the year we've had, opportunities to meaningfully connect with the people in our program are invaluable.

Communications plays a huge role in ensuring you're as informed about CASA as possible, so you can stay connected with each other and have the tools you need to do your best. Good communication means better event turnout and student engagement, so we can make the absolute most of our next year together.

I'd be responsible for all types of communication with you (in-person, email, and online), promoting events, and designing posters. Here's the experience I have to back it up:

Marketing/Promotion: I've held tons of positions in communications, including as a Marketing & Communications Student at Baycrest Health Sciences and the Provincial Marketing Director for Target Alpha Canada.

Graphic Design: I've served as Graphic Designer for the Toronto Hacker Club as well as a few other U of T events. (our posters will be the envy of every other students' association!)

Tech & Web Skills: I have a background in computer science, and have lots of experience managing social media in my aforementioned roles. I promise to stay reachable and make sure our communication channels are up to date so you're always in the loop.

The CogSci community is and always will be my favourite thing about U of T, and I'd love to continue giving back as an executive. That means a personal commitment to being available, approachable, transparent, and genuine.

I can't wait to get to know all of you! Feel free to reach out any time. :)

Alvina Lai

What's up, team? I'm Alvina, a second year Cognitive Science (brain) and Psychology major. I'll be running for Communications Director because I have been communicating so much this year that I figured I would just continue my job. As COG250 rep, I have pinged people countless times in our COG250 discord that I made and reminded them of everything that's going on in the class, as well as participated in all the CASA-held workshops. I have organized many study group sessions (7 hours long baby!) to go over tests, sent out weekly lecture notes (mostly) before town halls, and created a #crying channel for people to bond over their stress. If you've seen me around the CASA discord, it's probably because I pinged you to let you know that something is happening.

On top of this, I've also been heavily involved in research labs where I've had prior experience creating posters with Photoshop and Google Slides, and I also have an art-based side hustle. This lab also requires me to check my email a lot, which means that I will always be on top of COMMUNICATION with CASA peeps (shout out to Ayush). This gives me the experience I need to regularly update on CASA's social media and website with ~cognitive aesthetic~ and new events. To increase interest in the Cognitive Science program, I would want to implement more social media outreach and host things like Instagram Lives and collaborate with other student associations for an information exchange.

Being involved with CASA has been one of the most enjoyable experiences I've had this past year, and I truly want to stay involved. With your vote, I'll make you even more proud to be a part of this community!

Divya Gupta

Hello! My name is Divya and I'm running for the Communications Director position. As a first year student who learnt remotely for the entire academic year, I understand how difficult it can be to make friends or to access resources within your department that may interest you. I want to make it a priority for Cognitive Science students to receive various platforms to be thoroughly engaged in the community and form valuable friendships. I aim to achieve this by promoting bi-weekly social events, midterm and final season destressors, study-with-me sessions, and more.

Moreover, I want to ensure that students are well informed about various relevant internship and research opportunities within and outside of the University. I aim to do this by introducing monthly academic newsletters, promoting related clubs on social media, and maintaining close contact with the Cognitive Science department to update the CASA website with relevant opportunities.

Thank you for considering me!

Isha Khurram

Hi! I'm Isha, and I'm a third-year student majoring in CogSci (Cognition and the Brain). I'd love to end my journey at UofT by giving back to the CogSci community, and I believe CASA's Communications Director position provides me the platform to do just that! I am confident that I have the relevant skills and experience required for this position. I am the current Art Director and Student Life Representative of the UofT Women of South Asian Heritage Collective. I designed the first edition of the Tolanna Magazine, promoted it on social media, completed the paperwork required to get our club CCR recognition, and managed communication between our executive team and CCR validator. Notably, I am confident using Canva and Adobe Creative Cloud. I am friendly, creative, and organized, and I am eager to apply these skills to promote CASA. For instance, I want to improve the CASA LinkedIn page to enhance our professional networking and recognition as a community. If elected, I will be in direct contact with you, and I assure you that I will listen and relay your ideas to the rest of the team. Given my prior leadership roles and experience as a CogSci student, I hope you trust me to represent you!

Secretary

Justice Tomlinson

HELLO! My name is Justice and I'm running for CASA secretary. I'm a second year majoring in cognitive science and psychology and I make a lot of cogsci memes. If you're in CogSci Facebook or Discord chats, you've probably seen a few!

The secretary is responsible for organizing office hours, conducting CASA meetings, and other logistical and administrative tasks. I believe that my unique set of skills and experience make me the best candidate and I hope to not just fill this role but transform it by going the extra mile any time I get the chance - I'll work to improve existing processes, building in efficiency and longevity so that future secretaries can integrate into the job easily and smoothly.

Previously, I worked as a member of the CASA admin team, hosting office hours and helping students with their assignments and inquiries. This year, I've worked as a work-study and research assistant at Intelligent Adaptive Interventions which has taught me a lot more than I could've imagined about effective communication and task management. In these roles, I've also managed dozens of meetings, creating agendas and making sure all important information from the meeting is captured in recordings or minutes. These experiences have built up my ability to effectively communicate, manage events, and carry out administrative duties so I feel I can contribute a lot to CASA as both secretary and general member.

I want to become secretary because I really love cognitive science and I'm passionate about working with others and sharing knowledge from the field. I'm excited to further the field in any way I can! I hope you'll consider voting for me!

Keevyn Hirschfield

Hello everyone! My name is Keevyn Hirschfield, I am a second year student double majoring in Cognitive Science and Psychology, and I'm running to be your CASA secretary. Some of you may recognize my name from a Cog Sci group chat or two, while most of you probably have no idea who I am and all you have to go off of is my weird yet uniquely cool name.

For those of you who don't know (and really, it would be pretty weird if you DID know), the CASA secretary is responsible for a variety of tasks that you probably won't notice unless they're being done poorly. I would list them, but I'm rather certain you don't really care. Instead, I promise you this: as your CASA secretary, I will make the commitment needed to ensure you have no idea I exist. The office will remain neat and tidy, the library organized, and the communication effective.

Of course, I wouldn't be a good Cog Sci student if I didn't give you entirely too much evidence for my claims. The experience I will draw upon in my role as secretary is extensive. This year, I am the assistant peer mentor for the psychology first-year learning community (FLC), and am set to be the peer mentor for next year. In this role, I am responsible for designing, planning, and carrying out bi-weekly workshops for first-year psychology students, which involves frequent communication with co-workers, faculty, and staff at the university. I am also a member of the first-year foundations council, wherein undergrads, staff, and faculty meet to discuss issues facing undergraduate students. As such, I have a wealth of experience in communication, and clearly take my responsibilities seriously.

Alright, that's all I got. Thank you for your vote and have a good one!

Event Coordinator

Marian Wang

My name is Marian Wang and I am a second year student with a passion for learning about the mind and meeting new people. This quarantine has been a rollercoaster, but one clear takeaway is that nothing compares to enjoying a coffee with a friend outside, studying quietly amongst strangers in your favourite library, or most notably, sitting with classmates in a crowded lecture hall while listening to Vervaeke's newest insight on relevance realization. I am running to be your CASA Events Coordinator because I miss these experiences, and I want to help organize academic and social events which restore the joy of doing Cognitive Science alongside like-minded peers. I will continue to plan events like Re:Cog and board game nights, but other ideas for events include casual coffee chats with professors in Cognitive Science or related disciplines, informational events where students can learn about how to get involved in Cognitive Science research, or more social gatherings for students who are new to the program to get connected. I am qualified for this position because of my organization and planning skills. I served as a youth group leader for my church in high school, coordinating refreshments, planning game nights, and booking venues for events. I am also notoriously organized; I had a bullet journal before switching to Notion this year, and I am a sucker for to-do lists and a good scheduling app. In short, I want to use my skills to ensure CASA events run smoothly so that CASA can continue to be a club which highlights groundbreaking research, connects curious and motivated students, and creates an environment where anyone and everyone interested in cognitive science feels welcome, informed, and inspired.

Petra Fayad

Hi there! My name is Petra, I am a second year Cognitive Science and Linguistics major and I am running to be your CASA Event Coordinator. I'm sure many of you are excited to go back to campus, see your friends, and attend on-campus events! My goal as Event Coordinator would be to organize events that will make up for what we missed this year and that are accessible to both resident and commuter students. For the last two years, I have been an outreach associate at UofT Global Medical Training, where I've helped organize multiple fundraisers, as well as a conference with professionals in the health-care field. I have also spent three years volunteering at a food bank, some of my duties include: serving meals, setting up, and creating posters. These experiences have given me the skills I believe are most important for this position, such as communication, collaboration, and passion. If elected, I hope to help things run smoothly and lend a hand to anyone who may need it.

Conference Coordinator

Amina Shmanova

Hi, everyone! My name is Amina, and I am running for conference coordinator this year!

Many of you don't know me, and you may think, why should I vote for her, right? First, I hope I will meet you all! In this challenging time, the CASA community became vital for me. I spent a lot of time in CASA, both as an admin and a fellow COG250 student. I've seen how devoted, and hard-working each of the members are, which made me fall in love with this program and association even more! As an executive member, I want to return the favor and provide a welcoming environment for each and everyone!

Secondly, my passion is, of course, merited by my experience. Out of many things that I like about university, research is something that I love the most and I am happy to note that I am not the only one. Being a part of CASA has shown how many talented and passionate students we have in our program, thus, organizing the conference for each of you would be a great honour and delight for me. I am currently a research assistant in Toronto Language and Cognition and Self and Identity labs. As such, I see conferences as a fantastic way for students and researchers to stay connected to others in their field. To be an organizer for UTism and Confluence would mean realizing these goals and provide others with the opportunity to present their hard work.

Additionally, I have great organizational and leadership skills that are perfect for a conference coordinator's role next year! Being a founder of a youth organization aimed at helping children from local orphanages with schoolwork has taught me how to manage the teams and resolve conflicts. I've also been editor-in-chief of my high-school student newspaper. There, I learned how to maintain the group dynamic and share responsibilities.

This year was not perfect, yet we have the upcoming year to catch up and make a fantastic conference. I promise to do my best, and I know that we can make the following year a memorable experience together!