

SWSA Bi-Elections – Self Nomination Blurbs

Position	Secretary
<i>Candidate 1: Ryan Weibe</i>	
Blurb:	
<i>I am interested in the position of secretary within the SWSA because it inspires me to better integrate myself into the social work community while also allowing me to use my experience and skills for the benefit of others. Getting closer to the brightest and most devoted people in my program has always been a goal of mine, and the position of secretary would enable this perfectly.</i>	
<i>My goals are to streamline the note-taking practices of the SWSA by using my knowledge of Word and other programs to make agendas and minutes more accessible and understandable. I also plan to emphasize punctuality and professionalism within meetings, ensuring that people are not interrupted, both supporting accurate note-taking and ensuring all ideas are heard. These are only some of my goals, as I hope to determine what changes may be needed once I am more fully integrated into the role.</i>	
<i>I am currently the secretary on the executive council of Bronx Park Community Centre, where I have created, edited, and shared reports, agendas, minutes, and budgets at a professional level. I have also served as president, treasurer, and group leader in various clubs, gaining experience in organizing events and managing paperwork. Additionally, I am a Governor General of Canada Bronze Medal award winner, demonstrating how seriously I take my academics and extracurricular commitments.</i>	
<i>Overall, I believe my experience and enthusiasm make me a strong candidate for this position. I hope to work with you all very soon!</i>	

Position	Training Coordinator
<i>Candidate 1: Shelby Kitzul-Labiuk</i>	
Blurb:	
<i>With a life long love of education as well as years of professional experience in facilitation and training, I believe it's the power of connection and education that scaffolds us to live in a good way. I'm interested in creating reciprocal relationships with diverse training programs in our community for continued learning and professional opportunities.</i>	

Position	Indigenous Students' Representative
<i>Candidate 1: Marla Malcolm</i> Blurb: <i>Hello all! My name is Marla Malcolm. I am a wife, mother, and a current social work student in the distance delivery program. I am interested in the Indigenous Student Representative position because I am an Indigenous student myself who wants to help create a culturally safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for Indigenous students in social work. I want to create that environment for future Indigenous social workers to enjoy their future work without any judgment or negative stigma. If elected, my goals would be to strengthen connections between Indigenous students, create opportunities for storytelling about our experiences and perspectives, and advocate for Indigenous representation, cultural awareness, and student support. I believe I am a strong candidate because I care about the community and value the importance of listening to others; I am committed to learning, growing, and bringing my own Indigenous perspectives into social work. I want to learn from other Indigenous students while making sure students feel safe, heard, and understood throughout their time at the university.</i>	
<i>Candidate 2: Kassie Owens</i> Blurb: <i>As an Indigenous student in the Bachelor of Social Work program, I am passionate about advocacy, representation, and creating spaces where students feel welcomed, supported, and heard. I am interested in becoming an Indigenous Student Representative because I understand the importance of having a voice and a sense of belonging within university spaces.</i> <i>If elected, I hope to strengthen connections between Indigenous students, encourage greater involvement within our faculty, and advocate for culturally inclusive opportunities and resources. Through my own experiences navigating university as a first-generation student, along with my volunteer and community involvement, I have developed a strong appreciation for leadership, community, and supporting others. I hope to use this opportunity to uplift Indigenous student voices while contributing to a more inclusive and supportive BSW community for everyone.</i>	

Position	Black Students' Representative
<i>Candidate 1: Ester Olawumi</i> Blurb: <i>I'm interested in this positions because I identify as a black student. I want to create a more inclusive supported and connected environment for Black BSW students.If elected, my goal is to make Black students feel heard and represented especially when bringing forward their concerns .I would also like to create more opportunities for connection, community and meaningful conversations around the experiences of Black students in social work.</i>	
<i>Candidate 2: Winnifred Chimka Alex Ajikere</i> Blurb: <i>I am interested in this position because I want Black students in the BSW program to feel seen, heard, and comfortable being themselves. I want to help students connect with resources, opportunities, and support that they may not always know are available to them. I also want to help create a stronger sense of community within the Faculty, where Black students can connect with each other, feel supported and know that they belong. As a social work student, I believe in advocacy, inclusion, equity, and creating positive change. If elected, I hope to be someone students can come to with their concerns and feel comfortable speaking to. I also want to bring those concerns forward and advocate for a more inclusive and supportive BSW community.</i>	

Position	CASWE Student Delegate/Representative
<i>Candidate 1: Carie McIntosh</i> Blurb: <i>I am interested in the SWSA position of CASWE Student Delegate because I am interested in impacting how the Social Work program is delivered. Since January 2026, I have participated with the CASWE student committee and volunteered for their Green Caucus committee. The CASWE Student Committee advocates for students and validates their experiences in whatever program they are in. One of their initiatives this year is to develop Social Connections and Well-being activities for students across Canada.</i> <i>A personal goal for 2026-2027 is to advocate for paid practicum to support the student journey towards graduation and into the workforce. Personally, I applied for PLAR as an alternative to practicum due to financial obligations.</i> <i>An initiative that I would like to start is a virtual check-in group for Mature BSW Students (23+) as the current U of M group meets mostly in-person in Winnipeg.</i> <i>I have been on the SWSA executive in 2024-2025, 2025-2026, and 2026-2027 as a Distance Representative. It has been an amazing learning opportunity and a supportive environment to meet other students, learn about how the University works, and discover opportunities.</i> <i>I am a strong candidate because I strive to attend meetings, listen to students, and share ideas to support our academic and professional journeys.</i>	

Candidate 2: Bobby Hasselstrom**Blurb:**

Hi everyone, my name is Bobby (they/them). I'm in my final year of my BSW in the Fort Garry program, but I take classes at the Inner City campus as well. I have been the CASWE Student Representative and Delegate for about a year and a half, where I have had the honour and privilege to connect with students and faculty at schools across Canada, and represent our students through CASWE's Student Committee and attending CASWE's annual general meetings and conferences. I am now also involved with CASWE's Queer Caucus and Disability Caucus. I have two other SWSA positions already and I would like other students to have the chance to be in this role and attend CASWE's conference and AGM (there can be two CASWE Representatives, one of whom will also be the faculty's Student Delegate to vote on behalf of students at the AGM). But I am running again just in case two other students do not, to ensure the role is filled so our students' voices can be heard in the upcoming revisions to CASWE's accreditation standards (which regulate our social work programs and curriculums).

Position**First Year Regular Representative****Candidate 1: Alyssa Neufeld****Blurb:**

I, Alyssa Haley, am excited about the possibility of joining the SWSA as the First Year Regular Representative. Advocacy and community building are only a few of my interests, which align with the work done by the SWSA. I genuinely care about creating and a safe and inclusive community for all of my peers. If chosen to serve as the First Year Regular Representative, I intend to advocate for rural students, improved student supports and programming that will equip students with skills that are relevant and necessary to succeed in the profession. My work on the youth panel through the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the past 2+ years has granted me knowledge of various social factors that affect Manitobans, including mental health, disabilities, youth justice, adoption, foster care, and more! Additionally, I am committed to using my personal lived experience(s), which have influenced how I see individuals and communities for good. Overall, I promise to advocate for equity, accessibility, and use my power to provide a voice for marginalized people(s)!

Candidate 2: Santiago Greico**Blurb:**

Hi I'm Santiago or Santi for short. I am someone who has gone through the first year already I understand the stresses and anxiety that it may come with.

I'm interested in this position because with a previous diploma in another education institution, I understand the steps to become an efficient student, but I would love to give back to help others understand or learn how to become the best version of themselves in the field of social work.

With four years experience of working in the field, I know the ins and outs, but stay humble as you keep on learning.

My goals if elected.

- Social Work Screening (figure out what type of social work you'd be interested in)

- Community Agencies resource binders for all BSW students
- Transparency
- Opportunities for Peer Support amongst other students (forum or questions page)
- Loyalty
- Help gather resources for experience

Candidate 3: Ryan Matthew Peter

Blurb:

"I am interested in becoming the First Year Regular Representative because being new to something is difficult for anyone, and I want to help create an environment that is both welcoming and informative. If I can make even one person feel safe and comfortable within our faculty, I will have achieved my goal.

I have many goals regarding first-year students, but inclusivity and demystification are my main priorities. It can feel daunting to attend classes or participate in events as someone new to a faculty, so I will do my best to emphasize low-stakes, easily accessible events and programs that are both interesting and reasonable to participate in. Additionally, I want to make all of our events, classes, and meetings more understandable for first-year students. This means using more accessible language, clearly describing the purpose of our events, and ensuring that programs are understandable for all levels of students rather than only upper-year students.

I am a strong candidate because of both my experience and my attitude. Through my history of running clubs and organizing events, I understand what changes need to be made to make social work more accessible to new students. I am also skilled at hearing and applying the needs of my fellow first-year students, which will allow me to be a strong voice for them. I will speak confidently and consistently to ensure that our year is always respected and represented."

Position	Accessibility Representative
<i>Candidate 1: Sarah Hanslip</i> Blurb: <i>Hi, my name is Sarah! I am a third-year university student in my first year of the BSW program, and I am excited to run for the SWSA Accessibility Representative position.</i> <i>As a visually impaired and chronically ill student, I have firsthand experience navigating the complex process of finding proper accommodations. These personal ups and downs have inspired my future career goal to work as a social worker within school divisions or directly with children with disabilities.</i> <i>If elected, my main goal is to advocate for a more inclusive environment and remove systemic barriers for both current BSW students and incoming applicants. I am passionate about using my personal insight and dedication to ensure every student receives the accessible, barrier-free support they deserve. I would be honoured to serve as your voice and representative!</i>	

Candidate 2: Harsimran Nijjar

Blurb:

Why are you interested in this SWSA position?

I am interested in serving on the Social Work Students' Association because I want to be more involved in the Faculty of Social Work community and contribute to creating a positive and supportive experience for students. SWSA provides an opportunity to advocate for student needs, help organize events and initiatives, and ensure that student voices are represented in decision-making. I am passionate about social work values such as inclusion, advocacy, and community engagement, and I would like to help strengthen connections among students across all program streams.

What are your goals or initiatives if elected?

If elected, I would focus on:

Improving communication between SWSA and students so everyone is aware of opportunities, events, and resources.

Encouraging greater student participation and engagement, especially from students in different delivery sites and diverse backgrounds.

Promoting student wellness and peer support initiatives.

Advocating for student concerns and ensuring that all students feel heard and represented.

Supporting educational, professional development, and community-building opportunities that enhance the student experience.

What makes you a strong candidate?

I am a dedicated and approachable individual who is committed to helping others and contributing to a positive learning environment. My studies in social work have strengthened my communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills. I am organized, responsible, and willing to listen to different perspectives before making decisions. I believe my commitment to social work values, my desire to support fellow students, and my willingness to work collaboratively would allow me to be an effective representative and a valuable member of SWSA.

This response is broad enough to work for most SWSA positions and can be customized further if you tell me which specific position you're applying for (e.g., Secretary, Social Media Coordinator, Field Placement Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, etc.).

Candidate 3: Alyssa Neufled

Blurb:

I, Alyssa Haley, am excited about the possibility of joining the SWSA as the Accessibility Representative. Advocacy and community building are only a few of my interests, which align with the work done by the SWSA. I genuinely care about creating a safe and inclusive community for all of my peers. If chosen to serve as the Accessibility Representative, I intend to advocate for rural students, improved student supports and programming that will equip students with skills that are relevant and necessary to succeed in the profession. My work on the youth panel through the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the past 2+ years has granted me knowledge of various social factors that affect Manitobans, including mental health, disAbilities, youth justice, adoption, foster care, and more! Additionally, I am committed to using my personal lived experience(s), which have influenced how I see individuals and communities for good. Overall, I promise to advocate for equity, accessibility, and use my power to provide a voice for marginalized people(s)!

Position	Distance Students' Representative
Candidate 1: Harsimran Nijjar Blurb: <i>Why are you interested in this SWSA position?</i> <i>I am interested in serving on the Social Work Students' Association because I want to be more involved in the Faculty of Social Work community and contribute to creating a positive and supportive experience for students. SWSA provides an opportunity to advocate for student needs, help organize events and initiatives, and ensure that student voices are represented in decision-making. I am passionate about social work values such as inclusion, advocacy, and community engagement, and I would like to help strengthen connections among students across all program streams.</i> <i>What are your goals or initiatives if elected?</i> <i>If elected, I would focus on:</i> <i>Improving communication between SWSA and students so everyone is aware of opportunities, events, and resources.</i> <i>Encouraging greater student participation and engagement, especially from students in different delivery sites and diverse backgrounds.</i> <i>Promoting student wellness and peer support initiatives.</i> <i>Advocating for student concerns and ensuring that all students feel heard and represented.</i> <i>Supporting educational, professional development, and community-building opportunities that enhance the student experience.</i> <i>What makes you a strong candidate?</i> <i>I am a dedicated and approachable individual who is committed to helping others and contributing to a positive learning environment. My studies in social work have strengthened my communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills. I am organized, responsible, and willing to listen to different perspectives before making decisions. I believe my commitment to social work values, my desire to support fellow students, and my willingness to work collaboratively would allow me to be an effective representative and a valuable member of SWSA.</i> <i>This response is broad enough to work for most SWSA positions and can be customized further if you tell me which specific position you're applying for (e.g., Secretary, Social Media Coordinator, Field Placement Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, etc.).</i>	

Position	Field Placement Representative
Candidate 1: Harsimran Nijjar Blurb: <i>Why are you interested in this SWSA position?</i>	

I am interested in serving on the Social Work Students' Association because I want to be more involved in the Faculty of Social Work community and contribute to creating a positive and supportive experience for students. SWSA provides an opportunity to advocate for student needs, help organize events and initiatives, and ensure that student voices are represented in decision-making. I am passionate about social work values such as inclusion, advocacy, and community engagement, and I would like to help strengthen connections among students across all program streams.

What are your goals or initiatives if elected?

If elected, I would focus on:

Improving communication between SWSA and students so everyone is aware of opportunities, events, and resources.

Encouraging greater student participation and engagement, especially from students in different delivery sites and diverse backgrounds.

Promoting student wellness and peer support initiatives.

Advocating for student concerns and ensuring that all students feel heard and represented.

Supporting educational, professional development, and community-building opportunities that enhance the student experience.

What makes you a strong candidate?

I am a dedicated and approachable individual who is committed to helping others and contributing to a positive learning environment. My studies in social work have strengthened my communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills. I am organized, responsible, and willing to listen to different perspectives before making decisions. I believe my commitment to social work values, my desire to support fellow students, and my willingness to work collaboratively would allow me to be an effective representative and a valuable member of SWSA.

This response is broad enough to work for most SWSA positions and can be customized further if you tell me which specific position you're applying for (e.g., Secretary, Social Media Coordinator, Field Placement Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, etc.).

Position	Gender Equity Advocate
<i>Candidate 1: Alyssa Neufeld</i> Blurb: <i>I, Alyssa Haley, am excited about the possibility of joining the SWSA as the Gender Equity Advocate. Advocacy and community building are only a few of my interests, which align with the work done by the SWSA. I genuinely care about creating a safe and inclusive community for all of my peers. If chosen to serve as the Gender Equity Advocate, I intend to advocate for rural students, improved student supports and programming that will equip students with skills that are relevant and necessary to succeed in the profession. My work on the youth panel through the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the past 2+ years has granted me knowledge of various social factors that affect Manitobans, including mental health, disAbilities, youth justice, adoption, foster care, and more! Additionally, I am committed to using my personal lived experience(s), which have influenced how I see individuals and communities for good. Overall, I promise to advocate for equity, accessibility, and use my power to provide a voice for marginalized people(s)!</i>	

Candidate 2: Harsimran Nijjar

Blurb:

Why are you interested in this SWSA position?

I am interested in serving on the Social Work Students' Association because I want to be more involved in the Faculty of Social Work community and contribute to creating a positive and supportive experience for students. SWSA provides an opportunity to advocate for student needs, help organize events and initiatives, and ensure that student voices are represented in decision-making. I am passionate about social work values such as inclusion, advocacy, and community engagement, and I would like to help strengthen connections among students across all program streams.

What are your goals or initiatives if elected?

If elected, I would focus on:

Improving communication between SWSA and students so everyone is aware of opportunities, events, and resources.

Encouraging greater student participation and engagement, especially from students in different delivery sites and diverse backgrounds.

Promoting student wellness and peer support initiatives.

Advocating for student concerns and ensuring that all students feel heard and represented.

Supporting educational, professional development, and community-building opportunities that enhance the student experience.

What makes you a strong candidate?

I am a dedicated and approachable individual who is committed to helping others and contributing to a positive learning environment. My studies in social work have strengthened my communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills. I am organized, responsible, and willing to listen to different perspectives before making decisions. I believe my commitment to social work values, my desire to support fellow students, and my willingness to work collaboratively would allow me to be an effective representative and a valuable member of SWSA.

This response is broad enough to work for most SWSA positions and can be customized further if you tell me which specific position you're applying for (e.g., Secretary, Social Media Coordinator, Field Placement Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, etc.).

Position	Immigrant/Refugee Students' Representative
Candidate 1: Harsimran Nijjar Blurb: <i>Why are you interested in this SWSA position?</i> <i>I am interested in serving on the Social Work Students' Association because I want to be more involved in the Faculty of Social Work community and contribute to creating a positive and supportive experience for students. SWSA provides an opportunity to advocate for student needs, help organize events and initiatives, and ensure that student voices are represented in decision-making. I am passionate about social work values such as inclusion, advocacy, and community engagement, and I would like to help strengthen connections among students across all program streams.</i> <i>What are your goals or initiatives if elected?</i> <i>If elected, I would focus on:</i> <i>Improving communication between SWSA and students so everyone is aware of opportunities, events, and resources.</i> <i>Encouraging greater student participation and engagement, especially from students in different delivery sites and diverse backgrounds.</i> <i>Promoting student wellness and peer support initiatives.</i> <i>Advocating for student concerns and ensuring that all students feel heard and represented.</i> <i>Supporting educational, professional development, and community-building opportunities that enhance the student experience.</i> <i>What makes you a strong candidate?</i> <i>I am a dedicated and approachable individual who is committed to helping others and contributing to a positive learning environment. My studies in social work have strengthened my communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills. I am organized, responsible, and willing to listen to different perspectives before making decisions. I believe my commitment to social work values, my desire to support fellow students, and my willingness to work collaboratively would allow me to be an effective representative and a valuable member of SWSA.</i> <i>This response is broad enough to work for most SWSA positions and can be customized further if you tell me which specific position you're applying for (e.g., Secretary, Social Media Coordinator, Field Placement Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, etc.).</i>	

Position	Member at Large
<i>Candidate 1: Alyssa Neufeld</i> Blurb: <i>I, Alyssa Haley, am excited about the possibility of joining the SWSA as a Member at Large. Advocacy and community building are only a few of my interests, which align with the work done by the SWSA. I genuinely care about creating and a safe and inclusive community for all of my peers. If chosen to serve as a Member at Large, I intend to advocate for rural students, improved student supports and programming that will equip students with skills that are relevant and necessary to succeed in the profession. My work on the youth panel through the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the past 2+ years has granted me knowledge of various social factors that affect Manitobans, including mental health, disAbilities, youth justice, adoption, foster care, and more! Additionally, I am committed to using my personal lived experience(s), which have influenced how I see individuals and communities for good. Overall, I promise to advocate for equity, accessibility, and use my power to provide a voice for marginalized people(s)!</i>	
<i>Candidate 2: Aaliyah Olaniyi</i> Blurb: <i>Why I am interested in this SWSA position: As a BSW student, I want to contribute directly to our student community, help bridge communication between students and the association, and ensure everyone's concerns are heard and addressed.</i> <i>Goals or initiatives if elected: I aim to support overall student engagement, assist with organizing accessible events, and ensure transparent communication so all BSW students feel informed and included.</i> <i>What makes me a strong candidate: My experience as a support worker has sharpened my active listening, advocacy, and problem-solving skills, making me adaptable, approachable, and ready to step in wherever the student body needs support</i>	
<i>Candidate 3: Danielle Casavant Patterson</i> Blurb: <i>I would like to be a Member at Large to have a role on the board and with the happenings within the social work faculty and student association. I would like to be a part of an organization with my fellow social work students and I think this would be a great way to do so! As someone who hasn't had much experience with student associations I believe this would be a great way to get involved before I graduate!</i>	