



# OUTREACH TOOLKIT

ONTARIOSTUDENTVOICES.CA

# Introduction

Established on November 11th, 2022.

**Ontario Student Voices elevates and amplifies the voices of Ontario College and Polytechnic Students to the provincial level, ensuring their voice and lens is included in the conversations and decisions that impact them.**

To prepare for the needs of Ontario College and Polytechnic students today, tomorrow, and far into the future, student leaders from across Ontario began a strategic journey to create space for student leaders to gather, share best practices, and work together to tackle issues greater than any one College/Polytechnic Student or Student Government, in an effective, student-run, and transparent way.

We know that when more students band together with a united voice, advocacy efforts are not only more effective, but become impossible to ignore. To make this dream a reality - we have created an organisation built to be beneficial to small and large student governments alike, to ensure we can invite and include everyone to the table.

# Purpose of the Outreach Package

With the wide variety of geographical, budgetary, and social foundations in the mix, Ontario Student Voices is built to be **fair and valuable to all member organisations regardless of their individual circumstances.**

With this foundation in place, we hope to **attract the attention of current student governments to join our cause and amplify their student voices too.**

And now, it is the great pleasure of the Ontario Student Voices board of directors to **formally invite eligible student governments to join our team in the room where it happens, with the first membership intake opening for May 2023.**

While this outreach package gives an introduction and overview, more information, as well as our **official contact form can be found on our website** at:

[www.ontariostudentvoices.ca](http://www.ontariostudentvoices.ca)

# The History of Ontario Student Voices

## The Student Governance

Strengthening Implementation Committee is a collection of student leaders, first brought together by Colleges Ontario's Student Voices meetings in 2021, who identified a need to strengthen Ontario college student voices to be more effectively represented and included in the decisions that impact them.

After proving the worth of collaborative work and the benefits of sharing best practices, Colleges Ontario and the Student Voices group agreed that these continued efforts should be led by the students, and so planning began to prepare student leaders to create a formal means of collaboration at the provincial level.

To jump-start these efforts, Colleges

Ontario hired a research consultant with experience in post-secondary provincial advocacy to research options and connect with a sample of student associations to identify expectations for such an organisation.

After these findings were reported and discussed, and Colleges Ontario had given the group the tools needed to get started, the group of student leaders who had continued interest, time, resources, and the general means, banded together to explore and define an ideal framework for provincial advocacy, and began the process to bring it to life.

DATE	MEETING SUMMARY
April 6 2021	Colleges Ontario and student leaders from across the Province gathered to discuss the future of provincial advocacy.
June 14 2021	The group explored collaboration between student leaders, discussed best practices, and worked to understand where student leaders needed support the most.
September 13 2021	The group discussed student governance, good governance training, established possible shortfalls in governance at the student leader level, and explored possible supports.
February 10 2022	The group reviewed a research report prepared by Rylan Kinnon that investigated the state of provincial student advocacy at the time.
April 4th & 25 2022	The group, now gathered in person, created a foundational framework for providential student advocacy, and empowered a team of student leaders to create a basis of provincial advocacy from their foundational framework.

# Band-Aid Solutions

To offer an example of the **need for a formal and dedicated space to exist that is solely focused on provincial advocacy**, some context can be provided by reflecting on a **political landscape that existed early last year, which showcased the need for more formalised solutions**, as band-aids were no longer cutting it.

During the **Winter 2021 Term, Faculty work-to-rule was underway** and had college and polytechnic students not only suffering from the effects of the beginning stages of the negotiations, but had students, and their student leaders, **worried about possible escalation to a full faculty strike and the devastation it could cause in students' educational paths**.

**Student Governments across the province took to their emails, Word, and Google Documents to pen letters, some not even knowing who they were meant to address the letter to, or how to approach such a topic - when they, themselves, were still learning the ropes of provincial advocacy for the first time.**

A disorganized and strenuous effort on the part of these dedicated students' leaders led to a letter being sent to MP's encouraging them to do their part to help ensure students education would not be further impacted.

Thankfully, a walk-out strike never took place. This is a rather neutral ending to what could easily have been a much worse story.

**Without a dedicated provincial advocacy organisation, these student leaders had to put their home-student-association projects on hold, attempt to coordinate with individuals from external institutions they had never worked with before, delegate work when there was no clear ideal path, all while juggling different approaches and attempting to reach a consensus that would have a majority willing to add their signature to the letter.**

The need for a dedicated and effective advocacy body that worked not only reactively, but proactively, led entirely by the student voice, and with a focus on provincial-level advocacy, become quite clear through this process.

## Our Mission

To **engage college and polytechnic students** from across Ontario to connect, **develop and refine research-driven policy**, and to **amplify student voices** through advocacy at the provincial level.

## Our Vision

A **post secondary system** in Ontario that **priorities success, accessibility, affordability and quality** for all students - domestic and international.

## Our Values

Transparency

Inclusivity

Non-Partisan

Equitability

Pro-active

# What We Do

**1**

**We strive to provide effective advocacy for students in Ontario.**

**2**

**We bring student leaders together.**

**3**

**We are Student Run.**

**4**

**We strive to be a united and strong student voice.**

# Governance Structure

All Member Associations can nominate an elected student representative from their home association to the OSV board, and if there is only one nomination from a given college, they will automatically be approved to be a director!

If there are two candidates from one college (some colleges have more than one student association), one candidate will be chosen by the board to hold a director seat on behalf of both associations.

The board has a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary. All three board officers are elected at the first board meeting of the year, directly followed by ratification at the AGM.

Voting power is broken into two categories - board issues and members issues.

For board issues, votes are always weighted equally and a simple majority passes a motion.

For members issues, votes will be weighted to recognise the members that represent a larger number of students. Members votes are also subject to a double majority to ensure large institutions do not influence the vote unfairly based purely on their size.

This means that everyone's size is recognised and respected, and that fulsome, consensus-driven conversation will always remain the foundation that drives change in the industry.

## MEMBER VS. BOARD ISSUES

### Board Issues

- Long term Strategy
- Annual Strategy
- Approval of Budget
- Creation & Approval of Operational Policies
- Discipline/ Removal of college/ member associations
- Admitting member associations
- Designate responsibilities of officers
- Establish committees & working groups
- Overseeing Permanent staff

### Member Issues

- Approval of audit
- Establishment of auditor
- Approval of advocacy policy items
- Amending bylaws
- Appointment of officers to the board



# A Message from our Chair

**Sam Jemison, Chair**  
**Ontario Student Voices Board of Directors**

Ontario Student Voices was built with a commitment to embodying the values, needs, and lives of Ontario College and Polytechnic students in all it does, from a governance structure that is specifically tailored to empower, protect, and respect the student voice, to an operational foundation that allows for quick and proactive adaptation to an ever-changing political landscape that leaves no time for delay.

The development, design, and execution of the organisational framework has been led entirely by current student leaders representing a diverse set of students needs, and has set Ontario Student Voices on a path to be the most representative body of College and Polytechnic students in the Province.

On behalf of the board of Directors, we are proud of Ontario Student Voices' culture of commitment to students, and we look forward to approaching this new year with new student leaders at the helm.

"I have seen firsthand the work that Student Leaders, their teams, and our partners have done to create an organisation built to not only stand the test of time, but to usher students into an era where their voices are included at the tables and in the conversations that impact them in a way that cannot be ignored."

## Acknowledgements

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions of the people who who both helped to start, and worked tirelessly to create what is now Ontario Student Voices.

Foremost, we must thank those responsible for **concept and coordination of the initial idea**, most specifically, Colleges Ontario, the team that supported our first conversations, as well as Rylan Kinnon, who supported the process from start to finish.

The **Designer** of our logo, Areeb Shamsi, a Fanshawe student and chair of the FSU board.

Our **colleagues** from our home organisations, the staff, Managers, and ED's that supported our efforts and guided our shift from concept to reality have been so appreciated. We could not have managed without your talents and support.

And last but not least, our direct **contributors**, without students believing in the work we set out to do, it could not have been done. Thank you to all the student boards who invested in our mission through both direct funding, and in-kind donations. You made this happen, and we look forward to our continued efforts to prove its worth and ensure students lead us in all we do.

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