



Get to know University Councillor Katrina Samson:



BA'01, Bed'02, MA (Ottawa), PhD (Toronto); Oakville, ON; Head of School, Appleby College. Queen's University Council, Nominating Committee; Board Member, Fundraising Committee, Armagh; Member, Ontario College of Teachers. ASUS Orientation Committee '99; ASUS Head Gael '01; Member of Queen's Competitive Cheerleading Team 1997-2000. Volunteer with Halton Catholic District Schools, United Way, OW Hockey. Current term to 2022.

1. Why did you select Queen's University?

When I was 10, I attended a Highland Dancing summer camp at Queen's, and spent a few nights on campus, boarding in Victoria Hall. Queen's was the first place where highland dancing was cool – where people knew what it was. I fell in love with the campus, the location, and the sense of community. I begged my parents to buy me a Queen's University sweatshirt before we left for home. In the end, my decision to come to Queen's was based on the community experience promised, the opportunity for engagement and involvement, the immense pride and connection demonstrated by students and alumni, and the academic reputation. My first September on campus, residing in Gordon, I knew I'd found a new home and I never looked back.

2. Most memorable moment as a student?

While the moments I had during Orientation Week as Head Gael watching a new community come together were powerful and perhaps the most fun I've ever spent, my most memorable moment as a student happened on a trip to Toronto on Vanier Cup weekend. We were driving downtown having arrived to compete at (the then) Skydome in the National University Cheerleading Championships that occurred the same weekend and venue as the Vanier Cup. A few of us were in a van driving through the financial district and we saw a man walking down Bay St wearing an ArtSci '80 jacket. We opened the door to the van and shouted, "What's the sport of Kings?" and he immediately turned around, dropped what he was holding and shouted (with arm motions) "Queen's! Queen's! Queen's!" and finished the rest of the Oil Thigh with us before the light turned green and we drove on. I will never forget the randomness of that moment, but most of all the joy that came in that connection with a total stranger, bonded by this same passion for the school.

3. What is your job?

I am the Head of School at Appleby College, a 7-12 independent day/boarding school in Oakville, Ontario. As Head of School, I lead the faculty and academic programme at the College, working closely with the Principal and Board of Governors to provide both operational and strategic leadership and direction.

4. What's the best career advice you've ever received?

The best career advice I ever received was actually more life-advice. A mentor and friend once told me that "comparison is the death joy". Consciously shifting my focus away from what others are doing, to my own values, performance and impact has made me happier in my career and more focused on where I can make a positive difference.

5. What's the career highlight you're most proud of?

I don't think there is one career highlight, but rather I am most proud of the relationships I've built in my career. Those relationships are rooted in mutual respect, a high degree of confidence in the team we've built, the freedom and willingness to challenge one another, while also supporting one another. While not a directly career accomplishment, this past spring I successfully defended my doctoral dissertation; my research was focused on succession planning and leadership development. Earning a PhD while working full time and raising a family is something I am proud of, for sure.

6. How do you spend your free time?

I have four young children, so most of my free time is spent with our family. Since finishing my research, I've also really enjoyed reading for pleasure again (and reading from outside the academic journal genre!). While I don't get out to run as regularly as I once did, I relish any chance that I have to go for long runs.

7. What motivated you to stand for election for University Council?

I was approached by another councillor who suggested I consider standing for election. She shared her own experience on Council, the purpose and goals, and felt that my passion for Queen's, my professional experience and my continued engagement with the university, current students and alumni would fit this opportunity for further engagement. I'm grateful for her encouragement as I've enjoyed this engagement and the ambassadorial opportunities that are part of the role.

8. What are some of your most memorable milestones/accomplishments as a Councillor?

As part of the nominating committee, I've really enjoyed and have been pleased with the thoughtful work we have done contributing to some of the proposed bylaw changes that are up for discussion and voting at this year's AGM. Having an opportunity to work with fellow councillors on the committee, to work with members of the university secretariat office, and engage in thoughtful debate and discussion about the role of Council, succession planning and stability, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion has been rewarding. We really aimed to take a balanced approach, to listen and consider the feedback from councillors, trustees and staff members in some of the recent changes and projects, all with the goal of enabling councillors to have a positive and engaging role on Council, while contributing their expertise and insight to the university.

9. Your aspirations for being on University Council?

I have enjoyed getting to know and work with other councillors, learning from their experience and perspectives. I hope to continue and expand those opportunities.

10. Do you have any words of wisdom for incoming Councillors?

While it will be different this year as we cannot meet in person on campus, I encourage incoming councillors to take the time to meet one another and connect over our common commitment to Queen's.

Connect with [Katrina](#) on **LinkedIn**

