Get to know University Councillor Rico Garcia:

Born in Monterrey, Mexico, Rico moved to Canada in 2009 to attend Queen's and study Applied Economics and Global Development Studies.

At Queen’s, Rico was heavily involved in student government and had the privilege to serve in various student leadership positions, including: President of the Arts and Science Undergraduate Society (2011-2012), President of the Queen’s Student Alumni Association (2012-2013), and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Alma Mater Society (2013-2014).

A past recipient of the QUAA Outstanding Student Award and the Tricolour Award, Rico loves volunteering for Queen’s and is the current President of the Queen’s University Alumni Association.

Rico currently resides in Toronto, where he works as a consultant with McKinsey & Company. He also holds a Masters of Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

1. Why did you select Queen’s University?
Growing up in Monterrey, Mexico I had the privilege to attend an international school with many Canadian teachers – many of whom were Queen’s alumni. I also had the opportunity at an early age to travel to Canada to attend and eventually work at a summer camp in Tweed, Ontario (a small camp about an hour outside of Kingston). These experiences heavily exposed me to both Canada and Queen’s – allowing me to meet many Queen’s students and alumni who spoke very passionately about their time on campus. Committed to studying abroad, I decided to visit Kingston in what was a perfect summer day and immediately knew it was were I wanted to go.

2. Most memorable moment as a student?
There were many memorable moments as a student, but one of my favourite evenings was the QUAA Awards Gala in 2014. That evening was made special because my parents travelled from Mexico to attend the ceremony, and I had the chance to properly introduce them both to all of my friends and mentors on campus who had made my time at Queen’s so special. I’ll never forget dancing the night away at The Underground following the Awards ceremony.

3. What is your job?
I am currently an Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Company. Most of my work is focused on serving financial service institutions and public sector entities, especially in economic development such as foreign direct investment attraction, small business scaling, sector strategy, COVID response and relief efforts, and re-imagining economies.
4. **What’s the best career advice you’ve ever received?**
   It’s hard to pinpoint the best career advice I have received, but a neat lesson I learned from an old Professor is that “Leadership is the ability to disappoint people at a rate they can tolerate.” I think this is a very interesting framing on leadership, as it switches the perspective of a leader from someone all-inspiring that people want to follow to someone who is constantly challenging the status quo and is pushing a group towards new frontiers. After all, leadership is about moving people to an outcome, and that outcome is often not necessarily where the group wants to go on their own. To move them to that new goal therefore involves moving people away from their original vision, and thus slowly disappointing them along the way.

5. **What’s the career highlight you’re most proud of?**
   The nature of my job makes it difficult for me to share many specifics, but in this past year I am quite proud of having led a pro-bono project with McKinsey to help a Canadian non-profit focused on fighting anti-Black racism with the development of their overall strategy. Working alongside a passionate group of committed volunteers was an immense privilege, and it brought me a big sense of purpose and motivation during this challenging year.

6. **How do you spend your free time?**
   I spend a lot of my free time either enjoying the outdoors or watching sports. I personally love hiking, camping, canoeing, and running, so I’m always planning my next camping trip and/or training for a race. I also am an avid sports fan and enjoy cheering for the Denver Broncos, Toronto Raptors, and – as of late – following Formula 1.

7. **What motivated you to stand for election for University Council?**
   Unlike most Councillors, I am an ex-officio member of Council – which means I get to sit in on Council by virtue of my position as President of the Queen’s University Alumni Association. I’ll therefore speak to what motivated me to become the QUAA President. The answer is simple: I am passionate about building community and the QUAA is an organization uniquely positioned to bring thousands of our alumni from around the Globe closer to one another – maintaining that Queen’s spirit we are known for. I first became exposed to the work of the QUAA when I led the QSAA as a student, and my volunteering then led to my subsequent volunteering immediately following graduation. I’ve thus been a member of the QUAA Board for 6+ years, and now have the enormous privilege to lead the association.

8. **What are some of your most memorable milestones/accomplishments as a Councillor?**
   This past year I had the privilege to have served in two different committees that have and will continue to have a big impact in the future of the University. These committees were:

   - Advisory Committee to the Principal Regarding the Selection of a Candidate to Serve as Queen’s University’s 15th Chancellor
   - Macdonald Hall Building Name Consultation Advisory Committee to the Dean
Moving forward, I am excited to continue to make progress on EDII at Queen’s through important dialogues at University Council, the QUAA, and the External Relations Development Committee of the Board of Trustees.

9. Your aspirations for being on University Council?
   My aspiration with the QUAA is to get the organization to live up to its mission “to reach out and foster a lifelong association with Queen’s, to engage our members in the life and work of the University, and to serve the alumni community in all its diversity”.

   That last bit of the mission statement is quite powerful in my mind, as we need to make sure the QUAA is as inclusive as it can be and that our program offerings cater our alumni community in all its diversity. This past year has allowed me to realize how many of our own alumni did not have a positive experience as students, and I therefore want to make sure the QUAA can become more inclusive as a whole – allowing our fellow alumni who did not have the most positive experience on campus to find a welcoming community and re-engage with Queen’s in a meaningful way moving forward.

10. Do you have any words of wisdom for incoming Councillors?
   The University is at a critical junction, and we have a new Principal in the process of outlining a new vision for the organization. This strategic visioning exercise has been a consultative process to date, and I would encourage all incoming Councillors to quickly become familiarized with the materials that have resulted from this “Conversation”. I know Principal Deane is constantly looking for and is actively listening to feedback from the alumni community, so I encourage you all to form an opinion on the draft vision and share your thoughts / feedback with him and the rest of Council. You’ve joined Council at an exciting and critical time.

11. Anything else you would like to add/highlight?
   It’s been a pleasure to get to know many of you this past year, and I look forward to continuing to work with each one of you to make Queen’s an even better place. If you have any feedback on the work we do at the QUAA and/or have any ideas for collaboration opportunities, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I’m available via email at quaa.president@queensu.ca or via the LinkedIn link below.😊

Connect Rico on LinkedIn.

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION