Get to know University Councillor Anjali Helferty:

BSc(Hons)'06; University Council (2011-17); Residence Don (2005-06); AMS Social Issues Commissioner (2004-05); Queen's Musical Theatre Board (2004-05) and Stage Manager (2002-04). PhD'20 in Adult Education and Community Development at OISE, University of Toronto; MS'13 in Organizational Change Management from The New School, New York City. National Coordinator, Sierra Youth Coalition’s Sustainable Campuses program (2006-08); Acting Director, Energy Action Coalition (2009-2010); Interim Executive Director, Southern Energy Network (2011). Currently Toxics Campaigner and Operations Director at Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. Current term to 2021.

1. Why did you select Queen’s University?
I had moved to the US when I was 13 and didn’t really know anything about the Canadian university landscape – but my dad had gone to Queen’s and I had been doing the Oil Thigh with his Queen’s friends since I was a kid! I came to Queen’s with one of my cousins and was followed by two siblings and another six cousins in the next few years. I didn’t know much about Queen’s when I arrived – I had only visited campus on a freezing day in December when all the buildings were closed! Fortunately, it was more lively than that.

2. Most memorable moment as a student?
I used to stage manage for the musicals! Opening nights were always hectic but calling the lights up at the start of the show was magical and something I do not expect I will ever do again.

3. What is your job?
I work at the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. I run operations and campaign on toxics. Currently we’re focused on reform of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

4. What’s the best career advice you’ve ever received?
Greg McKellar, the former Information Officer at the AMS, once told me to stick to the commitments I made. I’m not sure it’s universally great advice but it has taken me in some interesting directions.
5. **What’s the career highlight you’re most proud of?**

On the academic side, I just completed a PhD focused on Indigenous solidarity in environmental spaces. It was a challenging experience and I’m proud to have made it to the other side.

In environmental spaces, I facilitated a 30-organization youth climate activist coalition through a substantial transition in funding and leadership.

6. **How do you spend your free time?**

Pre-pandemic I played cello in an amateur orchestra. I am a birth doula for friends, so attend a couple births each year. I like to bake and am part of a great baking community. I also just started doing work with Resource Movement promoting the creation of a wealth tax.

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

I have an interest in governance and systems and felt this would be a way that I could contribute to Queen’s in those areas.

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

I enjoyed the Committee work I engaged with as a Councillor, but ultimately it was the connections with other Councillors that I will remember as I enter my 10th year on Council.

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

There are opportunities to dig in as a Councillor if you choose to take them. You can be lightly involved if that’s what you have capacity for – I ultimately was not the most involved Councillor – but if you want to get the most out of this experience joining one of the standing committees is a great idea.

Connect with Anjali on LinkedIn.