Get to know University Councillor Tom Woodhall:

BSc(Eng)'06, BA'06, MSc(Eng)'08. Senior Associate at BA Group. Tom was active as a representative to the Engineering Society and the A.M.S., serving both as deputy speaker. A former Campus Bookstore (QUESSI) Director and Chair of Finance, Tom wrote for the Journal, competed on the engineering rugby team, and volunteered with outreach projects. As an SGPS member helped rewrite the society by-laws. Also a former Clark Hall Pub business manager, Tom worked for Science Quest and is the current Sci05 President. Current term to 2021.

1. **Why did you select Queen’s University?**

   I had several friends in high school who were older than me who selected Queen’s. As a result, I had a chance to visit campus a few times while I was in my last year of high school. I was very impressed by Kingston, the campus, and the people I met. Wanting to go into engineering and learning about the school’s reputation made it an easy pick. Although as a first-generation university student I had to convince my parents that leaving home to go to school was a good idea.

2. **Most memorable moment as a student?**

   I could say something cheesy like “running in student government elections” but really my highlight, every year, was working the Grease Pole during orientation week. As a SciCon I was always front and centre for one of the most stressful and most exciting days for any engineering student. We never had any serious injuries, and the event went smoothly (most of the time). Always a highlight of my year, no matter how hot or cold it was out.

3. **What is your job?**

   I’m a Senior Associate at a transportation planning and engineering firm in Toronto called BA Group. We’re an employee-owned company that works to improve how people get around in urban environments, be they by car, on foot, by bike, or on transit. I’ve worked at BA Group since graduating from Queen’s following my Masters program, which I think is a good sign it’s a great place to work.
4. **What’s the best career advice you’ve ever received?**

   People respond best when you ask them direct questions. It works with teams inside a company, it works with clients, and it works with the general public. It doesn’t matter if you’re sure of the answer you’ll get or not, other people typically respond well to direct questions.

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

   One of the things I continue to be most proud of was the first time I had to present evidence at the Ontario Municipal Board (which is a quasi-legal tribunal used to settle property and development disputes, since replaced by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal). It was a small project, but I was thoroughly prepared. Our team won the day, and the final decision was released on my birthday! It included a line from the presiding member that my testimony was helpful and instructive. I keep a copy of the member’s decision in my office to remind me that preparation pays off.

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

   Right now, mostly helping take care of my toddler-aged daughter. She consumes most of my non-working awake time. Under normal circumstances I like to play team sports (curling, soccer, and softball mostly).

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

   I knew a few people who had been elected Councillors and enjoyed going back to Kingston and keeping involved in the University. When I was first elected the Council was MUCH bigger and mostly less functional. I’ve since re-run as the organization has become more relevant and helpful to the University.

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

   I’ve had the pleasure of chairing a number of committees, including a subcommittee on alcohol use and misuse, which was challenging, but rewarding. Principal Woolf complimented the committee’s final report on its utility to him and the administration, which was a sign to me that we’d provided some value to Queen’s. I also very much enjoyed my time on the Executive Committee working to select the Distinguished Service Award recipients. It was lovely to read about how many people had such a positive impact on so many areas of the University.
9. Your aspirations for being on University Council?

I’ve had the great pleasure of being on University Council for quite a while. That’s allowed me to serve in many roles within the organization and, I hope, I’ve had an impact in that time. For the balance of my current term, I’d like to continue outreach to other alumni (such as the recent bookmark signing activity for new graduates) and promoting the good name of Queen’s to my various networks.

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

I would recommend getting involved in committees right away; there’s no reason to wait and ‘feel out’ what your role might be. Everyone on Council is bright and engaged and ready to help, there’s no need to wait until you’re deep into your term before making an impact. I would also recommend speaking with the Secretariat’s office early and often. They can be very helpful in finding you a place to use your talents.

Connect with Tom on LinkedIn.

[Flag of Queen's University]