Director of Student Services - Candidate Statement 2017 Election

My name is Jessica Wyatt, I recently moved to Victoria from St. John’s, Newfoundland to begin a PhD program in the Centre for Forest Biology. I completed a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology and a Master of Science in Aquaculture from Memorial University. As a Master student I was Chair of the Aquaculture Student Society from 2010 until 2012. Duties involved planning social events for students in the department as well as to organize fundraising events to support the society. I planned events including but not limited to hosting trivia nights at the Grad House, board game night, and themed pub crawls during various holiday seasons. Students in the Aquaculture program were spread over three different institutions in St. John’s. A major responsibility as chair was to maintain contact and a sense of community between all students and to act as a liaison for any issues or complaints the students may have had.

I love working with my community and have been an active volunteer with the Special Olympics (NL) and the Association for New Canadians since 2013. As a volunteer coach I work closely with children with learning disabilities helping them enjoy sports in an engaging, safe, and fun way. As an English language tutor I was able to help new refugees become more confident in their English language skills. In 2015 I began volunteering with the Association for New Canadians resettlement program where we prepared to welcome dozens of Syrian family refugees to our province. This involved picking families up from the airport, grocery shopping, helping families settle into their apartments, helping the parents understand their finances and how to rent an apartment, as well as tutoring English to adults and children. This was something I also involved my four-year-old daughter in as well as I believe it is important that everyone be involved in helping their community.

I believe maintaining a sense of community and togetherness is important since we as Grad students come from diverse backgrounds and work in diverse fields. One thing we all have in common is being a part of the Graduate Student Society. Grad student can be challenging, but it can also be fun. As Director of Services I would like to uphold the tried and tested Society events that we all enjoy. Being new to this province and University I also have many new and exciting ideas to expand on current events and have some fun while we pursue our higher education goals. I believe my previous experience as Aquaculture Student Society Chair and my dedication to volunteering make me an excellent candidate for the University of Victoria GSS Director of Services and I look forward to serving the Society.

Thank you for your time

Jessica L. Wyatt