



## 2020-2021 FACL BC BOARD OF DIRECTORS - NOMINATION STATEMENTS

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## **Director-at-Large**

### **Afifa Hashimi**

My name is Afifa Hashimi and I am an articling student at Moore Edgar Lyster LLP, a progressive law firm that specializes in union-side labour law, human rights, and administrative law. I am running for a FACL BC Director-at-Large position because as an Indian and Afghan Canadian (settler) woman in the legal profession, I'm deeply committed to FACL BC's mission of promoting equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian Canadian legal professionals and the wider community.

I have contributed to many initiatives as an active member of FACL BC's Mentorship Committee (since 2019) and Advocacy Committee (since early 2020). This includes assisting with our mentorship program, planning events, moderating a webinar for students, and contributing to resource lists and recent steps towards solidarity with Black communities.

I also engage in equity and anti-racism work beyond FACL BC. At UVic Law, I was the Law Students' Society Equity Representative, a member of the Equity and Diversity Committee, president of the Racialized Law Students Collective, and co-president of the Feminist Law Students' Association. I advocated for students, promoted equity, and organized anti-oppression initiatives. In March, I co-organized an event about perspectives of racialized people in law and I was interviewed by CBC Radio about the legal profession's lack of racial diversity. In these interviews, I discussed the need to eliminate barriers impacting racialized people in law and the importance of FACL BC's mentorship program.

I'm honoured to contribute to FACL BC's important work, and would love to contribute further as a board member. As a Director-at-Large, I would continue to advance FACL BC's mission. I intend to work on promoting anti-racism and equity for Asian people in our profession and society, building interracial solidarity, and strengthening connections between South and East Asian legal communities in BC. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Khalil Jessa**

I am an associate at Hakemi & Ridgedale LLP where I practice corporate, commercial, and securities litigation. Prior to law, I worked as a legislative assistant in the Senate of Canada where I developed legislation, wrote speeches and worked to advocate for minorities.

For the past two years, I have been a director-at-large of FACL and an active member of the advocacy committee. I am running for re-election and I hope that I can earn your vote with my commitment, experience and vision.

During my tenure, the advocacy committee has become one of the most active FACL committees but there's so much more that we can do. I am deeply committed to issues of diversity, inclusion, and equality.

This commitment has been on display on many occasions. Most recently, I hosted an event through FACL with BC's Attorney General on the topic of diversity on the bench. The event guided racialized minorities through the complex application process.

As a director-at-large, I hope to lead the advocacy committee and expand its ties to other organizations, create a broader and more inclusive pan-Asian membership and use that strength to affect policy changes in a manner that can greatly benefit society at large. It is important that we continue the momentum of the current period which has highlighted systemic racial inequality throughout Canada.

I also look to support long term projects such as the documentary initiative and the supportive relationships project which will highlight inequalities faced by the Asian legal community and explore the deep ties between Asian Canadians and Aboriginal communities respectively. I would also like to use this time where we are under social restrictions to find innovative ways to use technology to better serve our membership and provide value.

## **Jenson Leung**

I am a junior lawyer with a strong focus on employment and privacy law. I have been involved with FACL for over three years, including as a member of the Mentorship Committee for the past year, so hopefully some of you will recognize me :).

I love being involved with mentorship and outreach, which is a big part of why I am running to join the Board. During the past three years, FACL has made a massive impact on both my personal and professional interactions. Something I love about FACL is the meaningful relationships that I've been able to build; I count some of the people that I've met through FACL as friends/mentors, rather than just "connections". Throughout my career so far, my mentors have always just asked me to "pay it forward" and I feel that being part of the Board this year would be the perfect way to continue doing so.

I believe that I would be a strong contributor on the Board, given my diverse experiences. My volunteer experience includes previous involvement with the FACL mentorship committee, a Trial Lawyers Association planning committee, and running a Toastmasters club. I've also worked in a range of legal roles and practice areas, including with government, large regional firms and small boutiques, so I can bring in a broader range of insight into the legal market. Finally, I have experience marketing on social media and podcasts, which I believe will help continue expanding our outreach.

In my spare time, I love spending time with my dog (who some of you might have seen photos of), learning cocktail recipes, discovering restaurants and trying new activities.

Thank you for considering me for a Director-at-Large position on the FACL BC Board. I look forward to serving you all.

Best,

Jenson Leung, JD, CIPP/Ck

## **Rasmeet Mohar**

It is with excitement that I am writing to apply for FACL's Director-at-Large position. I am currently completing my articles at Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP and look forward to starting my legal career by giving back to an organization I truly believe in. I have been a member of FACL since my first year of law school and I have previously served as the 2018-2019 FACL Student Director at Peter A. Allard School of law. As a South Asian female from Singapore I have always been a big believer in fostering strong connections between lawyers and law students of all Asian backgrounds. When I was a Student Director I focused on establishing these connections by being an active member on FACL's mentorship committee, and continuously connecting FACL with other legal associations that represent minorities. My initiatives also included both organizing and hosting FACL's first mentorship mixer in collaboration with the South Asian Bar Association. As a Director-at-Large I am ready to take on a greater leadership role and plan to continue establishing connections with other minority groups for FACL. I plan to do this not only through the mentorship committee but by taking it a step further and championing causes that impact minority groups with the advocacy committee. As an articling student during the COVID-19 pandemic and the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement, the need to examine and dismantle unfairly oppressive structures within our community and especially the legal field has taken on greater significance. As a result, I would love the opportunity to give back to an organization that tirelessly works to break down barriers for not only the Asian community but all minority groups.

I look forward to actively contributing to FACL as its Director-at-Large. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Rasmeet Mohar  
Articled Student  
Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP

## **Fiona Wong**

My name is Fiona, and I am an articling student at McMillan LLP. I wish to run for a Director-at-Large position. In 2019/2020, I had the pleasure of serving on the Board as the Student Director for UVic Law, where I devoted most of my time to the Mentorship and Advocacy Committees. I helped with several initiatives of FACL BC, including:

- coordinating lawyer/student pairings for the mentorship program;
- co-drafting the recent statement against anti-Black racism;
- co-organizing the inaugural FACL BC event in Victoria, featuring Law Society Bencher Pinder K. Cheema, QC;
- liaising between FACL BC, the Victoria area representative, and students of the UVic Pan-Asian Law Society;
- co-organizing the student-led webinar on the effects of COVID-19 on law students and recent graduates;
- organizing the annual ladies' mentorship mixer (postponed);
- marketing and branding through managing the Facebook and Instagram pages; and
- representing FACL BC at the 2020 FACL Ontario Conference and Gala.

I am currently focusing on strengthening FACL's interracial solidarity by reaching out to local Black organizations and pushing FACL BC to be a better ally. I will also be the student representative to our advocacy documentary project, which is currently in the planning stages. If elected, I would like to explore the possibility of launching a podcast for FACL BC, as there is currently no such initiative on the west coast. I would also like to assist with expanding FACL BC's presence beyond Vancouver because it is important to have representation from other regions within the province.

I am incredibly proud of the advocacy work that FACL BC has done in the past year and wish to be more involved moving forward. I would appreciate your vote so that I can continue giving back to this growing organization and further advocate for the Asian-Canadian legal community. Thanks!

## **Fanda Wu**

I practice family law and estate litigation at Lindsay Kenney LLP. I've been a member of FACL BC since 2013, the same year I was called to the bar. I'm running for the director-at-large position.

FACL has made a significant impact on the legal profession, providing us with a forum to discuss issues and socialize with other like-minded Asian legal professionals, and advocating for Asian representation in both the bar and the bench, which has historically lacked diversity. Before the 1940s, people of Chinese descent were not allowed to become lawyers in BC. The first Chinese-Canadian federal judge was only appointed in 1990. Even now, there are only a handful of judges of Asian descent on the BC Supreme Court and none on the Court of Appeal. It was inspiring when FACL invited Madam Justice Shergill to speak at the 2019 FACL Gala. It is important for us to see others like us succeed in the legal profession.

Like many other lawyers who are first-generation immigrants, I'm the first in my family to become a lawyer. Not having those connections when I first started out my career made it difficult to feel like I was part of the legal community. That is where FACL made a difference. To see other Asian lawyers who faced similar challenges, such as being stereotyped as only a solicitor for Mandarin-speaking clients – while disheartening to hear how common this was, it was a relief to share and learn from each other's hardships. That is why I think FACL is such an important institution – for us to share our experiences, advocate for each other, mentor and be mentored by each other, and strengthen the Asian legal community. I hope to help FACL with this mission and get to know even more of you in the process.

## **Jim Wu**

My name is Jim Wu, I am an employment lawyer with Forte Law Corporation and this will be my third attempt running for the position of Director-at-Large – as they all say, third time is a charm!

If elected, my priorities will be in mentorship and advocacy for Asian-Canadian lawyers, which I believe go hand-in-hand. Asian-Canadians were not permitted to practice law in our Province until the 1950s. While this has produced a number of notable trailblazers in the legal profession, it has also left a deep chasm in professional mentorship and has formed a “bamboo ceiling” that limits Asian-Canadian lawyers from achieving the same level of professional recognition and achievement as their white counterparts.

In addition to having mentored three amazing FACL mentees, I am also a mentor for the Big Brothers program and the CBA. I am in turn mentored by several lawyers in my current employment law practice, many of which relationships I developed and maintained during my one-year operating my solo employment law practice. If elected, I would like to see FACL bring in speakers and develop more workshop offerings for FACL members on breaking the Bamboo ceiling.

As an employment lawyer working at a progressive law firm, our firm prides itself on finding ways to enact positive change in our community and in the legal profession. On that end, I have been delivering several webinars on EI, including one with FACL to make EI more accessible. Having seen the benefits of collaborating with other organizations for webinars over these last months, part of my mandate on the Board will be to explore opportunities for FACL to engage in outreach and expand strategic partnerships. As a suburban lawyer, I plan to further expand FACL’s presence outside of Vancouver. Thank you for your vote.

## **Secretary**

### **Brian Cheng**

I am a civil litigator at Owen Bird Law Corporation.

As a first-generation Asian Canadian lawyer, I believe that access to justice requires the bench and bar to reflect the mosaic of Canadian society. This is why FACL's mission — in promoting equity, justice, and opportunity for the Asian Canadian legal community — is one that resonates with me.

As secretary, I would bring governance and managerial experience to FACL. I was a past Deputy National Commissioner of Scouts Canada, a non-profit nationwide youth organization. Currently, I am a director-at-large of the Law Courts Inn.

I have been a persistent proponent of diversity as a means towards access to justice. To that end, my experiences include the following:

- I was a panelist at FACL's recent mentorship roundtable, where I had the opportunity to share my experiences with other Asian lawyers.
- I am a founding member of my firm's Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Involvement Committee.
- I am a volunteer lawyer for UBC's Law Students' Legal Advice Program and have supervised law students in criminal and civil matters.
- I am a volunteer courthouse clinician with Access Pro Bono.
- I have represented tenants as a volunteer for the residential tenancy clinic at the Superior Court in Seattle.
- I have presented programs for CLEBC and the CBA on various topics to assist other lawyers in broadening their practices.

When I am not busy practising law, I volunteer for search and rescue. I am a certified swiftwater technician (a rescue swimmer for operations in whitewater rapids) and an acting team leader for ground search teams.

I hope that my commitment to diversity, access to justice, and volunteerism will be assets to the FACL board. I humbly ask for your vote.

## **Area Representative - Kamloops**

### **Ruby Dhand**

My name is Ruby Dhand and I am writing to submit my nomination for Area Representative for FACL BC.

I am an Associate Professor at Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law. I work, advocate and research in Human Rights Law, Health Law, Disability Law, Mental Health Law and Community Lawyering. In particular, I have advocated on behalf of people from equity-seeking communities, particularly those with mental health disabilities and on behalf of sexual assault victims and survivors of domestic abuse. I have been part of test-case litigation teams on major cases at the Supreme Court of Canada and Federal Court of Canada.

I have been honoured to be part of FACL BC as the Area Representative because of my role working to promote FACL events (specifically within the Interior), to help increase equity, diversity and inclusion within the legal profession and increase access to justice in BC. With FACL BC, we hosted the first-ever “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion TRU Law Day” on March 6, 2020 at TRU Faculty of Law where over 150 law students, faculty, admin. and lawyers participated and supported the dialogue to address systemic discrimination and increase equity, diversity and inclusion within the legal profession. We were honoured to host 12 board members (who travelled to Kamloops) to join us for this incredible event.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

## **Area Representative - Victoria**

**Sarah Sohn**

Dear colleagues:

I am running to be the Victoria Area Representative for FACL BC.

When I was living in Vancouver and looking for an articling position, I always enjoyed the camaraderie and relatable perspectives on the legal profession that I found at FACL events. When I moved to Victoria for my articles, I missed the opportunity to connect with other legal professionals who self-identify as Asian Canadian.

I wanted to build a similar community in Victoria. In February of this year, I took the initiative and organized a FACL BC mixer aimed at practising lawyers in Victoria. At the event, three senior members of the Victoria legal community spoke about their experience practising in Victoria and their practice areas. The response from the attendees was overwhelmingly positive. I planned to host regular FACL BC events in Victoria going forward, but I put my plans for more in-person events on hold due to COVID-19. I've had encouragements and offers of support from many sources for growing FACL BC's presence in Victoria, and I fully expect to hold another event once it is safe to do so.

Another priority for me is bringing FACL BC's mentorship program to Victoria. Given the relatively low level of risk for COVID-19 on Vancouver Island, a one-on-one mentorship meeting (via zoom or otherwise) would be a great way to build a supportive professional network. I believe mentorship is a crucial part of career development, especially for underrepresented groups in the profession. I have personally benefitted from FACL BC's mentorship program and look forward to offering the experience to others in the Victoria legal community.

I look forward to contributing to the FACL BC Board as the Victoria Area Representative for the next term. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Sohn

## **Student Director (Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC)**

### **Shanna Gu**

My name is Shanna Gu, and I am a third-year student at the Peter A. Allard School of Law ("Allard"). I write to nominate myself for the Student Director position for UBC.

At the age of 14, I left home to study abroad on my own. After living in five different cities across North America, I had become used to being disconnected from the local community due to my frequent relocation. When I decided to move to BC for law school, I was eager to finally reunite with my family and make meaningful connections.

Like for many of you, joining FACL felt like coming home for me. Since my first Roundtable and Ladies' Social and through the mentorship program, FACL has been not only a significant professional resource but also a genuine community where I have and will continue to meet passionate people who share similar experiences and cultural identities.

Through FACL, I have met my closest friends and some of the most caring mentors who showed me the meaning of community. Since then, I have made it a priority to contribute by participating as a general member, volunteering, and hosting the 39th Annual Chinese Legal Community Banquet. In addition to taking a full-time course load, I worked as a legal advocate at Chimo Community Services to advance access to justice, especially for individuals with language barriers.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, I believe I can help FACL adapt to various uncertainties and make necessary changes to continue supporting this community. This Student Director position gives me an opportunity to give back to FACL at a critical time. Additionally, as with those before me, I hope to share my experiences with incoming students, further the mandate of FACL at Allard, and help grow the Asian legal community in BC.

## **Lily Le**

My name is Lily Le, and I am an incoming 2L student at the Allard School of Law. Being a daughter of immigrants, the idea of Canada being a meritocracy was instilled in me from a very young age—if I just work hard enough, I will succeed. When I was told that I would never become a successful lawyer because no one would take me seriously due to my gender and ethnicity, I simply laughed it off. I later realized there was more truth to that statement than I initially thought. Racialized minorities face many barriers in life and the workplace, one of which is having either a small/non-existent web of mentors to learn from and rely on.

Prior to applying to Allard, I attended an event where I met the (then) current FACL president who told me about FACL. My initial reaction to this description was actually one of shock—shock that there was an organization of individuals who not only recognized but was actively working to overcome barriers by way of mentorship, community involvement, and advocacy. Ultimately, what FACL promotes is equity and opportunity for Asian Canadians, and this is done by creating spaces to support and be in solidarity with one another in our endeavours. The encouragement I have received from just a few FACL mentors (even before entering Allard) is truly astounding. From discussing study methods, grades, career options, work-life balance, and so on, I would not be where I am now without all those insightful conversations. The support that I was given is what I wish to give to other students, which is why I am running for the Student Director position. I hope to give back and further support FACL's objectives by assisting with the fostering of meaningful connections between Allard students and FACL.

## **Student Director (Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law)**

### **Sandy Lun**

My name is Sandy Lun and I will be entering my third year of law school at Thompson Rivers University ("TRU Law"). Before law school, I was interested in immigration and refugee law as my parents came to Canada as refugees. Growing up with no lawyers among my family or friends, I initially had limited opportunities to learn about different areas within the legal field. FACL has given me the opportunity to learn about the multiplicity of opportunities in law and has also allowed me to establish rich and diverse new connections. Through the FACL mentorship program, I developed strong, mentoring relationships with Jessica Lo and Jim Wu who have given me endless encouragement, strength, and advice as I navigate my legal career.

FACL student members in the B.C. Interior face unique challenges in networking and attending workshops that would otherwise be available in urban areas. I am cognizant of this, and I would look forward to leveraging my relevant experience to this position. I am passionate and committed to implementing FACL's Vision for 2020: to act as an authoritative voice on diversity issues in B.C., connect with the legal business community, and expand FACL's presence in regions outside of Vancouver. Recently, I have been elected by the TRU Law student and faculty members to serve on the TRU Law Equity Committee. It would be an honour and privilege to serve as TRU Law Student Director for FACL, and in the position promote FACL's presence and incredible networking opportunities in the B.C. Interior, while also advocating for equity and diversity issues.

## **Student Director (University of Victoria Faculty of Law)**

### **Joannie Fu**

My name is Joannie and I am running to be this year's UVic Student Director. I am currently a 3L student at the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law. I obtained my Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto.

I have been a member of FACL BC since 1L and I worked closely with the past UVic Student Director in 2L during my time as the co-president of the UVic Pan-Asian Law Society. Most recently, I have been involved in an ongoing FACL Advocacy Committee initiative to strengthen interracial solidarity between racialized communities. I am interested in joining FACL BC's Board of Directors because of their commitment to promoting equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian Canadian legal professionals and the community.

Additionally, I am encouraged by the progress in FACL's advocacy and community initiatives and would like to contribute to this ongoing process of growth and development. I would contribute to this mission through my past experience serving as the Equity and Diversity Student Representative at UVic. In this position, I attended and contributed to regular Faculty committee meetings and helped with launching various initiatives that facilitate discussion around issues of equity and diversity. As a Student Director, I would be committed to promoting FACL BC's mission within the Faculty of Law at UVic. Furthermore, I would be committed to building strong relationships between Asian-identifying students at UVic and FACL BC, particularly through promoting FACL BC's mentorship program and various events. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Board. Thank you!

## **Jacqueline Louie**

My name is Jacqueline Louie and I am an incoming 2L at the University of Victoria running for Student Director. I am passionate about bringing an intersectional, anti-oppressive lens to government, public policy, and law. I am actively involved in the UVic Racialized Law Students Collective, the Faculty's Equity and Diversity Committee, and have professional experience at all three levels of government, including as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of State for Trade of British Columbia.

I first became involved with FACL BC the summer before beginning law school through events like Ladies Night, where I met many of the mentors who guided me through 1L. Over the past year I have been fortunate to join the Advocacy Committee, attend many other FACL events, and even co-moderate the recent Community Discussion on the Rise of Anti-Asian Discrimination.

I am running for Student Director to give back to this community for the many ways it has shown up for me, and also to continue the strong work FACL BC has done this year on social justice advocacy, supporting Asian-Canadian legal professionals and students through trying times, and speaking out publicly against issues of discrimination and prejudice.

If elected I hope to continue to build FACL BC's capacity and influence for advocacy on behalf of our membership as well as develop relationships of interracial solidarity with other organizations and communities.