



My name is Melissa Maharaj and I am running in the Spring Elections 2008-09 for an open seat as Union Council Representative.

I am an International student from Canada enrolled in first year law at the University of Leicester. I have already completed a Bachelor of Arts (06') where I majored in Sociology and Criminology at the University of Manitoba.

I have always been interested in student politics. During my first undergraduate degree, I participated quite actively in student council. I represented the Arts Student Body Council (2004-06) as a Senate Representative. Duties included acting as a liaison between the students for the Faculty of Arts and the Senate of the University of Manitoba. From my experience I learned a lot about the rules and procedures governing how a university operates.

My interests for running for a Union position arose from a greater need to learn more about student politics on a larger scale. Due to the fact that I formally represented a specific genre of students (Arts), I would like to broaden my horizons by increased representation of students on a macro level.

As a Union Council Representative, I will make it a priority to listen to students input and feedback of how we can improve the needs of the students attending the University of Leicester. After all, every student monetarily contributes to create a budget for the Student Union; therefore, the council could not be run without you! I am here to ensure that every paying student has their say in the way things are run from campaigns to nights out and other social events. I will focus on increasing student participation in the mechanics of an effectively operating Student Union.

More specifically, I take a strong interest in International students' needs, namely because I have first hand experience. I could act as a forefront for ensuring that International students have a responsive outlet for addressing any concerns or queries that affect their lives as students, here at the Uni. This could be done through hosting open forums ranging from various topics and issues of importance. For instance, something as basic as learning to navigate one's way around campus to contact information for support systems allocated to dealing with the move from home (and learning to cope with the whole adjustment process).

My ultimate aim is to help students feel more informed and comfortable with student democracy. I hope to work alongside fellow Union Council Reps. to combat ignorance and increase participation amongst all students enrolled and paying costs into the operations of the Student Union Council.

As a Union Council Representative, I would represent the voice of the students. I would take reasonable steps towards voicing concerns and work on rectifying matters in an effective way, while still helping to achieve the needs of all students. I look forward to representing you!