USC 101: A Brief Introduction

So... you are considering running in a USC election - that’s very exciting! Whether it be a councillor, faculty president, or president-at-large position, it’s always helpful to have a little background information about this complex organization so that you know what you’re getting yourself into. Without further ado, let’s get into the basics!

The Basics

The USC is an organization that is built for students and by students — and our mission is to enhance the educational experience of all undergraduate and professional students here at Western. We represent over 35,000 students across campus, including:

- Arts and Humanities
- Brescia University College
- Dentistry
- Education
- Engineering
- Information and Media Studies
- Health Science
- Medicine
- Huron University College
- Ivey School of Business
- Kings University College
- Law
- Music
- Science
- Social Science

Each year, student executives, alongside numerous full-time staff and part-time student leaders manage a $30 million budget and four operations, including: the Spoke, the Wave, the Purple Store, and Western Film. As such, the USC is one of the largest student governments in Canada and the largest non-profit organization in London.

Executive Team

Each year, students run or apply to fill six positions which will form the USC Executive. These positions include: the President, Vice President University Affairs, Vice President External...
Affairs, Vice President Student Support and Programming, Vice President Governance and Finance, and Vice President Communications and Public Affairs.

President
The President and CEO of the University Students’ Council is the main spokesperson for 35,000 undergraduate and professional students on campus. We like to describe them as the person you can always tap on the shoulder to chat about whatever issue may be on your mind. They oversee the complex responsibilities of the executive team and the organization at large — and work, year over year, to ensure that students at Western have the best student experience possible! The USC President is elected at-large by the student body during the USC election period.

Vice President University Affairs
The Vice President University Affairs is the expert on all things related to campus life. They conduct research, develop evidence-informed policies, and carry out advocacy to the university’s senior administrators on issues including: sexual and gender based violence, academics, equity and inclusion, and campus safety. The Vice President University Affairs is elected by the USC Council during the USC’s Annual General Meeting in March.

Vice President External Affairs
The Vice President External Affairs knows the ins and outs of all levels of government, including municipal, provincial, and federal. Much like the Vice President University Affairs, they are focussed on researching, writing, and lobbying for policies that will improve student life, including: student financial aid, work integrated learning, housing, and transit. The Vice President External Affairs is elected by the USC Council during the USC’s Annual General Meeting in March.

Vice President Student Support and Programming
The Vice President Student Support and Programming is focussed on improving your student experience. They oversee large scale events, such Orientation Week and PurpleFest, while managing student support networks like Food Support Services and the Peer Support Centre. The Vice President Student Support and Programming is hired by a USC hiring panel. Applications and interviews are conducted in February and March each year.

Vice President Governance and Finance
The Vice President Governance and Finance is responsible for managing a $30 million budget, while ensuring that the USC’s expansive policies continue serving the student community. Additionally, they oversee the USC’s complex clubs system, totalling over 200 student organizations. The Vice President Governance and Finance is hired by a USC hiring panel. Applications and interviews are conducted in February and March each year.
**Vice President Communications and Public Affairs**

The Vice President Communications and Public Affairs keeps students in the know about all things Western. They oversee the organization’s corporate communications strategy, including digital engagement, branding and campaigns, while managing the organization’s political strategies through media engagements, community relations, and crisis management. The Vice President Communications and Public Affairs is hired by a USC hiring panel. Applications and interviews are conducted in February and March each year.

Want to learn more about the executive team? Schedule a chat with any of the executives by sending an email to info@westernusc.ca.

**Council**

Council is the USC’s legislative body, where elected representatives from each faculty, affiliate, and professional school can put forth, debate, and carry out motions to improve student life. Each month, Councillors come together to discuss advocacy topics including: gender based violence, equity and inclusion, work integrated learning, and safe spaces.

Together, USC Council: (a) represents the interest of Western’s undergraduate and professional students, (b) establishes terms of reference and methods of accountability for the executive officers, (c) approves the USC’s strategic plans, roadmaps, and budget submissions, and (d) appoints committees, task forces, and advisory boards.

Each Councillor is elected by the student body of their respective faculty, affiliate, or professional program during the USC election period. If you are interested in learning more about the USC Council, visit westernusc.ca/council.

**Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors oversees the corporate side of the USC. Each year, they assess the organization’s financial practices, approve a $30 million budget, and assess any financial risks that may exist. They also play an important role in the development of the strategic plan, as well as review human resources and governance practices.

The Board of Directors hires students whenever positions are opened and applications will be posted on the USC Opportunities webpage. To learn more about the board, visit westernusc.ca/board-of-directors.

**Peer Programs**
The Peer Programs are the USC’s equity-based networks, which aim to develop events, campaigns, research, and advocacy positions to forward diversity and inclusion within the organization and across Western’s campus. The Peer Programs examines students’ issues through an intersectional lens and aim to provide a safe space for students of all backgrounds to build a community.

The Peer Programs network includes:

- Accessibility Committee
- Allyship Network
- Ethnocultural Support Services
- Gender Equality Network
- Indigenous Relations
- International Student Support
- PrideWestern

**Peer Support**

Peer Support aims to provide support for students in every sphere of their wellness journey. The Peer Support team oversees the Peer Support Centre, which provides confidential, peer-based support to students, and further provides Remote Peer Support for students, as well as Food Support Services, our on-campus food bank.

Further, the Peer Support Network manages Health Promotions, which provides events and services that address all aspects of health and wellness, including financial, physical, emotional, social, environmental, sexual, and spiritual wellness.

**Programming**

The USC Programming Network provides students with the opportunity to engage in initiatives, attend events, and discover their passions outside of the classroom. The Programming team ideates and executes some of the organization’s largest events, while overseeing committees including:

- EnviroWestern
- Early Outreach
- Charity
- Public Arts Commission
- Theatre Western
I know... it’s a lot! The USC is more complex than meets the eye, but it is one of the most innovative, adaptable, and inspiring organizations that one can be a part of. If you are still a little confused after reading this brief, know that there is always someone around that is happy to chat — send us an email at info@westernusc.ca and we can set something up.

Best of luck in your upcoming USC Election - you got this!