

The Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG)-Carleton Board of Directors Nomination Package

About OPIRG-Carleton

Mission Statement

OPIRG-Carleton is a campus-based not-for-profit organization that works to create and sustain student and community-based engagement through research, education, and action on social justice and environmental issues. OPIRG-Carleton uses an anti-oppression framework, consensus-based decision making processes, operates in a non-hierarchical setting, and supports multiple working groups struggling for social change.

Some OPIRG-Carleton History

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) were initiated by American consumer activist Ralph Nader during the early seventies, as he encouraged students on university campuses in the United States and Canada to create campus-based organizations that could facilitate the teaching and use of activist skills by students. Currently, there are PIRGs at university campuses in most provinces. The PIRG in Carleton was formally created by students in 1980 through a campus-wide referendum. OPIRG-Carleton is an autonomous member of Ontario PIRG, a provincial network of 11 PIRGS.

Over the years, OPIRG-Carleton has grown into an established organization that provides students with a dynamic place to apply their knowledge, passions and energy to address issues of public concern, while benefiting from training, support, and real opportunities that build leadership skills and empower students to become active citizens.

OPIRG-Carleton Membership

OPIRG-Carleton is a campus and community-oriented incorporated non-profit organization that receives its core funding from a refundable levy that is paid by all undergraduate and graduate students at Carleton University. OPIRG-Carleton is autonomous from Carleton University, the Carleton University Students' Association, the Graduate Students' Association, as well as the PIRG network.

After paying their student levy fees, all students are members of OPIRG-Carleton. We realize that not everyone believes in the values of OPIRG-Carleton. Therefore, we allow students the ability to request a levy refund, despite a 2004 referendum vote making all student fees non-refundable.

Volunteers

Volunteers are involved at all levels of OPIRG-Carleton, from Board Members, Working Group members, practicum/intern/co-op students, researchers, general volunteers and supporters, and more!

Consensus Decision-Making

OPIRG-Carleton aims to be a non-hierarchical, inclusive and democratic organization. As part of this goal, OPIRG uses consensus-based decision making which allows for the full and active participation of all group members. Instead of working by majority rule, consensus is a philosophy that works to include everyone's input into decision making processes and encourages all participants to speak up, as well as take part in active listening.

OPIRG Projects

OPIRG-Carleton has a number of ongoing campus and community-oriented resources and services (Bursaries, Radical Frosh, Free Store, Equipment loans, organizing and meeting space, supplies, and support to network and organize), student-led initiatives (eg. Working Groups, OPIRG Roots radio show; historically: Oxbow Park naturalization project, recycling, Garden Spot, anti-racism, etc.), educational initiatives (Colloquium Speaker Series, Tools for Change Workshop Series, Training, Resource Centre) and organizes and supports events on campus and in the community.

For more details on OPIRG's work and current projects and events, visit www.opirgcarleton.org.

More details on the Board of Directors

What Does the OPIRG Board Do?

The OPIRG Board of Directors is comprised of 5-9 individuals with 2/3 of the members being Carleton University students. Faculty, community members, and former staff/interns/volunteers/researchers are also encouraged to apply.

To qualify as a member of the Board, the nominee must be a member who is at least 18 or more years of age, in good standing of the Corporation, and is an active volunteer for OPIRG or a similar organization for at least eight months.

OPIRG-Carleton works as a non-hierarchical organization and makes decisions by consensus.

The role of the OPIRG Board is to:

- Support OPIRG's projects and support the work of the Working Groups and Portfolio areas;
- Be part of the planning, visioning, and setting of priorities for the organization;
- Be responsible for the organization as defined by the Corporations Act, OPIRG bylaws and policies, and the Board Contract;
- Be the employer as defined by the Collective Agreement with CUPE 1281;
- Work collectively with the staff to oversee the work of the organization.

Board Members cannot receive any remuneration for their work with OPIRG.

No experience is necessary to join the Board of Directors, but some skills and experiences are considered to be assets:

- Ability to work well and communicate within a volunteer-based, grassroots, non-profit setting;
- Experience with consensus decision-making;

- Experience with drafting policies;
- Conflict resolution skills;
- Experience working with student and/or community groups.

You Can Gain Skills!

Many skills can be gained or improved through your participation on the Board. These include:

- Consensus decision-making skills;
- Successful meeting facilitation skills;
- Administrative and computer skills;
- Education on various social and environmental justice issues;
- Non-profit organizational skills;
- Financial management skills;
- Anti-Oppression skills;
- Leadership skills;
- Program coordination skills and project development skills.

Prioritizing Diversity at OPIRG-Carleton

OPIRG-Carleton constantly strives towards diversifying the Board of Directors. We encourage people from under-represented groups, as well as people with a strong anti-oppression analysis, to put forth a nomination. These include, but are not limited to, women, people of colour, people with disabilities, queer and trans folk, and others who face systemic barriers.

How Much Time is Required?

The Board of Directors requires a time commitment, which sometimes varies from week to week, but generally looks like:

- Minimum of 2 hours a week in service of the organization to take place in the OPIRG office;
- 2 years commitment to the Board;
- One 2 hour meeting or training every other week (must be able to stick to a 'fixed' meeting schedule, which changes at the beginning of every semester);
- Participation in Board Portfolios.

Portfolio Work

Portfolios are part of the ongoing work of each Board Member. Some examples include: Finance, Hiring, Staff Relations, Resource Centre, Policy, Campus Relations, Volunteer Coordination, Outreach, Ontario PIRG Board, etc.

Other Board Responsibilities

Fiduciary Duties:

- Skill: In carrying out their obligations, Board Members are expected to use an appropriate degree of skill and professionalism in order to make competent decisions on behalf of the organization.
- Diligence: Board Members are expected to attend meetings and to become as fully informed as possible regarding all aspects of operations, including any issues that affect OPIRG-Carleton.
- Board Members must act with honesty and in good faith in what they reasonably

believe to be the best interests of OPIRG-Carleton. Board Members must act with commitment to OPIRG Carleton's mandate and values at all times, including:

- disclosing benefits and threats to the organization;
- not placing themselves in a situation where their duty as a Board Member conflicts with their interest or with their duty to others;
- not profiting in any way from their relationship with the organization and not entering into contracts with it;
- maintaining confidentiality regarding Board discussions and the internal workings of the organization.

Furthermore, OPIRG-Carleton Board Members are expected to communicate respectfully with each other, staff members, volunteers, OPIRG general members and the greater community. They are expected to represent OPIRG-Carleton in a fair and accurate manner at all times, and clearly distinguish their own opinions from those of OPIRG. Board Members are not to express opinions on behalf of the organization unless specifically given leave to do so. This includes identifying yourself as a Board member to the media on an issue/event unrelated to the work of OPIRG-Carleton.

Once you become a Board Member, you are also responsible for the following:

- Abiding by OPIRG-Carleton's constitution and bylaws, policies, and the Collective Agreement signed with OPIRG's unionized staff;
- Fulfilling your portfolio responsibilities;
- Preparing for meetings, which means being aware of the agenda, reading and responding to correspondence in a timely fashion, and preparing for the meeting ahead of time;
- Communicating reasons for meeting absences and giving adequate notice (a member of the Board who is absent from any three consecutive Board meetings without eight hours prior notice will be removed from the Board as per OPIRG-Carleton's bylaws);
- Acting in accordance with the principles of consensus decision-making;
- Acting in accordance with anti-oppression principles (working against such things as racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, transphobia, colonialism, etc.).

You are also required to be familiar with OPIRG-Carleton's:

- Working Groups, Projects, and Committees;
- Mission Statement;
- Collective Agreement;
- Bylaws;
- Budget and Financial Statements;
- Policy Package.

Nomination & Election of OPIRG Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Overview:

If you are interested in being on the OPIRG-Carleton Board, you will need to fill out a nomination form and submit a hard copy to the OPIRG office (326 UniCentre) and electronically to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) at opirgcarletonelection@gmail.com (please cc: OPIRG staff at vcopirg@gmail.com) by March 19, 2013, by 5:00pm.

Nomination Eligibility

- In order to be eligible to be an OPIRG-Carleton Board Member, nominees must be active social justice volunteers and current members in good standing of OPIRG-Carleton.
- Members in good standing fall into two categories:
 - Student member: Carleton University student who has paid the OPIRG-Carleton levy fee and who has not received a levy refund;
 - Community member: anyone who is not a student at Carleton University but has paid the OPIRG-Carleton fee as determined by the Board as laid out in the bylaws (e.g. is active in a Working Group or similar social justice-oriented organization);
- Acceptance of a nomination by the CEO does not guarantee the eligibility of a candidate. If, at a later point in time, a candidate is found to be ineligible, that candidate will be disqualified.

2013 ELECTION TIMELINE

Nominations Open: March 5th, 2013 – 3 weeks prior to the election date

- Nominations packages will be available on the OPIRG-Carleton website (www.opirgcarleton.org) and in the OPIRG office, 326 UniCentre.
- You will need to get signatures of 15 members (levy paying students or community members in good standing) and answer some questions about why you want to be on the Board. You must sign your nomination form.

Nomination interview with two current Board members during period in which nomination forms are being accepted

- If you are interested in being on the Board, you need to set up a meeting with two existing members of the OPIRG-Carleton Board of Directors. **This meeting is mandatory for all candidates.** Other meetings may be called by the CEO as needed. (If two Board Members are not available, a special resolution may be passed for the Board to appoint only one Board Member to conduct the interviews.)
- Meetings times and locations will vary according to the availability of existing Board Members. During this meeting the current Board Members will clarify election procedures and requirements, discuss OPIRG Board responsibilities and time commitment, and other information.

- The two existing Board Members shall interview applicants and choose appointees based on the following qualifications:
 - Parity of the Board (OPIRG-Carleton strives to ensure broad and adequate representation of historically marginalized groups on the Board);
 - Demonstrated commitment to the mission of the organization;
 - Whether minimum requirements for student membership on the Board have been reached.

Nominations Close: March 19th – one week prior to elections

- A printed copy of the nomination form and the nomination questions must be submitted to the OPIRG office (hard copy), the CEO (electronic copy), and to OPIRG staff (electronic copy) by March 19th @ 5pm in order to be considered for eligibility;
- Nominations will *not* be accepted after 5:00pm;
- Extension of Nomination Period is possible only by special Board resolution with the consent of the CEO;

Campaigning

- No candidates will be permitted to produce their own posters or promotional materials (including leaflets, banners, and others).
- The use of email or other methods (including websites, Facebook, blogs and Twitter) to promote individual candidates is prohibited. Any person, including candidates, may use these electronic means to promote the election in general, including providing a link to the OPIRG website where more information on each of the candidates will be available.
- Candidates' answers to a set of standard questions will be available to members (see attached Nomination form for questions). The CEO and OPIRG representatives may post candidates' bios and answers to these questions on the OPIRG website and/or display them outside the OPIRG office and/or in other locations deemed appropriate.
- Candidates in breach of any of the outlined rules or guidelines will be subject to disqualification and/or alternate consequences deemed appropriate by the CEO.

Elections: Date and Location

- Applicants must attend the AGM of OPIRG-Carleton where elections will take place.
- Information provided by the applicants (in the nomination package) will be made available to those in attendance at the AGM. Order of appearance of candidates' information will be chosen at random.
- Applicants are required to introduce themselves to the membership, explain what experience they would bring to the Board of Directors, and describe why they should be elected to sit as a Board Member.
- Voting shall be by secret ballot. (Election of Board Members is one of the rare occasions OPIRG does not use consensus).
- Each member of OPIRG-Carleton shall have one ballot.
- Each member of OPIRG-Carleton shall be entitled to vote for as many Directors as are to be elected. If there are more candidates than there are open Board positions (ie. there are 5 open board positions and 9 candidates running), members shall vote for a maximum of 5 candidates.

- The CEO will count ballots.
- The number of votes received by each candidate will not usually be publicized. The CEO, the Board, and the Candidates shall see the full voting results in order to ensure the election was properly counted, and any candidate may call for one recount before the announcement of the results. The names of elected candidates shall be announced in alphabetic or random order, and the election shall be declared closed.

Results:

The CEO will announce the results of the election in prominent places within two weeks of the AGM.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Chief Electoral Officer: opirgcarletonelection@gmail.com.

Please cc: vcopirg@gmail.com on all electronic correspondence.

OPIRG-Carleton Board of Directors Nomination Form

Deadline for nominations is March 19th, 2013, at 5:00pm. For details regarding the nomination process or the eligibility criteria, please refer to OPIRG-Carleton's Nomination Package (the first seven pages of this package).

For more information or further questions, please contact the Chief Electoral Officer at opirgcarletoelection@gmail.com and cc: vcopirg@gmail.com.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Student number (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I have read and understand OPIRG-Carleton's mission, values and the responsibilities of being a Board Member.

I agree to abide by these and wish to put myself forth as a nominee for the Board.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Have you read OPIRG's nomination package in its entirety?

Yes No

Do you agree with and commit to abiding by OPIRG's values, policies and mission statement?

Yes No

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please submit the below information with your name and contact information to the Chief Electoral Officer at opirgcarletoelection@gmail.com. Please cc all correspondence to vcopirg@gmail.com and submit a printed and signed copy to the OPIRG office (326 UniCentre).

Questions distributed at AGM to inform voters (may also be posted on OPIRG website):

Why do you want to be a Board Member of OPIRG-Carleton? (max. 150 words)

What plans do you have for your term on the OPIRG Board? (max. 150 words)

What do you understand social and environmental justice to be? (max. 150 words)

What social and environmental justice issues are you passionate about? (max. 150 words)

What life experiences do you have that will contribute to your work as a Board Member of OPIRG and the diversity of the organization? (max. 150 words)

Please also submit a candidate statement for use in election materials (200 words max)

Nomination Signatures

Nominees must submit to OPIRG the name, student number (where applicable), and signatures of 15 members in good standing approving their nomination.

With my signature below, I declare my nomination for the OPIRG-Carleton Board of Directors

[candidate name] _____

[candidate signature] _____

I further certify that my membership in OPIRG-Carleton is in good standing. For more information on what it means to be in good standing please see the Nomination Eligibility section of the OPIRG-Carleton Nomination Package.

Name	Student Number	Signature
1)	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____
4)	_____	_____
5)	_____	_____
6)	_____	_____
7)	_____	_____
8)	_____	_____
9)	_____	_____
10)	_____	_____
11)	_____	_____
12)	_____	_____
13)	_____	_____
14)	_____	_____
15)	_____	_____