



Irene Thompson

CHAIR

Irene Thompson has worked in post-secondary education sector for over 37 years and recently retired from the University of Guelph, where her last role was Vice-Provost, Student Affairs (Interim). Irene enjoys working with young adults and supporting their personal, academic, and social development. She oversaw a residence community of 4700 undergraduate students, two family housing complexes and 300 staff. Irene has served on many University related committees including those examining issues around substance use, mental health, and wellness.

Irene has held many leadership positions on campus, in the community and professionally. She is currently a member of the University of Guelph Board of Governors. She is active with the United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin Campaign Cabinet and has recently retired as a member of the Board of Directors. Irene is a Facilitator of the Mental Health First Aid course and regularly trains staff, faculty, and students from the University.

Irene is Chair of the Board Governance Committee and sits on the Executive Committee.



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Kathy Markowiak

TREASURER

Kathy Markowiak is a senior Human Resources executive with 20 years of experience in all aspects of HR and more than 25 years in leadership positions. Kathy has expertise in strategic planning, facilitation, leadership development, coaching, performance management, succession planning, career management and employee engagement as well as managing change, building and shaping culture and communications. She has worked in both private and public sector organizations.

After a long career with Sun Life Financial, Kathy took on a role as interim head of Human Resources at Agricorp, a government agency supporting farmers and now holds the position of Vice President, Human Resources at ATS Automation.

She has volunteered with several organizations including the Kidney Foundation and most recently with Dancing with disAbility, Canada's first dance program tailored to meet both the physical and cognitive challenges of those living with MS, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's, stroke, and other movement disorders. Kathy holds a Mental Health First Aid Certificate, is a Fellow, Life Management Institute, and has a Business Administration diploma from Seneca College.

Kathy sits on the Board Resources Committee and the Executive Committee.



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Dana Hardy
BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Dana Hardy currently serves as the VP Strategic Initiatives and Integration with Responsive Group Inc. She is a proven senior leader in the long term care and retirement living sectors who is passionate about excellence in care and services, improving the quality experience for those in need and facilitating leadership effectiveness. With over 25 years of healthcare management experience, Dana has developed skills in clinical and business operations, professional development, and system improvement.

Dana is a Registered Nurse graduate from Conestoga College and holds a Masters of Arts Leadership from the University of Guelph. She is a member of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and has held positions with the College of Nurses Quality Committee and Board of Directors with the Ontario Retirement Communities Association.

Dana is Chair of the Board Performance, Quality, Risk & Ethics Committee and sits on the Executive Committee.



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Brooke Billings
BOARD MEMBER

Brooke is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), who worked for over a decade in public accounting, working mainly with charities, not-for-profits and municipal governments. Through this role, she gained expertise in not only accounting and financial reporting, but other areas of concern to clients such as annual funder reporting, compliance issues, governance, and leadership. She recently transitioned to a role at the University of Guelph.

Brooke is also a practice inspector for CPA Ontario, inspecting other firms for their compliance with audit, accounting and other relevant standards. This role not only helps her stay on top of emerging trends and issues within the industry, but it also is a personal passion to continually pursue professional growth, learning opportunities and excellence in her field.

Brooke has experience on local boards, such as the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada and Yorklands Green Hub, serving as a Treasurer, director and member of the Finance Committee. She values her years spent as a trusted advisor to many organizations in Guelph and the surrounding community, and was privileged to both assist them professionally, as well as support these organizations at fundraising and other events. She is passionate about the local community and is honoured to have worked with so many of the organizations making positive changes.

Brooke sits on the Board Resources Committee.



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Mariah Blake

NEW PROFESSIONAL ON BOARD

Mariah is a Political Science and Community Engagement Graduate from Wilfrid Laurier University, currently working as a dedicated public servant. She has worked with various non-government organizations, such as House of Friendship, The Working Centre, YWCA as well as with various levels of the government.

Mariah is a strong advocate with demonstrated commitment to anti-racism, mental health, addiction and housing services in the community. With experience in casework, public policy, government relations and mental health/addictions services, Mariah is passionate about community building and bridging gaps in services in our region.

Mariah continues to pursue community led, holistic approaches to mental health and well-being, and hopes to bring attention to structural and systemic barriers to mental health care.

Mariah sits on the Resources Committee and The Grove Governance Committee.



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Julia Borges

BOARD MEMBER

Julia earned an Honours Bachelor of Science from the University of Waterloo, including a Minor in Gerontology, and a Masters of Health Ethics degree from the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Julia then received her Juris Doctor from Dalhousie University in 2022, including Certificates in Health Law and Policy, and in Aboriginal and Indigenous Law.

Julia has held various positions in both public and private organizations including work that intersects health, law and policy, in the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care. Julia currently practices as a lawyer in the Ministry of the Solicitor General, advising on class actions involving correctional institutions.

Julia has volunteered with many organizations, including as a crisis line worker with the Newfoundland Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre and a Hospital Elder Life Program at the Palmerston and District Hospital. Julia has completed Assisted Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST) and completed a Fellowship with the Canadian Frailty Network.

Growing up in rural Wellington (Drayton), Julia is passionate about contributing to organizations that are impactful in local communities, and that are responsive to both rural and urban needs.



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Sean Bradley

BOARD MEMBER

Sean grew up in Scarborough. He has a diploma in police foundations from Seneca College, a bachelor's degree in criminology from Carleton University, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto. Sean was called to the bar in 2012 and has worked as an Assistant Crown Attorney in Halton and Brantford ever since. He routinely prosecutes cases in the Ontario Court of Justice and Superior Court ranging from minor thefts to multiple homicides. Sean played a major role in Halton's mental health court working closely with CMHA court support staff.

He and his wife Emily have resided in the Kitchener/Waterloo Region for the past 10 years.

Sean sits on the Board Performance, Quality, Risk & Ethics Committee.



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Neil Dunsmore

BOARD MEMBER

Neil Dunsmore is an award-winning speaker and a former Corrections Officer and Hostage/Crisis Negotiator with the Ministry of Correctional Services. He has been a business owner, salesman and a former Township of Centre Wellington Councillor.

Since his days in corrections Neil has been a mental health advocate and is the author of the book Reflections in the Ripple which chronicles his journey of 531 kilometers – a journey to start a conversation around mental health and suicide and to erase the stigma that prevents so many people from reaching out and accessing the help they so desperately need.

Neil sits on the Board Resources Committee.



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Julia Goyal
BOARD MEMBER

Julia Goyal is a graduate of McMaster University (B.Sc. (Honours), Biology) and University of Waterloo (M.Sc., Public Health and Health Systems and minor in Economics). She is pursuing a Joint Interdisciplinary PhD between the School of Public Health Sciences and Department of Mechatronics and Mechanical Engineering at the University of Waterloo (the very first at the institution!).

In the community, Julia serves as a board member of Ontario Hospital Association, a board member of the Cambridge Memorial Hospital, the Hospital Appointee on the Cambridge Memorial Hospital Foundation, Vice Chair of the Cambridge North Dumfries OHT Joint Board Committee, and a board member of the Federated Health Charities.

She previously served on the University of Waterloo Senate, University of Waterloo Board of Governors, and the former Kitchener Waterloo Symphony. In the past, she was also privileged to serve as a Public Member on the Council of College of Physicians and Surgeons (appointment by former Minister of Health Christine Elliott and the Cabinet of Ontario), and the Ontario Physicians and Surgeons Discipline Tribunal and Fitness to Practice Committee, to ensure the provision of quality health care for all Ontarians.

Julia sits on the Performance, Quality, Risk & Ethics Committee



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Lisa Hood
BOARD MEMBER

Lisa is a fundraising and engagement professional whose passion lies in creating access to educational opportunities, and building community. She works as the Vice-President, Philanthropy, Marketing and Communications at the YMCA of Three Rivers.

Education has opened lots of doors for Lisa, with a BScH in Biology and Psychology, and an MA in Leadership. Her research experience runs the gamut from chickadee mating habits to employee retention, leadership development, and affective organizational commitment.

Lisa is an enthusiastic volunteer in her industry, as a speaker, volunteer and board member for the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for more than 15 years. Locally she's involved with her neighbourhood association, and her children's schools. In 2014 Lisa was named among the Top 40 Under 40 in the City of Guelph, cited for her volunteerism and philanthropy.

Lisa is Chair of the Board Fund Development Committee.



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Somkene Igboanugo

BOARD MEMBER

Somkene Igboanugo is the Capacity Building Coordinator for Patient Education and Engagement at the University Health Network. He holds a Medical degree from Lugansk State Medical University, Ukraine, a Master of Science in Health Studies and Gerontology, and a PhD (2022) in Public Health and Health Systems (Work and Health) from the University of Waterloo. His research focused on psychosocial stress and its effect on the health and well-being of first responders.

Somkene is very passionate about mental health and addiction issues, especially their effect on minority and marginalized communities. He aims to bring about mental health awareness and tackle stigmas and misconceptions within these communities.

Somkene sits on the Board Performance, Quality, Risk & Ethics Committee.



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Deanne Metzloff

BOARD MEMBER

Deanne resides in Alma, and is Director of Finance at Thresholds Homes and Supports in Kitchener. She has over 20 years' experience working, volunteering and fundraising for various charitable and non-profit organizations.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing, spending time with family and friends, and being active outdoors.

Deanne is Chair of The Grove Governance Committee and sits on the Board Fund Development Committee.



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Pia Williams
BOARD MEMBER

With over 25 years of dedicated professional librarian experience spanning both the public and private sectors, Pia Williams is a seasoned leader in the field. Her diverse background encompasses roles that range from law librarian, academic librarian, and public librarian to fundraising prospect researcher, highlighting her multifaceted expertise and commitment to excellence in library management.

Pia is very passionate about mental health and addiction issues. Currently, Pia serves as the Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Law Association (WRLA), where she established the Mental Health Committee for the WRLA. This initiative aims to assist legal practitioners in the community by bringing awareness about mental health, tackling the stigmas and misconceptions within the legal community, and providing access to essential mental health resources.

Her commitment to the library profession extends beyond her professional roles. Pia has actively contributed to the community through her volunteer work and board memberships. She has served as chair on the boards of the Ontario Association of Courthouse Libraries, and Heritage Green Child Care, among other boards, and currently sits on the Appeal Tribunal for the City of Waterloo.

Pia currently resides in Waterloo with her husband, two children, and two dogs. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, running, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.



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Sydney Austin
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
MEMBER

Sydney Austin is a fourth year undergraduate student in the Honours BA Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Sydney is actively engaged in the psychological research community at Laurier, currently holding the role of lab manager in IMPETuS social psychology lab, and honours thesis student in Cognisant cognitive neuroscience lab. Her undergraduate thesis aims to investigate motor outcomes for individuals with anxiety, autism, and ADHD in a variety of everyday environments.

Sydney has grown up in Waterloo Region all her life, and has had the opportunity to be involved with various community settings such as Waterloo Regional Police Services, Elmira District Secondary School, Wilfrid Laurier University, upon others. She is a board member for the Woolwich Counselling Centre, an organization providing counselling services for individuals, couples and families of all ages in the Woolwich township. Sydney works as Research Coordinator and Academic Writing intern at Get A-Head powered by Keel Mind, a Toronto-based digital therapy platform that provides free mental health support to post-secondary students across Canada. Here, she is creating a publication on e-mental health platforms and their relevance to post-secondary student mental health. She is the Student Representative for the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), and Associate Departmental Representative for the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour and Cognitive Science (CSBBCS) at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Sydney is incredibly passionate about mental health and advocating for accessible therapeutic support for all populations. Sydney's future goal is to pursue a Masters and PhD in the area of clinical psychology, with the eventual goal of becoming a clinical psychologist.

Sydney sits on The Grove Governance Committee.



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Lisa Pierce

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
MEMBER

Lisa has been a dedicated and compassionate Paramedic, providing citizen-centered service to the residents of the Region of Waterloo for over 15 years. She has proven herself a proactive leader in the workplace, encouraging conversations about mental health and assisting in the development of a peer support program within Paramedic Services. Lisa's commitment to enhancing her knowledge and skills in this crucial field led her to complete a post grad trauma certificate program at Wilfrid Laurier University. In addition, Lisa also completed ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and Assisting Individuals in Crisis training further enhancing her skills to assist those in crisis.

In her pursuit of making a difference, Lisa is currently embarking on a career transition by enrolling in an Occupational Health and Safety program at Fanshawe College. Her dedication to supporting employee's well-being reflects her continued commitment to ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for all.

Lisa sits on the Board Performance, Quality, Risk & Ethics Committee.



David Doxey

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
MEMBER

David Doxey is a member of the Guelph Police Service where he has been a police officer since 1999. During this time David has worked in Neighbourhood Services, Information Systems Services, Traffic and School Safety, Court Services, and Investigative Services. David currently leads the Neighbourhood Services division.

David was part of the Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT) partnership development team with CMHA where he continues in a liaison role.

David sits on the Board Performance, Quality, Risk and Ethics Committee.



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Lindsay Gladding

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
MEMBER

Lindsay Gladding currently serves as World Vision Canada's Director of Fragile and Humanitarian Programs. With more than a decade of experience in diverse humanitarian and emergency settings, she has deployed to emergencies around the world including Haiti, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Zimbabwe and Niger. Lindsay spent 15 months with World Vision Lebanon as the Humanitarian Director, establishing World Vision's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. She is a passionate gender equality and mental health advocate and has developed strong skills in non-profit fundraising, mental health and psychosocial support especially for children in crises.

Lindsay has served as a contract faculty member in humanitarian and development studies at Brescia University College and Humber College. She holds an MA in Human Security and Peacebuilding at Royal Roads University, a Post-Graduate Diploma in International Project Management from Humber College, a BA in Socio-Cultural Studies from Western University, and a Diploma in Community Development from Brescia University College. Lindsay sits on the Fund Development Committee.



Sherry Slejska

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
MEMBER

Sherry Slejska had a long-standing career as a marketing communications professional working in the commercial, public, and non-profit sectors, where she honed her skills in designing and delivering strategic marketing communications programs and establishing and leading strong teams. Her ability to understand company objectives and push precise, quantifiable solutions that interrupt, alter, and amplify conversations has driven her success. Sherry's self-discovery and recovery from childhood trauma piqued her interest in mental health and social justice and led her back to school, where she retooled her skills in social work.

Sherry has a diploma in advertising, advanced studies in digital marketing from McMaster University, a Chartered Marketer Designation from the Canadian Marketing Association, a BA in General Studies and Social Sciences, a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Waterloo, and is now studying for a Master's in Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. Sherry serves on the Fund Development Committee.



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