

July 30, 2026

To the Judges of the Regional Canada Pageant,

I am pleased to write in support of Rachel Dragas and her candidacy for Ms. Greater Toronto Area. I came to know Rachel in my capacity as Manager of the Graduate Conflict Resolution Centre (Grad CRC) at the University of Toronto. She served as a member of the Peer Advisor team while completing her Master of Science in Neuroscience at the Institute of Medical Science.

As a Peer Advisor, Rachel supported fellow graduate students through some of the most difficult moments of their academic lives, including breakdowns in relationships with academic supervisors and interpersonal conflict. This work demanded discretion, emotional intelligence, and sound judgment, and Rachel brought all three to the role, along with compassion and kindness. She also led numerous practical workshops on dispute resolution, communication, and mental wellness for students, staff, and faculty. Rachel was an active member of the Grad CRC while also extending her leadership and advocacy for student wellbeing across the university.

As Chair of Grad Minds, the graduate student mental health initiative, and as a Graduate Life Sciences Education (GLSE) Student Representative, Rachel was a consistent, credible voice for wellbeing across the University, and she was invited to speak at GLSE Summer and Faculty Retreats. She had the unique ability not only to identify issues, but to propose solutions, build consensus and ensure follow through.

Over the years, I have noted that she has sought out roles of increasing responsibility and opportunities to develop as leader and role model. Rachel is a creative problem-solver with an eye for practical solutions that bridge gaps and make everyone feel respected and included.

In my view, Rachel would be a fantastic representative for the Greater Toronto Area; I am confident she would carry this title with intelligence, empathy, and grace.

Sincerely,

Heather

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