

# An Introduction to Being on the OPIRG Guelph Board of Directors

Here are some details to help you on your way to considering being part of the *super amazing* OPIRG Guelph Board of Directors!

October 2017

## Introduction

This form provides you with basic information about what OPIRG Guelph requires from its Board members. If you have doubts about your ability to commit the required time, attend scheduled meetings, or comply with these requirements, please talk to us about it—we're here to help!

## Term of Office

1 or 2 year terms. Board members are generally elected through board members election process, but board members may be appointed between elections and serve for irregular periods of time.

## Time Requirements

We require a time commitment of approximately 5 hours per week for board meetings, committee meetings, orientation sessions, and special events, including preparation time. We cannot do a good job or meet deadlines without full participation from members.

## Board Meetings

Currently we have a board meeting bimonthly. Board meetings are open to staff, volunteers and community members. All board meetings usually take place on every first (1st) and third (3rd) Thursday of the month from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. *If this schedule poses problems for you, please let us know!*

## Committee Meetings and Board Streams

**Committees** meet at the pleasure of committee members in order to accomplish certain tasks by established deadlines. These include Programming and Funding, Symposium, Policy, Finance and Library Committees—and more as the Board decides.

We also have various **board streams** which serve as the broad responsibilities that we aim for Board members to oversee (but not necessarily execute themselves) in the organization, including: Staff Support, Provincial Network, Anti-Racism and Community Relations, Finance, Library and Research, and more!

## Orientation Sessions

Each new board member will receive a half day orientation session. The Organizational and Policy Development Coordinator and board members will arrange other orientation sessions as needed.

## Major Events and Board Work

**Annual General Meeting (AGM):** We hold an Annual General Meeting which includes the presentation of the Annual Action Report and audit.

**Social Events:** We normally have at one or two social events per year where staff, friends of the organization and board members can meet, chat, and hang out.

**Training:** Based off the needs of the board the OPD supports the organization of specific training sessions. Some examples might be anti-oppression, consensus decision making, financial accountability, legal responsibilities, etc.

**Board Retreats:** We normally hold a two-day retreat each year to review and update our strategic goals and direction. We also hold a one-day review session mid-way through the Board year. Every few years we update our strategic plan to reflect our broader directions and intera of the organization.

**Speed River Cleanup:** Held in June of each year, our nearly forty year old river clear up is usually a time where we need Board member support.

**Rebel Knowledge Symposium:** Held in February of each year, our Symposium on social and environmental justice is another time of the year where we appreciate Board assistance.

## Selection Process

- The Board Recruitment Team does a call out. Either students or community members approach OPIRG or Board members and Staff identify prospective board members. These are individuals who have demonstrated leadership and commitment to values shared by OPIRG Guelph.
- Prospects are potentially invited to attend a board meeting, orientation session, or other events. They also receive this information package.
- The prospective member may then send in a short, one page or less letter of interest.
- The letter is then reviewed by the OPIRG Guelph Board.
- If the OPIRG Guelph Board wishes to proceed, the Board Recruitment Team sets up a coffee meeting to discuss

## Governance Approach

board responsibilities, answer questions from the prospective member, and relate current issues at OPIRG Guelph.

- The Board then meets to reflect on this meeting and make an appointment.
- If the recruitment is to fill a vacancy on the board, the candidate may be appointed by the Board to serve what remains of the term.

Briefly stated, we believe that the Board's role is to ensure that OPIRG establishes and maintains the trust of the community by being clear in its mission, prudent and ethical in its activities, and accountable for its actions. Our meetings focus on planning, policy-making, and assessing our progress.

We make decisions by way of a specialized form of consensus decision-making unique to the OPIRG Provincial Network. This system allows us to approach items at our board in a collaborative and effective way.

## Our Mission and Goals

**OPIRG Guelph** is an activist centre for research, education, training and action for social and environmental justice. Our office is a positive place where campus and community activists come together and connect to share skills and information, access resources and support, and deepen our political analysis.

**We know** that environmental degradation and social injustice are complex and interconnected issues that are the product of systems of domination and hierarchy. We expose and challenge the structures and institutions which perpetuate colonization, imperialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and other forms of inequity. We stand in solidarity with people around the world who are resisting social and economic oppression.

**We recognize** that there are many ways to initiate and support grassroots radical change, and that our strength as an organization lies in the diversity of our experiences, approaches and tactics. In order to be as effective and inclusive as we can in our activism we operate without hierarchy and uphold the core values of anti-oppression and consensus. We mobilize through a wide variety of methods such as research, creating awareness, lobbying, media, training, protest, and direct action. We are volunteer driven and rely on the creativity and dedication of our members.

## Values and Beliefs

The Board of Directors of OPIRG Guelph subscribes to and aims to act in accordance with the above mission statement and our governing documents. Our focus rests on challenging systems of domination and hierarchy, aiming to work through a framework of anti-oppression and consensus, and to further research, education, training and action for social and environmental justice.

## Directors' Code of Behaviour

As a Board member of OPIRG Guelph, you would...

- be committed to the mission of OPIRG Guelph
- act in a manner consistent with the mission and values of OPIRG Guelph
- focus my efforts on the mission of OPIRG Guelph and not on my personal goals
- accept responsibility and share power in order to work as a productive, cooperating member of the Board of Directors
- avoid conflicts of interest between my position as a board member and my personal and professional life.
- support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Board of Directors even when I am in a minority position on such actions.
- never exercise authority as a board member except when acting in a meeting with the full board or as I am delegated by the board.
- keep confidential matters confidential.
- be accountable to the membership and the community, for competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of the obligations of the Board
- ensure that discrimination is never practised at OPIRG Guelph act in a manner consistent with this Collective Agreement despite personal opinions, values or differences.
- attend meetings consistently, prepare for meetings, participate fully, and otherwise fulfill my fiduciary obligations to OPIRG Guelph.