



## Aleks Besan

### NEW MEMBER

January 2016

### Hometown:

Riga, Latvia

### Current Community:

Vancouver, BC

### Inspiration

Knowing that Coast Capital's community investments focus on youth, I was inspired to apply. I knew that I wanted to work with an organization and group of young leaders who channel such a commitment to youth-serving projects through their own work and passions.

### Fun Fact

When I was younger, I dyed my hair purple. It stayed that way for three years. Although the colour is long gone the nickname "Purple" has still stuck around with some friends and my ears perk up whenever I hear the word.

### What do you hope to achieve on the Council?

I hope to bring my experience with non-profits and social justice efforts to the Council. I am looking forward to the team-based approach and to advocate for projects that support greater inclusion of youth and their myriad of unique, lived experiences. I anticipate being truly humbled by the breadth of youth-serving projects our Council will encounter.

### What accomplishment are you most proud of to date?

I am proud to have entered university with a full entrance scholarship based on my community involvement and academic achievement. I knew that my ability to go on to post-secondary would have been delayed by several years without this award and I am truly thankful for it.

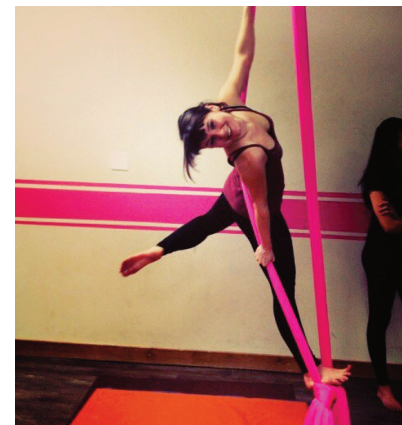
I am also very proud to have graduated from university as valedictorian of my faculty.

### Bio

The top of her class, Aleks Besan graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies and a certificate in Co-operative Education from Simon Fraser University. Currently, Aleks works as the Education Program Coordinator at Check Your Head, a local non-profit that provides social and environmental justice education to youth through a peer-led, popular education approach. As program coordinator, Aleks oversees the core programming of the organization, mentors youth facilitators, and leads engagement workshops on action-planning, goal-setting, and leadership.

In addition to her work at Check Your Head, Aleks is a Chapter Coordinator for Women, Action, and Media, a non-profit dedicated to building a robust, effective, and inclusive movement for gender justice in media.

Aleks has devoted both her personal and professional life to the goal of educational success for all. She has worked with the YMCA on their national Summer Work Student Exchange program, which gives students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience through an exchange to another Canadian city. Aleks also volunteered as a crisis line and support group facilitator for the Battered Women's Support Services. During her time there she facilitated a ten-week support group for women healing from abuse.



Outside of her work and volunteerism, Aleks enjoys expressing herself creatively through various art forms, and is currently honing her skills as a digital illustrator. She looks forward to bringing her passion and knowledge of non-profits and youth-based initiatives to the Metro Vancouver Young Leaders Community Council.

Aleks loves taking dance and fitness classes - her latest attempts have been in aerial silks and hula hoop.