



Session 8

Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council
October 2 - 4, 2026 | Buena Park, California

Gayatri Pathak
Hindu Students Council
University of Calgary

Speaker Bio



Fourth-year Kinesiology student at the University of Calgary; founding former President of the Hindu Students Council. Currently serving as an advisor and mentor to HSC's student leadership team, with plans to begin a Master's in Neuroscience in 2027. Passionate about youth leadership, seva, cultural engagement, and strengthening Hindu communities.

Presentation Abstract



This presentation explores how Hindu youth leadership can grow from individual involvement into a connected, sustainable movement. It highlights the importance of :

- building relationships across different Hindu traditions
- creating opportunities for seva, advocacy, and cultural leadership.
- empowering young people to take meaningful responsibility within their communities.

From Youth Participant to Youth Leader



My Journey: Building HSC

COMMUNITY • CULTURE • LEADERSHIP • LASTING IMPACT



2023

Founded and started the Hindu students Council at the University of Calgary. 1st Hindu representation in 60 years



Growth

Hosted over 50+ Hindu events spanning from 2023-2026. Brought together over 100+ volunteers for Temple seva and for other youth led initiatives



Leadership transition

To ensure HSC's continued growth beyond my presidency, I transitioned the role to new student leaders and shifted into a mentorship and advisory role.



Today

Empowering students and expanding HSC to other local institutions such as MRU, SAIT, etc with the goal to boost Hindu representation

Connecting Youth Across Traditions



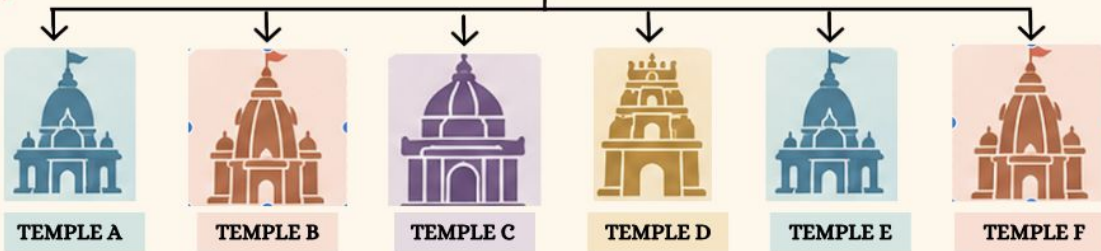
One Hindu Community, Many Traditions

DIFFERENT ROOTS • SAME FAITH • ONE COMMUNITY

EACH EXECUTIVE MEMBER
DEVELOPS A
RELATIONSHIP WITH A
TEMPLE/COMMUNITY



 **HSC
Youth Executive**



**South Indian
Traditions**

(e.g., Tamil, Telugu,
Kannada, Malayalam)



**North Indian
Traditions**

(e.g., Hindi, Gujarati,
Rajasthani, etc.)



**Other Hindu
Communities**
across Calgary

— WE INTENTIONALLY CONNECT WITH TEMPLES REPRESENTING
DIFFERENT REGIONAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS —

Giving Every Community a Seat at the Table



Giving Every Community a Seat at the Table

YOUTH AS CONNECTORS

Hindu Heritage Month



Temples

Hindu
Organizations

Youth



Collaboration

Hindu Awareness Week



Temples



University of Calgary



Collaboration

Youth can become connectors between generations, temples,
cultures and Institutions

*Youth may act as a
bridge for Hindu
institutions that
may not otherwise
interact*

Seva, Advocacy & Cultural Leadership



Seva, Advocacy & Cultural Leadership

YOUTH LEADERSHIP GOES BEYOND EVENTS

SEVA



- Food donations for students
- Seva across all temples
- Community donations and service initiatives

ADVOCACY



- creating spaces for Hindu Identity
- Increasing visibility of the community
- Advocating for needs of hindu youth

CULTURE



- Cultural programs
- Hindu festivals and celebrations
- Use of social media platforms to answer FAQ's about Hinduism and create content

From One Chapter Hosted to a Movement



From One Chapter to a Movement

WHAT'S NEXT?



EXPAND



CONNECT



EMPOWER



SUSTAIN

The goal is to help create a Connected and United Hindu youth community where every young person finds belonging, serve their community and become a Leader for their next generation

