

Candidate for PGT President

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One Year. Make It Count.

Hello everyone! My name is Sophia, and I'm a Master's student in the School of International Relations, studying Terrorism and Political Violence.

WHY

For many students, St Andrews is a new place we've just arrived, yet we are expected to make a lot of it in very little time. In just one year, we need to find our feet academically, build our community, complete a demanding degree, and, most importantly, figure out what comes next. Some will continue with a PhD; some will enter the job market, perhaps with experience, perhaps not.

All this in only one year.

I am running for President because I want to help make that year feel a little less overwhelming and a lot more connected. I want PGT students to feel their voices are heard; I want them to have a place to turn for support; and show that St Andrews can become more than just the place where we complete our degree. It can become a place where we belong.

MY EXPERIENCE

Throughout my academic experience, I learned how to listen to people and not just create a community for them to speak, but a safe place. I served as a Class Representative for two consecutive years, followed by being the editor-in-chief of my college newspaper. Then at the University of Michigan, I worked as an Event Manager promoting women in leadership and served as Recruitment Chair at the Michigan Daily, the University's newspaper. These experiences have taught me how to represent different perspectives, communicate with larger institutions, and create spaces where people feel heard and included. I learned that representation is not simply about speaking for people. It starts with listening to them. It means making space for different perspectives, communicating concerns clearly, and making sure people do not feel overlooked by the institutions they are part of. That is the kind of representation I want to bring to the PGT community at St Andrews.

Representation

As my predecessor, Pierluigi Maffi, did, I will continue a transparent and strong postgraduate representation across the university. Being heard should mean more than having somewhere to speak. It should mean knowing what happens after you speak. I will push to have a consistent system of check-ins and keeping students informed of the progress of issues they raise, even when solutions take time. I will work to make sure PGT students across all schools know how to access representation and feel included. I will also continue working with the University and Students' Association Presidents to build greater continuity in postgraduate representation.

Community

PGT community should extend beyond our individual programs.

I want to build on the already existing PGT events, but make them more accessible to all PGT students, including those who commute or do not live in postgraduate residences. For me, building a community is also about well-being, making sure that in a short and intense degree, students have people and spaces where they feel like they belong.

Academic & Career Support

Beyond university life, the question for many of us is “what’s next?” I want to work more closely with the Career Center to create opportunities that bridge our academic year into whatever comes next. Creating focused sessions to help PGT students translate their academic experience into the job market will be one of my priorities. Alongside this, I will continue Pierluigi’s work on having better clarity to dissertation guidance. I’ll work on having sessions where students can better understand the dissertation process and how to approach it. We only have one year to navigate these transitions; making it even more important that we have the support that recognizes the academic challenge of our dissertations and the career transitions that follow.