



University of St Andrews Students' Association Students' Representative Council

AGENDA

20th February 2024 – Parliament Hall – 18:00

Present

| Name | Position |
|--------------------------|---|
| Cam Brown | Director of Education |
| Caitlin Ridgway | Director of Wellbeing |
| Sam Gorman | Director of Student Development and Activities |
| Fiona Waddell | Athletic Union President |
| Will Christopher | Association Chair |
| Guillermo Canales | Alumni Officer |
| Jack Kennedy | LGBT+ Officer |
| Alro Bitcon | Gender Equality Officer |
| Alasdair Richmond | Societies Officer |
| Molly Reade | Disability Officer |
| Hitanshi Badani | Arts and Divinity President |
| Noah Schott | Accommodation Officer |
| Eva Neill | Environment Officer |
| Jack McNealy | Community Relations Officer |
| Alice Chapman | Charities Officer |
| Cooper Smith | PGT President |
| Callum Irvine | PGR President |
| Jacob Carey | Employability Officer |
| Mandy Thompson | Carers, Commuters, Mature and Flexible Learners Officer |
| Meagan Neves | BAME Officer |
| Gabriel Vargas Berroa | International Students' Officer |
| Callum Noughton | Science and Medicine Faculty President |
| Grace Greene | Student Health Officer |
| Nuttaricha Ngarmskullert | Secretary |
| Klaudia Grat | PG Development Officer |

In Attendance

Iain Cupples

Advocate (Education) / HR Manager

Ishani Khemka

Student Councils' Intern

Tori Greenberg

Isobel Kaya

Tara King

1. Adoption of The Agenda

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1. Barry Will

2.2. Jack Mcnealy

2.3. Eva Neill

3. Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous SRC Meeting

3.1. 21-11-23 SRC Minutes

Amendments were proposed to the 21.11.23 minutes.

Will Christopher (WC) suggested the removal of certain audience names who did not feel comfortable about having their name in the minutes. Sam Gorman (SG) asked whether the rector's name would remain in the minutes, seeing as they were an audience member who spoke. Iain Cupples (IC) responded stating that the rector would be consulted regarding this.

Amendment passed by a show of hands.

SG amended what they said at the previous meeting.

Amendment passed by a show of hands.

Jack Kennedy (JK) amended their statement in the minutes.

Amendment passed by a show of hands.

Meagan Neves (MN) requested more detail in the minutes pertaining to discussions around Palestine as the minutes seemed slightly skewed from the section on audience members, such as individuals conflating ceasefire with antisemitism, the double standards regarding Ukraine and the position of the University regarding boycotts and divestments. IC suggested audience members can email the intern with their amendments and the same can be changed.

Amendment passed by a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5. Open Forum

6. Reports of Sabbatical Officers

6.1. Association President

Barry Will (BW) was not present to provide an update, SG read out their update. BW secured funding to acquire a campaign coordinator for the union to help the union advocate for national issues. They have been working towards launching the "Save Our Scottish Universities" campaign. BW and other sabbs will be going to the Scottish parliament the next day to rally and will be meeting with presidents from student unions across the UK to organize national demonstrations. Initiatives to spread awareness of the campus larder on social media have gone well, news of the same has reached many students with an overwhelmingly positive response. BW will be participating in Race2 the next week and will be on annual leave.

6.2. Athletic Union President

Fiona Waddell (FW) launched the cost of living and how that affects sport survey, a joint initiative across all institutions that have a sports sabbatical officer in Scotland. It gets feedback on how we can better support students facing cost of living crisis whilst encouraging them to pursue sports. They are

on track to beat the number of submissions for the British cost of living survey from last year. They are working on the AU-SA partnership agreement, which has been agreed on by both boards. All societies can now book any saint sport meeting room. This would replicate facilities the clubs can access in the union. They have also been working on the new stash initiative, it relies on graduates to donate old kit to make it accessible for students that don't have the funding to purchase kit for themselves. They mentioned many new events coming up such as the Conference Cup on March 6th.

6.3. Director of Education

Cam Brown (CB) has been working on the campus larder. They have been working with the university to ensure that the September semester for the academic year 2024-25 finishes before the 23 December so that international students can go home before Christmas. CB is working on the academic appeals policy which has passed through stage one and two of the summits, and time lines are coming out soon along with the independent learning week policy and the extenuating circumstances policy. They have also secured approval from SSEMG on their plan to expand the 24-hour study space. Edu-exec and Edu-com are preparing for 1413 teaching award.

6.4. Director of Events & Services

Lucy Brook (LB) submitted a text update online. Here is the link :

<https://universityofstandrews907.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/SRC2023-24/Shared%20Documents/SRC/SRC%20-%20DoES%20Report.docx?d=wb9b94dad9c59423ab3f0de057a62c3a1&csf=1&web=1&e=oWwHKx>

6.5. Director of Student Development and Activities

SG said Race 2 would be taking place next week, and they'd be gone from Monday to Friday. Nominations for student excellence awards and the society awards open next week. Nominations for HLM will be open soon. SG will be asking affiliated societies to take part in scheme that assesses the effectiveness of anti-spiking pods and asking *community leaders to carry the pods to large scale events, then taking feedback at the end of the semester in collaboration with student services*. The student activities funds committees will be approving their first applications next week, where they will possibly be able to give out 5000 pounds worth of funding. Meetings for this will take place around once every four weeks. The project tasked with finding a space for Mermaids to rehearse has been placed on indefinite hold.

6.6. Director of Wellbeing & Equality

The resource for students that do sex work is now online. It has been well-received, and will hopefully set the groundwork for future advocacy work said Caitlin Ridgway (CR). They've been working on the free period product distribution, which will be taking place tomorrow. There will also be a destigmatizing art event at the university for gender equality week. CR has also sorted out some gender affirming product orders. CR attended the student services open forum, gave feedback on the new appointment form regarding accessibility. They also attended the Scottish government round table on spiking. Through this the University of St Andrews will be one of the first to implement the spiking pods trial. CR has also been meeting with the proposers of the motions regarding Palestine and antisemitism, to discuss how the university at large can support these student groups. CR has also been engaged with change program at the union.

7. Questions for SRC Members

7.1. Accommodation Officer

7.2. Alumni Officer

7.3. Arts and Divinity Faculty President

- 7.4. BAME Officer
- 7.5. Careers, Commuters, Mature, and Flexible Learners Officer
- 7.6. Charities Officer
- 7.7. Community Relations Officer
- 7.8. Disability Officer
- 7.9. Employability Officer
- 7.10. Environment Officer
- 7.11. Gender Equality Officer
- 7.12. International Officer
- 7.13. LGBT+ Officer
- 7.14. PGT President
- 7.15. PGR President
- 7.16. Postgraduate Development Officer
- 7.17. Rector's Assessor
- 7.18. Science and Medicine Faculty President
- 7.19. Secretary to the SRC
- 7.20. Societies Officer
- 7.21. Student Health Officer
- 7.22. Widening Access and Participation Officer

8. Unfinished General Business

9. New SRC Business

- 9.1. R-24-09 Motion to create an SRC position for the Performing Arts Officer

SG presented the motion, the discussion for which is connected to motion R-24-10.

During the last academic year some of the music groups in St Andrews met on a forum and decided they would like more support from the Students Association to ease access to spaces and funding. SG was in contact with the President of Music attended and attended the forums. The president from the last year advocated for a Sabbatical officer in charge of music. This was written as a proposal, which is attached as the appendix to music officer motion. Everyone in SRC is elected and becomes a voting member. Previously there were two students' councils, once one got dissolved the officers remained and were no longer elected by all students. The Mermaids Performing Arts Officers is still elected by all students through a Microsoft form that is organized by DOSDA. The motions are connected because the groups would like more support from the union, and will be able to represent the members associated with the subcommittees more effectively. The performing arts officer also has some representative role as they sit on university committees and they are elected by all students.

Alice Chapman (AC) asked how these changes would affect the DOSDA role.

SG said it was more incentive for the DoSda to represent their student voice, but overall, there would not be much change to the role. SG said they do not represent the music officer so it would resolve the demand for more representation for music groups and that the future DoSda would not need to organize a separate election for the Mermaids President.

AK asked if this request came out of the officers wanting input on anything discussed at SRC or if it was purely for representative purposes.

SG answered that in regards to the music officer different groups of St Andrews wanted the SRC to take on a greater role in coordinating representation, the same could not be said for the performing arts officer. AK replied that there are other ways for the union to support officers, and wondered that if they don't want to provide input on things discussed in SRC, it would just broaden their workload. SG that it would make it easier for them to get the support of the SRC

Hitanshi Badani (HB) asked if the officers in question sit on the subcommittee steering group or the activities forum. WC responded that they don't sit on any council. MN referring to a council's flow chart from the union website, which WC then said was outdated, said that the SAF had many different

officers like the music officer and charities officer but once it was abolished only a few officers were placed in the SRC. MN asked why only certain officers passed over, and why these discussions are taking place now. SG stated that they couldn't specifically speak for why this happened, and can assume that at the officers that were moved to the SRC had more elements of representation in their role, or their remit covered a need to be on the SRC. SG looked to IC for clarification.

IC stated that then people who didn't cross over were thought to not really have a function outside their own subcommittee, and didn't have an opinion on the SRC at that time, this SRC can have a different opinion on this. Currently, there is an ongoing discussion in the change program to see what the SRC will look like in the future.

Callum Irvine (CI) said they were sympathetic to the demands of the officers, but felt like matters of the SRC would be out of their interest and thus felt like they would hesitate on introducing these roles.

HB asked how would this change to a more representative role affect the performing arts officer as mermaids isn't the only theatre group in St Andrews. SG responded saying that GNS is an affiliate of mermaids. They act as a forum of different theatre groups that communicate with each other and the forums are well attended. This would allow for greater access to the SRC.

Jacob Carey (JC) prefaced his comment by stating that they are on Mermaids and asked if the committee is currently set up to be representative as a subcommittee, and if it is ready to do so. SG said that they personally believe it is ready, and noted that this motion to be implemented would need to be passed at this SRC due to the rapidly approaching election season.

MN asked what a music or performing arts officer would bring to SRC. SG said they could advocate for the university to put more money into student theatre. SG also feels like the closure of Barron theater could've been more effectively challenged with support from the SRC. There have also been issues in student theatre community that could be raised here.

Alasdair Richmond (AR) asked if the performing arts officer has ever not been able to fulfill their agenda by not being on the SRC. SG responded saying they couldn't think of any such instance from the past but such a situation might arise in the future. AR followed up by asked if the performing arts officer provide advice or funding to students to activity-based groups or does it provide any representation to students at all. SG said bringing them to the SRC might allow the performing arts officer to have a say in how funding is allocated to represent student voices. SG ended by asking what the downside to having them on SRC.

Debate began, WC timed speakers for 1 minute.

AC said Charities runs many events, and as a subcommittee that benefits from decisions made by this group AC felt that there would be some merit to having the music and performing arts officers become a part of the SRC.

FW added that as a representative of a large group of people who devote their time to a co-curricular and as a student FW felt that this group needed a voice at the representative council. In terms of a sabbatical officer for music they don't quite have the numbers that determine this as a necessity however, it is such a huge part of representation, and FW felt that no one at the SRC can confidently speak on behalf of these groups of people.

AK shared that when the SAF was disbanded it was done under protest who didn't feel like they were involved enough and the SRC chair resigned over the way it was handled. AK wasn't sure if it was helpful to compare these situations. It seemed to them that something like the SAF was really useful, there also existed joint councils and the SSC. At the moment there is also nothing stopping people

from speaking to members from the SRC. AR added that SAF was disbanded as officers wouldn't have anything to report back to that committee, which included the performing arts officer, whose remit has not changed. AR also objected to the way this motion was presented, having spoken to people on mermaids as there was no consultation of the motion before it was presented.

JC believed that mermaids could not be considered a representative community, there are many issues within the theatre community and mermaids is not always well liked. It doesn't represent theatre people as much as it should. SG assured the SRC that there has been agreement from Mermaids to take this motion forward. SG doesn't see a downside to adding them to the SRC.

IC interjected urging the SRC to consider whether every position in the council currently had a representative role or not. CB added that the change program will be looking at SRC and potentially restructuring it. CB assured people that the university was looking to fund more of the music and performing arts pursuits at the university and restated that they would be valuable as an addition to the SRC. CI disagreed that they wouldn't provide unique viewpoints from their position to debates in the SRC. While they are great extracurriculars, there exists no legitimate music program. Until then there seems to be no point in elevating this matter. FW added that it would be difficult to categorize what representation is as there is also no formal sports degree. AC also added that charities doesn't represent anyone.

CR said that one can make the argument for any SRC member at any time, judging whether someone would be the best for the job and some things align closer to some remits than others however if some people would like more experience, then they should be allowed in these spaces of discussion. HB commented that whilst she could see the merit in having a performing arts representative, adding two more votes would dilute the voting power, perhaps it would make more sense for just one more addition. JK said that some roles may be more representative than others, and there often exists a large portfolio of student activism for each role that is being overlooked.

LB said that if you examined every role on this SRC up to these standards quite a few would fail as well. There also seems to be an unorganized structure in how representation for music societies takes place this would help support them. CI supported HB and suggested the condensation of both roles into one performing arts officer. CB reiterated that the change program would aid in long term strategically can asking these questions, but since this is a short-term proposal, it would be worth considering for the next academic year.

MN shared that as BAME officer she is wary of music and performing arts not being representative enough so she can see the merit in having them on the SRC. She suggests a restructure of subcommittees after bringing them on and working from there. AK said when people elect officers, they want us to speak on behalf of anything happening in SRC, including things beyond their remit. AK wanted to know what would be done before election to ensure that those running will know what they're getting into. AK also agreed that after working with the Music Centre President last semester, they saw how underrepresented the officers felt in the union, which is something to keep in mind.

LB said the proposal was made in consultations with current and previous music fund officers, and the music officer would be consulted by a group created by various music groups that they believed represented them. The Mermaids officer was a bit more rushed, and was spoken about with the current head at the committee meeting where many members weren't present but voted through and passed.

JC stressed their doubt of the level of competency to head up mermaids. JC said that if someone was elected there was a chance, they could do nothing. SG stated that there is always an element of doubt regarding people standing up for roles, but these roles are elected by students and can be considered for every position.

CB said that as the council the SRC must represent students, and this is one of the only avenues for them to do this. CI agreed that they should increase representation, but reiterated the argument for just performing arts not music. SG responded that this would mean a complete restructure of 2 separate subcommittees, so this would not be possible.

JC added that mermaids is “self-sufficient” and it isn’t given money by the Union, so JC didn’t understand why they should be involved in the SRC. JC also asked that if the DoEs represents both mermaids and music societies, why could they not continue doing both. SG responded saying they’ve never been involved in theatre in their role as DoSda and since they’re different subcommittees one can’t be expected to know the intricacies of each of their functioning.

JK added that individuals who run for positions may not always be perfectly trained which is why they have handovers. If things are going to change in the first place some need to be made initially. CR added that in theory the DoEs or DoSda could represent them these communities, but she felt that if she had to handle communications for all of the officers, she represented there would be a disagreement with the priorities of the same. LB added that overseeing subcommittees is a small part of the sabbatical roles, and someone putting themselves out there for this role would be likely to be competent than their overseer as they have more of a specific interest in the role.

MN asked if STAR in and UDS would also be included in the SRC. SG responded no saying they don’t have as much if any representative function. They also added an active disinterest cited by the UDS officer to be a part of the SRC. A member of the audience from the music society, Jessiah, commented that as a casual member of the music society they weren’t aware of this motion. They also felt that if the SRC cannot answer basic questions about their structure and makeup, then this is not an accurate representation of the student body.

JK said there is no officer for cinema but they still raised a motion for the same, an officer doesn’t need to be tied to an issue. This would allow issues to be brought up more.

AR having consulted the music officer previously and observing a demand for a sabbatical role for music, felt that reducing this position to a volunteer position would not best represent students in question.

AK asked if it made sense to make this change now as things are right now, as this will be addressed by the change program. LB said that there is no one on SRC that is raising these issues currently, the officers are blindsided by this, and the SRC does require this representation.

Motion passes by a show of hands.

9.2. R-24-10 Motion to create an SRC position for the Music Officer

The motion passes by a show of hands.

10. Open Discussion

Molly Reade (MR) spoke of the DSN launching accessibility training, which will be taking place on Thursday from 7-8pm in society room C.

AC added that charity nominations for next year are open.

CB spoke about the student partnership agreement. Having written it with the whole sabbatical team and seeing the SPA written by the University of Queens association, they feel like they can write an agreement that is much more representative of the student voice. Currently the sabbaticals are in a position where they can ditch the current agreement and hold the university to a working group, and meet with representatives to see what changes they would like to make in the SPA. This would involve

sharing with the representatives how the student partnership would work, so that the University could hear from students directly. CB asked if he could take an informal SRC vote to see how officers felt about this plan of action. FW and SG reiterated the importance of the agreement and its role in advocating for a strong partnership between the university and the union.

JC suggested waiting for the elections to finish timeline wise as outgoing and incoming officers would need to be consulted. CB agreed stating that the timeline would have to be very strategic. CB reiterated the importance of the SPA in how the union forms its partnership with the University and collaborates on projects. For reference he added that Queens University gave their union 95,000 pounds whereas our association got 10,000. They are hoping to get advice and conduct consultations, regarding things that aren't supported but the Union can push for.

AK asked what the university's incentive would be to buy into the new agreement and how formulating a new SPA would allow the union to retain the power they have on the agreement. CB said that the association has not yet signed the agreement and the Union is in a position to make the agreement better, to not only show the University we can do better but also to set an example across Scotland. HB commented that we try to keep these documents vague so they make space for different manifestos and wondered if it was worth the time and effort to change a couple of vague terms. JK wondered if this would just be a document of buzzwords that no one would ever read and also wondered whether it would be worth changing. CB admitted that these documents are kept vague, but this document defines specific strategic goals and models how we want them to look like. These goals would need backing from Association and its representatives as well, so that it could bring the community together in a way that unites us.

CS asked if there were any concrete examples of changes to the document that would be made. CB said one example would include how partial programs work to make it a more formal process as the Union can benefit greatly through that, and also formalizing them in a way that it would be agreed upon.

An informal vote to change the SPA document passes.

MN commented that the Gaza and Israel roundtable took place, where students working for the Race Equality Charter who are representatives quit and are no longer participating. This was because of the dissatisfaction amongst societies such as MEENA and StAMSA. Representatives will be meeting with the principal on Friday to discuss the same.

IC added that elections are coming up and requested all officers to please stand for elections or support candidates and also requested all officers to plan their handovers.

11. Any Other Competent Business