



**University of St Andrews  
Students' Association  
Students' Representative Council  
Student Services Council**

**AGENDA**

Tuesday, 31st March 2015 – Beacon Bar - 6.00pm

**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

**2. Apologies for Absence**

**3. Open Forum**

**4. Reports from Sabbatical Officers**

- 4.1. Report of the Association President
- 4.2. Report of the Association Director of Events & Services
- 4.3. Report of the Association Director of Student Development & Activities
- 4.4. Report of the Association Director of Representation

**5. New General Joint Business**

- 5.1. Elections Committee Report
- 5.2. J.15-12 Petition to the Elections Committee for Open Elections for All Students

**6. New General SRC Business**

- 6.1. Election of the SRC Senior Officer
- 6.2. Election of the SRC Deputy Senior Officer
- 6.3. Election of Two Nominees to the SSC Societies Committee
- 6.4. Election of Three Nominees to the Students' Association Elections Committee

**7. New General SSC Business**

- 7.1. Election of the SSC Senior Officer
- 7.2. Election of the SSC Deputy Senior Officer
- 7.3. Election of Two Nominees to the SSC Societies Committee
- 7.4. Election of Two Nominees to Students' Association Discipline Committee
- 7.5. Election of Three Nominees to the Students' Association Elections Committee

**8. Any Other Competent Business**

# **University of St Andrews Students' Association**

## **REPORT FROM THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS 2015**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Students' Association Elections 2015 took place between February and March 2015. The Elections were regulated by Rules & Regulations for Students' Association Elections 2015 and overseen by the Elections Committee consisting of nine members.

The Elections Committee was looking to fill in 63 different positions within the Students' Association (including sabbatical officers, SRC and SSC members, School Presidents, and newly created Departmental Convenors in the School of Modern Languages). The Elections Committee received nominations for every position and results for each elected position were announced to the student body.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The SRC and SSC are asked to:

- Note the report from the Students' Association Elections 2015.
- Consider the Petition to the Elections Committee for Open Elections for All Students to strike §1.3.6 of Chapter 6 of the Laws.
- Recruit Elections Committee and mandate it with:
  - Reviewing Chapter 6 of the Laws ("Elections").
  - Drafting up General Principles and Election Rules in advance of the upcoming NUS Referendum 2015 and Students' Association Elections 2016.

26 March 2015

**Ondrej Hajda**

Senior Elections Officer & Director of Representation

## Report from Students' Association Elections 2015

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### Nominations

Nominations for the Students' Association Elections 2015 were open online between 19 February and 26 February.

At the beginning of the voting period (12am on 5 March), there were **138 valid nominations**, which were the most nominations we ever had in the Students' Association Elections. Overall, the Elections Committee received over 160 valid nominations but more than 20 candidates (including 2 sabbatical candidates) withdrew from a race before the start of voting. The number of nominations from male (42%) and female (58%) candidates closely reflected the gender distribution in the student population.

Despite the efforts of the Elections Committee, there were several positions that received only one valid nomination<sup>1</sup>. The lack of competition for these positions, especially for officers on the Student Services Council (SSC), might be a concern for the Students' Association Councils.

Nominations	2015	2014	Ratio
Sabbs	12	14	85.71%
SRC/SSC	68	58	117.24%
School Presidents	58	44	131.82%
<i>Total</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>118.97%</i>

### Campaigning

Candidates were allowed to campaign between 28 February and 6 March in line with the Rule & Regulations for the Students' Association Elections 2015. Sabbatical candidates were allowed to spend up to £100 on their campaign and non-sabbatical candidates up to £35 on their campaign.

### Voting and Turnout

With the exception of four races<sup>2</sup>, voting in the Students' Association Elections 2015 opened online between 12am on 5 March and 6pm on 6 March. All candidates had to stand against **Re-Open Nominations (R.O.N.)** and **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** was used to determine the winner.

In comparison to 2014, we registered both an increase in the number of votes received and the percentage turnout.

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<sup>1</sup> Namely: Athletic Union President, Community Relations Officer, LGBT Officer, Postgraduate Convenor, Broadcasting Officer, Charities Officer, Debates Officer, Music Officer, Performing Arts Officer, Classics School President, Physics & Astronomy School President, Social Anthropology School President, Comparative Literature Convenor, Italian Convenor, Russian Convenor, and Spanish Convenor

<sup>2</sup> Nominations and voting for Medicine School President, French Convenor, German Convenor, and Italian Convenor took place a week later.

Votes	2015	2014	Ratio
SRC, SSC, Association, and Sabbatical Positions	4364	3535	123.45%
School Presidents	2554	1907	133.93%
<i>Total Votes Cast</i>	<i>4654</i>	<i>4359</i>	<i>106.77%</i>

Turnout	2015	2014	Difference
Electorate	9506	8938	568
Overall	48.96%	48.77%	0.19%

Our Students' Association has had the **highest turnout in any UK student union elections for 4 years running** (the closest this year was Imperial College Union with 42.47% turnout).

### Results

Full results can be found on the [Students' Association website](#).

### Recommendations from the Elections Committee

- The Elections Committee received a petition to overrule the decision of the SRC and SSC to introduce a two-year-long cap on the number of times an officer can serve in an elected role. The Committee recommended that the petition was discussed by the SRC and SSC at their next meeting.
- The Elections Committee recommended that the status of students on a leave of absence as ordinary members of the Students' Association was clarified by the SRC and SSC.
- The Elections Committee recommended that the rules for the Athletic Union President election were further clarified to address issues of eligibility and the reimbursement process for candidates.
- The Senior Elections Officer recommended that a new Elections Committee is recruited in April and mandated to review Chapter 6 of the Laws ("Elections"), and create General Principles and a simplified version of Election Rules in advance of the upcoming NUS Referendum and Students' Association Elections 2016.

26 March 2015

**Ondrej Hajda**

Senior Elections Officer & Director of Representation

## J.15-12

### **Petition to the Elections Committee for Open Elections for All Students**

We, the undersigned, believe in the three basic principles approved by joint councils, the first of which is this: that our elections should be open to all students on an equal basis.

The legislation recently passed ensures that we no longer "foster an...inclusive community". Our stated values that are "democratic, [where] every student is eligible to...stand for election" and wholly "Inclusive" with a commitment to equal opportunities are not only threatened by this motion but are an utterly extirpated, standing in direct conflict with the beliefs that form the heart of our Association.

If we value being democratic, then why are we restricting the way that students vote? We believe in giving students the ability to decide for themselves who they elect to office, and placing limitations on who can and cannot stand for election fundamentally violates our democratic right to self-determination.

We have created an Association that holds three main areas at its core: representation, activities, and places/facilities. Our strategic plan states that "it is vital that we offer the best possible service", but we cannot possibly offer the best possible service if we bar our most experienced and knowledgeable students from running in elections. In our Students' Association, it is the "fantastic work carried out by our students" which allows it and us to "improve and grow" and to create an institution "where all students are involved and supported".

Our Association promises to uphold a "student-led and student-run philosophy of democratic engagement" which we believe is violated by recent legislation. Our Association also believes that our "outstanding accomplishments are only achieved through the ambition, talent, and hard work of our amazing students who volunteer their time and abilities year on year to plan, organise, and work towards an even better Association". It is our understanding that the largest contributions made to student life are best achieved through due diligence and careful planning, and these contributions may take years of development and require continuity in order to be brought to fruition. Again, we believe that this legislation fundamentally inhibits the largest and most ambitious contributions to student life which serves us, as students, the most benefit.

Beyond violating our democratic right to choose our officers, we have forsaken our dedication and commitment to equal opportunities. Our Laws state that our Association ensures that "all individuals...will not be subjected to unfair discrimination in any respect of the Association's activities" and that we will "not tolerate unfair discrimination on any grounds" and that these grounds shall include "union activity". When these principles are abandoned, our own Laws require that we "campaign against discrimination" on these very grounds. We expect our members and societies to adhere to these rules, so why not our elected officials and the bodies they sit on? The regulation passed in recent days is nothing short of discrimination.

How can we be "inclusive" and free from discrimination when we segregate our most dedicated students from running for election? How can we be "democratic" when we are stripped of our ability to choose our officers for ourselves?

The councils have delegated authority to the Elections Committee, which shall have the power to make changes to the Rules and Regulations for the 2015 elections. We urge the elections committee to see the inherent reason in our argument and completely reverse this legislation immediately.

As such, we, the undersigned, petition the Elections Committee to strike §1.3.6 of Chapter Six of the Laws to allow for any student to be elected to any position and to consider and hold a vote on this motion within 24 hours of reception and advertise accordingly.

\*\*\*Please note that the public copy of the Laws (linked below) is out of date. Chapter 6 (as indicated above) has been re-written and is included in the "legislation" link (motion J 15-8, p. 14). The amendment in question may be found on p. 31 of the legislation link. Unless otherwise stated, the quotes above are taken directly from the Strategic Plan which includes the Students' Association's Mission Statement, Values, and Goals (as well as an introduction from the President and Chair of the Board).

At the current point in time (24 February 2015, 8pm), no copy of the minutes of the meetings of either Council are electronically available.

For a copy of the Strategic Plan, click here: <http://bit.ly/1yUy6n4>

For a copy of the legislation, click here: <http://bit.ly/1EN4bBI>

For a copy of the Laws, click here (equal opportunities: Ch. 24, notably §1-2 inclusive): <http://bit.ly/1a9yCsG>

**First signatory: Courtney Lewis**

62 further signatories.

Details of the further signatories and the text of the petition can be found here: <https://www.change.org/p/a-petition-for-open-elections-for-all-students>

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The Elections Committee for the Students' Association Elections 2015 asks the SRC and SSC to consider whether to strike §1.3.6 of Chapter 6 of the Laws that reads: "No student may hold the same elected position on the SRC or SSC for more than two consecutive years."

1.1.29. SSC Performing Arts Officer

1.1.30. SSC Postgraduate Officer

1.1.31. SSC Societies Officer

1.1.32. SSC Volunteering Officer

1.1.33. SSC Broadcasting Officer

1.1.34. SSC Member without Portfolio

## 1.2. Conduct

1.2.1. All Association elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the Association.

1.2.2. Elections to the *Senatus Academicus* shall be conducted in accordance with Senate regulations (presently Ordinance 111, page 124, section IV).

## 1.3. Eligibility

1.3.1. Only ordinary members of the Association shall be eligible as electors, proposers, seconders or candidates for election.

1.3.2. For Faculty President elections, electors, candidates, proposers and seconders must be members of the relevant faculties.

1.3.3. For Postgraduate elections, electors, candidates, proposers and seconders must be matriculated as postgraduate students.

1.3.4. No person shall stand for election to more than one Association position during the same election period.

1.3.5. No student may hold sabbatical office for more than two years in total.

1.3.6. No student may hold the same elected position on the SRC or SSC for more than two consecutive years.

#### 1.4. Dates of Elections

1.4.1. Voting shall not take place on a Saturday or Sunday.

1.4.2. Elections for SRC and SSC positions shall be held annually, during Semester Two.

1.4.2.1. Except as otherwise provided, the elected members shall take office at the start of Week Eight of Semester Two. The term of office shall include a period of training with the previous elected members during Semester Two.