



# University of St Andrews Students' Association Students' Representative Council

## AGENDA

4<sup>th</sup> March 2023– Large Rehearsal Room – 18:00

### Present

#### **Member's Name**

#### **Position**

Juan Rodriguez

Association President

AK Schott

Association Director of Education

Lucy Brook

Association Director of Events and Services

Emma Craig

Association Director of Wellbeing & Equality

Sam Gorman

Association Director of Student Development & Activities

Ailsa Martin

Athletic Union President

Will Christopher

Association Chair

Guillermo Canales

SRC Alumni Officer

Francesca Lavelle

SRC Arts & Divinity Faculty President

Meagan Neves

BAME Officer

Alice Chapman

Charities Officer

Jack McNealy

Community Relations Officer

Sachin Shah

Disability Officer

Daniel MacDonald

Employability Officer

Eva Neill

Environment Officer

Arlo Bitcon

SRC Gender Equality Officer

Martyna Kemeklyte

International Students' Officer

Jack Kennedy

LGBT+ Officer

Amanda Thompson	Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer
Klaudia Grat	Postgraduate Development Officer
Sandro Eich	Postgraduate Academic Convenor
Grace Greene	Student Health Officer
Katie McAdam	Widening Access & Participation Officer
Stella Maris	Rector's Assessor
Nuttaricha Ngarmskullert	Secretary to the SRC

### **In Attendance**

Iain Cupples	Student Advocate (Education) / HR Manager
Alex Purcell	Student Councils Intern

#### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted without dissent.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Alasdair Richmond	Societies Officer
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#### **3. Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous SRC Meeting**

The minutes were adopted without dissent.

#### **4. SRC Training**

Will Christopher (WC) led the newly elected members through a PowerPoint presentation covering key information about the SRC, with a focus on its competencies and standard procedures (i.e., submission of motions, voting, etc.). Iain Cupples (IC) assisted by clarifying areas of uncertainty and expanding upon WC's instructions.

#### **5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### **6. Open Forum**

No matters were raised in the open forum.

#### **7. Reports of Sabbatical Officers**

7.1. Report of the Association President

Juan Rodriguez (JR) spoke about the recently announced fundraising initiatives for students experiencing financial hardship. Proceeds from select products sold in the university shop will now go towards the student hardship fund. JR has also been working on updates to MySaint and continues to engage with Fife Council regarding the HMO ban. JR is engaging with the university regarding a strategy for affordable student housing. Student accommodation pricing is set to increase by £900 in the coming year. JR has begun to lay the groundwork for student outreach to potential candidates in next year's Rector's Elections. JR is preparing to handover to his successor. JR noted the achievements of this year's sabbatical officers, including creating more affordable transport for students; encouraging the university to reduce the number of incoming students to reduce strain on limited housing resources; finishing drafting the new university strategy. JR will also reach out to alumni requesting financial contributions on behalf of low-income students. JR thanked this year's sabbatical officers and SRC members for their hard work.

#### 7.2. Report of the Athletic Union President

Ailsa Martin (AM) submitted a written report. St Andrews retained the Varsity title against Stirling university, competing across 15 events. AM continues to work on the Saints Sport Awards, as well as facilitating successful handovers of sports club's committees.

#### 7.3. Report of the Director of Education

A.K Schott (AKS) has been working on preparing incoming officers for the commencement of their terms. AKS is also working on student-led teaching awards, which celebrate outstanding contribution to the academic experience. Student awards are also upcoming, with AKS encouraging the SRC to nominate students who deserve recognition for their volunteering contributions to the student community. AKS has been trying to facilitate greater engagement with module evaluation questionnaires. AKS additionally organised a careers event specifically for student representatives, which was well received. AKS also attended the Undergraduate Academic Forum (UAF), which discussed academic extension policy and the academic calendar. AKS is advocating for changes to the way deadlines are scheduled throughout the academic calendar, with the UAF suspecting the current calendar makes completing work to the expected standard more difficult than previously. This semester has seen a drastic increase in extension requests. Similar issues are affecting the taught-postgraduate cohort. Postgraduate students have been more effected by availability of study space, which AKS is working to resolve. AKS noted that Sandro Eich (SE) has been working on securing funding for conference/research related travel now that Santander's fund has concluded without renewal. University court has approved a motion to lower the boundary to enter Honours.

#### 7.4. Report of the Director of Events & Services

Lucy Brook (LB) has been working on Board dinners, requesting any invitees send their dietary requirements. All members present were invited to events training scheduled to take place next week. There was no new information regarding the re-opening of 601. LB is planning for Fresher's Week as if 601 is unavailable. Discussions over summer hours for the bar are ongoing.

#### 7.5. Report of the Director of Student Development & Activities

Sam Gorman (SG) has spent most of his time judging various student awards. SG reiterated AKS' point about nominations for honorary lifetime membership of the Association being open until April 17. SG has been supporting subcommittees in processing constitution changes. SG attended a recent offer-holder's day alongside JR. SG has been comparing Association training practises with those of the Athletic Union (AU). Almost all societies have now completed their AGM.

#### 7.6. Report of the Director of Wellbeing

Emma Craig (EC) has been supporting student volunteering efforts for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). EC encouraged SRC members to attend an upcoming training session on supporting survivors of sexual violence. EC has also been contributing to initiatives combatting the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

## **8. Questions for SRC Members**

- 8.1. Questions for Accommodation Officer
- 8.2. Questions for Alumni Officer
- 8.3. Questions for Arts/Divinity Faculty President
- 8.4. Questions for BAME Officer
- 8.5. Questions for Charities Officer
- 8.6. Questions for Community Relations Officer
- 8.7. Questions for Disability Officer
- 8.8. Questions for Employability Officer
- 8.9. Questions for Environment Officer
- 8.10. Questions for Gender Equality Officer
- 8.11. Questions for International Officer
- 8.12. Questions for LGBT+ Officer
- 8.13. Questions for Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer
- 8.14. Questions for Postgraduate Academic Officer
- 8.15. Questions for Postgraduate Activities Officer
- 8.16. Questions for Postgraduate Development Officer
- 8.17. Questions for Rector's Assessor
- 8.18. Questions for Science/Medicine Faculty President
- 8.19. Questions for Secretary to the SRC
- 8.20. Questions for Societies Officer
- 8.21. Questions for Student Health Officer
- 8.22. Questions for Widening Access and Participation Officer

## **9. Unfinished General Business**

There was no unfinished general business.

## **10. New SRC Business**

### **10.1 R-23-08 Motion to update the Alumni Subcommittee's Constitution**

Guillermo Canales (GC) introduced the motion. GC outlined his vision for an improved Alumni Subcommittee constitution, noting the following: the Subcommittee member's roles are not fully outlined in the current constitution; responsibility for organising Alumni Talks is not designated to any one member; the Students' Association Strategic Plan 2023-2027 aims to improve organisational engagement with alumni. As outlined in the motion, GC wants to update the constitution. The motion also resolves to cease running the Alumni Weekend, which is not feasible with the current budget.

The motion **passes without dissent**.

### **10.2 R-23-09 Motion to amend the Entertainments Subcommittee Constitution**

LB introduced the motion. Since the Students' Association began employing a team of staff technicians to manage and run production of Union events, the Entertainments subcommittee has shifted focus to offering training and providing volunteering opportunities. The motion notes that the Subcommittee requires a budget to continue providing its high-quality training program. LB argued that the Entertainments Subcommittee constitution no longer reflects the work the group undertakes, and that it should be amended to reflect this. Doing so would enable further support of the committee.

SG asked whether Ents would now apply for funding using the same process as other affiliated societies. LB confirmed this was the case. AKS asked what LB envisioned the difference in responsibilities being between paid and volunteer members. LB replied that the motion would ensure a clear distinction between the responsibilities. LB anticipated the proportion of the budget spent on training would decrease in the future.

The motion **passes without dissent**.

### 10.3R-23-10 Fossil Free Careers Motion

The motion will not be voted upon until the SRC reconvenes in September. The petitioners wished to discuss the motion with the SRC and request its endorsement. The motion calls on the SRC to publicly support the Fossil Free Careers campaign. The campaign's goal is to bar companies responsible for significant environmental pollution from reaching students through university careers guidance resources, in this instance St Andrews Careers Connect. The petitioners emphasised that they do not want to hinder students from accessing careers advice, but to prevent major polluters from advertising on campus or through the Association. SG argued the motion should be redrafted, describing it as vague and noting it lacked any mechanism for enforcement. GC asked whether the motion would stop students from engaging with fossil fuel companies that also research green energy. The petitioners affirmed that they do not want to stop students from pursuing their desired careers, but also noted that 'sustainable energy' research by fossil fuel companies receive less than 1% of company funding, describing such claims as greenwashing. Eva Neill (EN) recommended that the petitioners clarify several elements of the motion, citing its length and ambiguous wording in specific areas. EN was open to working with the petitioners. Jack Kennedy (JK) requested more information on how involved major polluters currently are with the university careers service. JK requested greater use of statistical evidence in the anticipated revised version of the motion. Klaudia Grat (KG) expressed concern that passing the motion would jeopardise events partially funded by polluting companies, e.g., the Postgraduate writer's retreat.

SG **deferred voting on the motion till September**.

### 10.4R-23-11 Motion to Create the St Andrews Widening Access and Participation

Katie McAdam (KM) introduced the motion. Pointing to the success of the BAME Students Network and the LGBT+ Subcommittee, KM outlined her proposal for a comparable body advocating on behalf of Widening Access and Participation students. KM argued it would show students from said backgrounds that they are supported. Volunteering as part of the committee would also be good for student's CVs.

SG asked how KM intended to elect the new committee. KM expressed her intention to hold an AGM after advertising the positions for a few weeks. AKS noted that Association subcommittees have had difficulty recruiting in recent years, and queried how KM will create engagement with the student body. KM noted prevalent discontent amongst the student body regarding lack of provisions for students from Widening Access and Participation backgrounds, and affirmed her belief that people will want to get involved. KM envisioned the sizable committee helping to evenly distribute work and prevent a small number of students from becoming exhausted. EC echoed AKS' concerns, citing the already strained existing volunteer base. EC asked KM whether she would be content to begin the next semester with a smaller committee. KM responded that even if they were unable to fill all the roles, the act of having the committee would be historic and ground-breaking. Rache Nevinova (RN) echoed KM's belief that people will want to get involved. EC and KM discussed the possibility of the subcommittee including a rep for estranged students. The motion was amended in the following ways:

- Section 1.1.1: Support for estranged students was added to the subcommittee's remit.

- Section 2.8: The position of ‘Schools Outreach Officer’ was retitled as ‘Outreach Officer’.

The Motion **passes without dissent.**

#### **10.5 R-23-08 Motion in response to University of St Andrews staff taking industrial action**

AKS introduced the motion. AKS recalled that in November 2022 the SRC passed motion [R-22-23](#), supporting staff taking industrial action. AKS noted that some members of the Students’ Association are also members of the UCU, the body representing workers taking industrial action. AKS relayed that the most recent UCU strike ballot returned a mandate for further industrial action. The UCU may now call for a marking and assessment boycott. AKS stated that this development warranted renewed discussion of support for UCU members taking industrial action. The motion would extend the support signalled through the passing of R-22-23. AKS wanted to ensure the SRC is deliberate and specific in its support, hence bringing the matter before the group once again. Iain Cupples (IC) explained that the exact form of the industrial action will be determined by the UCU executive. Industrial action short of a strike could include marking boycotts, as well as no work beyond mandated hours.

The motion **passes without dissent.**

#### **11. SSG Carve-up Elections**

WC outlined the purpose of the SSG. WC read out Alice Chapman’s (AC) campaign speech. WC asked if anyone else was interested in standing. AKS requested a delay in proceedings, as some people interested in running may not have begun their terms yet (e.g., newly elected school presidents). Proceedings were delayed until September.

#### **13. Open Discussion**

JK met with the university’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team. The EDI team are collaborating with the LGBT+ subcommittee on updating the university’s EDI policy. They are seeking feedback on a draft version, which JK told the SRC he would circulate following the close of the meeting.

#### **14. Any Other Competent Business**

No other competent business.

**Meeting Closed.**