



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

## AGENDA

19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 – Large Rehearsal Room – 18:00

Present

Name	Position
Cam Brown	Association President
Hitanshi Badani	Director of Education
Caitlin Ridgway	Director of Wellbeing
Catriona Martin	Director of Student Development and Activities
Luke Baird	Association Chair
Jack Kennedy	LGBT+ Officer
Alexander Chun	Gender Equality Officer
Caitie Steele	Societies Officer
Jack McNealy	Accommodation Officer
Naomi Smith	Environment Officer
Lillie Shipman	Community Relations Officer
Keegan Shimaitis	Charities Officer
Thomas Carey	Employability Officer
Amanda Cao	Carers, Commuters, Mature and Flexible Learners Officer
Manya Dutt	BAME Officer
Taasia Thong	International Students' Officer
Daria Gusa	Alumni Officer
Rob Johnston	Music Officer
Louise Anderbjork	Performing Arts Officer
Phoebe Rickard	Science and Medicine Faculty President
Lola Chirico	Student Health Officer
Nathaniel Rice	Widening Access and Participation Officer
Milo Hill	Director of Events & Services
Callum Irvine	Postgraduate Research President
Jay Martin	Disability Officer

## In Attendance

Iain Cupples	Advocate (Education) / HR Manager
Isabel Kagoo	Student Councils' Intern
Anette Lee	Student
Gray Black	Student
Lucia Assadi	Student
Parie Desai	Student
Edith Osborne	Student
Jacob Carey	Student
Cole Schubert	Student
Sofia Barradas	Student
Felix Jones	Student

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

Agenda adopted without dissent

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

AU President, Arts and Divinity Faculty President, Secretary to the SRC, Postgraduate Taught President

### **3. Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous SRC Meeting**

Meeting minutes adopted without dissent

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

### **5. Open Forum**

Jack Kennedy (LGBT+ Officer) emphasizes the need for warm spaces and asks that the Students' Association helps to promote study spaces and other places in St Andrews that are heated. JK also asks for additional support for part time working students especially those that will remain in town over the winter break. Iain Cupples responds to JK and states that he will chat with the management team about warm spaces within the Union. IC also notes that the University does not believe that working students are extenuating circumstance so he recommends that working students apply for hardship funds. He will, however, be able to offer campus larder and maybe a few additional perks for students staying over the break. Cat Martin (DoSDA) also offers to help JK with providing support for working students staying over the break. Hitanshi Badani (DoED) notes that there hasn't been any movement from the University on classifying part time work as an extenuating circumstance. However, this topic will be discussed soon at UAF on Thursday.

### **6. Reports of Sabbatical Officers (moved to the end)**

- 6.1. Report of the Association President
- 6.2. Report of the Athletic Union President
- 6.3. Report of the Director of Education
- 6.4. Report of the Director of Events & Services
- 6.5. Report of the Director of Student Development & Activities
- 6.6. Report of the Director of Wellbeing

## **7. Questions for SRC Members**

- 7.1. Questions for Accommodation Officer
- 7.2. Questions for Alumni Officer
- 7.3. Questions for Arts/Divinity Faculty President
- 7.4. Questions for BAME Officer
- 7.5. Questions for Charities Officer
- 7.6. Questions for Community Relations Officer
- 7.7. Questions for Disability Officer
- 7.8. Questions for Employability Officer
- 7.9. Questions for Environment Officer
- 7.10. Questions for Gender Equality Officer
- 7.11. Questions for International Officer
- 7.12. Questions for LGBT+ Officer
- 7.13. Questions for Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer
- 7.14. Questions for Postgraduate Academic Officer
- 7.15. Questions for Postgraduate Activities Officer
- 7.16. Questions for Postgraduate Development Officer
- 7.17. Questions for Rector's Assessor
- 7.18. Questions for Science/Medicine Faculty President
- 7.19. Questions for Secretary to the SRC
- 7.20. Questions for Societies Officer
- 7.21. Questions for Student Health Officer
- 7.22. Questions for Widening Access and Participation Officer

## **8. Unfinished General Business**

### **9. New SRC Business**

- 9.1. Vote on Student Partnership Agreement

Cam Brown (Association President) introduces an amendment to delay the ratification of the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) until the Students' Association has received the block grant from the University. Hitanshi contextualizes the situation with the block grant by noting that without the resources provided by the grant, the Union will not be able to fully support the initiatives noted within the SPA.

Amendment passes with all in favor.

- 9.2. Review of R-24-08 Motion on Combating Anti-Semitism

Iain Cupples delivers the review. He notes that the SRC officers have participated in a mandatory antisemitism training and they have also been in touch with JSoc about supporting their events. IC also states that progress on the motion is more or less complete but there will hopefully be new union staff members that can support new initiatives.

No questions from officers.

- 9.3. Disability Officer Co-option

No questions for Jay. Jay is co-opted without dissent.

- 9.4. R-24-04 Motion to continue support for the 'Save Our Scottish Universities' campaign.

Motion is introduced by Cam Brown (Association President). CB states that the motion is a continuation of the work from last year started by Barry to support Scottish universities. The campaign seeks to highlight the lack of funding to Scottish universities by working with other universities. CB asks for the SRC backing for this campaign.

All officers in favor, motion passes.

9.5. R-24-05 Motion to Endorse a Referendum on the Change Programme Democracy Review

Cam Brown (Association President) introduces an amendment to push back the referendum a week to the 4<sup>th</sup> of December.

Caitie Steele (Societies Officer) notes that the referendum does not follow the democratic rules laid out in the constitution. Iain Cupples responds by stating that the four week requirement for referendums is being waived as there has already been time to form yes or no campaigns.

Hitanshi Badani (DoED) asks if this referendum would work under the same rules for elections and other referendum. Iain responds by saying yes. If anyone comes to him and wants to start a no campaign the Union will fund it.

All officers in favor, motion passes.

9.6. R-24-06 Motion to endorse a support for volunteers' policy

Motion is introduced by Jack Kennedy (LGBT+ Officer). JK highlight the need for more support in place for volunteers that are stressed and anxious. JK notes that the motion emphasizes flexibility for volunteers as well as more equitable and accessible support.

Cam Brown (Association President) highlights that this a great piece of work and hopes that the change programme reforms will also help to support student volunteer. They are in the midst of developing a people strategy and is looking forward to engaging with all to develop this strategy. CB asks that all officers reach out if they can contribute or if they need any support.

All officers in favor, motion passes.

9.7. R-24-07 Motion to assist the Rector

Cam Brown (Association President) introduces the motion. This motion will codify the support previously discussed and the new part is the updated constitution to the Rector's Committee. CB believes this motion will address all issues and concerns that have been brought up in the past in regard to the Rector situation.

Jack Kennedy (LGBT+ Officer) asks if the Rector's Assessor (RA) will be able to vote on SRC matters. CB responds that the RA will not be a voting member but it is important that they are able to have a voice on the SRC.

Thomas Carey (Employability Officer) asks if this motion will create a reason for the University to not give the Students' Association the block grant. CB responds that the University is quite happy for the union to support the Rector via a Rector's Committee.

Daria Gusa (Alumni Officer) inquires as to the point of having the addition of the RA on the SRC. CB responds that this gives the Rector a direct channel to the SRC and it also means that the SRC can hold them accountable for what they and the Rector's Committee do. He also notes that people bring different issues to the Rector and the Rector's Committee.

Caitie Steele (Societies Officer) asks if you all the sabbatical officers are supporting the Rector, why can't they speak for her. CB responds that it is not the sabbs jobs and they wouldn't want to conflate the role of sabbatical officer with Rector.

JK mentions concerns on a structure level and asks if the Rector is a nonvoting member why can't she just attend the SRC meetings and ask questions. JK also inquires about the existing budget for the Rector's Committee and the Rector's Fund and how things are going to change with the Change Programme. JK notes this motion would not require the RA to be elected by students so they ask if it would be possible to add a RA election with this referendum. Cat Martin (DoSDA) responds that while the Rector can attend the meeting she can't participate or engage with the SRC as a voting or non-voting member. CM also notes that adding a review date makes sure that no drastic changes are being made for the future. CB states that he is working on a representation space for student representatives, sabbs, and the Rector. In terms of the Rector's budget, she has been given a small budget.

Hitanshi Badani (DoED) expresses that it might be helpful to have a RA especially when future Rectors may not be based in St Andrews and can't make SRC meetings. In these situations, having a Rector's Assessor to liaise with the SRC will be extremely beneficial.

DG emphasizes that if the RA should be an elected position. However, given the timing, co-option is the best option till the next election.

JK expresses that co-option is a very good idea but the role should be very widely publicized. TC agrees but feels that there are a lot of loose threads given the impending referendum.

Jack McNealy (Accommodations Officer) states that there was a RA in the past and this position is vital given the Rector's current situation.

Alexander Chun (Gender Equality Officer) believes that co-option for the RA would be best for SRC as an election this late in the semester would not be feasible. IC points out that in the past the RA has been an interviewed position.

DG proposes an amendment that for this year the RA position can be a co-opted position but starting in March it needs to be either an elected or interviewed position if the RA is to have voting rights within the SRC.

HB notes as far as she knows that the RA does not have to be a student and this needs to be highlighted before going out to the student population.

DG emphasizes that co-optation should only be reserved for extenuated circumstance which has occurred this year. She believes that in the future, since all other positions are elected it's important that this position is not different.

JM proposes an amendment to set a review date for February so maybe then we can decide if we want to make this position electable.

All officers in favor, motion with amendments passes.

9.8. R-24-08 Motion for SRC to support the Student Associations' transition to 100% plant-based food by the 2028/2029 academic year

Naomi Smith (Environmental Officer) introduces the motion and its purpose for the SRC to support 100% plant-based foods in Rectors Cafe, Main Bar, Old Union café, and Saint Espresso. She emphasizes that the transition to 100% plant based would be very very slow as it would take a couple of years to reach this goal. NS notes that this issue is very important to the student body. Annette Lee (Audience member) states that the implementation of this motion would consider all students and their needs. In drafting this motion, they sought out student voices including disabled and neurodivergent students. AL emphasizes accessibility and transparency for students with allergies and sensory challenges. Financially, AL believes that plant based is optimal. She emphasizes that climate rights are human rights and eco anxiety is at an all-time high. AL believes that change needs to be made especially within institutions such as St Andrews. In terms of implementation of the motion, she highlights a contingency plan for students that have certain restrictions as well as making gradual shifts to ensure that accessibility needs are being met.

Daria Gusa (Alumni Officer) asks if the Union sources animal products ethically. IC responds by stating that the Union tries to ethically and locally source by our sustainably policy. NS notes that she sits on a university sustainability team and feels that since the Iniversity is a world leading institution, we should make bigger environmental efforts. Cat Martin (DoSDA) emphasizes that while the University is a world-class institution our Union is not due to a lack of resources and staff.

Jack McNealy (Accommodations Officer) asks if this motion covers university catering. NS responds no.

Alexander Chun (Gender Equality Officer) asks if this motion would include liquids. NS responds yes, for instance, cows milk would not be served.

Amanda Cao (CCMFL Officer) asks if it would take three years before there is a proper review. AL replies by stated that at each 25 increment there would be a review. But after the 75% mark there could be a pause for further review.

Hitanshi Badani (DoEd) asks if any student groups were consulted other than DSN. AL responds that she has spoken to environmental groups and had individual conversations with students.

Cam Brown (Association President) asks if senior union staff were consulted. IC replies that they have not had a proper consultation. He does not, however, that the SRC would be a passing a policy statement not a binding resolution.

Caitlin Ridgway (DoWell) asks if the goal is to always to be pushing for 100%. AL replies yes as it seems like the logical solution, but it may not be practical in the long run.

JM asks if they have the current percentage of plant-based foods served within union facilities? AL responds that there are two wraps, soup, and one dessert that is plant based. She believes that we are at a lower percentage then the university.

Phoebe Rickard (Science and Medicine Faculty President) emphasizes that this motion is achievable. She notes that the Union has changed their menu and have used more plastic. This motion would also improve our chances of meeting net zero goals.

DG states that she is against this motion because of cost of living. Union facilities are seen by students as a place to get cheap food. Only 4% of students are vegan, not representative of all students. She feels that this motion would maybe villainize students that do choose to eat meat.

Jay Martin (Disability Officer) notes that this motion unfairly puts pressure on disabled students to challenge this motion. Disabled students may not have the capacity to do this and will choose to not eat at Union facilities. JM agrees with DG in regard to the cost of living crisis in St Andrews. JM notes that having warm food being served at the union is an important accessibility feature. DSN views this motion as admirable but restricting diets is not a good thing.

Audience member responds to the cost of living argument by emphasizing that vegetables are cheaper than animal products. They also note there are always moral positions that will be made food. They believe that although there are environmental concerns about soy, cows milk is worse for the environment.

Jack Kennedy (Saints LGBT+ Officer) states that there is no need for a discussion about every ethical decision. JK emphasizes that important issues such as sustainability policies and DSN policies. They feel this motion is indicative of the union needing to do more in terms of sustainability.

PR notes that an initiative towards plant based foods will benefit the union. PR also emphasizes the environment effects and the impact this motion could have for the local area.

Caitlin Ridgway (DoWell) emphasizes that environmental concerns affect us all. Additionally, she feels that concerns brought about by DSN is also appreciated. CR suggests working towards a 50% goal. She also suggests a working group to meet with catering staff.

Lola Chirico (Student Health Officer) notes that students have both positive and negative perspectives on plant based diets. While plant based diets can help with weight management, lower risks of cancer, hypotension. There are also concerns of low protein and malnutrition. Vegan alternatives are often high in sodium. LC emphasizes that students should make informed decisions about their diet and health.

HB agrees with the principle of the motion but feels the targets are lofty. She feels that they maybe need to talk about principles rather than implementation, operations, and logistics. HB notes that not all of the university's plant-based food is sourced ethically.

AC expresses that just because disabled students were surveyed, this doesn't mean that all key demographics were reached. They emphasize that survey numbers don't always translate into meaningful opinions.

CB feels that the SRC should advocate to the senior management team to increase plant-based options but keep meat options as well for disabled students. He also encourages the creation of a working groups.

AL stresses that this is an urgent matter as climate change is affecting our community more and more every day. She believes that student representatives have a responsibility to their community. AL also feels that communication has been misinterpreted during the debate on the motion.

CI asks that postgraduates also be consulted on this motion.

Motion to defer as long as a working group between the Environmental Officer, Sabbaticals, and any interested parties is created is introduced

Vote passes, motion is deferred.

**10. Open Discussion**

**11. Any Other Competent Business**