

Vote Sean for Chemistry President

for Chemistry, Careers, and Community

Sean Nwachukwu
Chemistry President Full Manifesto

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Introduction

Who am I?

For those who don't know, my name is Sean Nwachukwu (He/Him) and I am currently in 4th Year studying Chemistry with Medicinal Chemistry. My favourite part of Chemistry is (by far) Organic Synthesis, which is something that I'm considering going into after my degree.

Why am I running?

Studying Chemistry in St Andrews was easily the best decision I made in my life, so in my final year, I want to give back to the school and the university that made me the person that I am today.

Additionally, my time as Class Rep has made me more invested in how the School of Chemistry operates and I have plenty of ideas and policies that will make life for chemistry students and staff even better. And finally, I would like to be in a position that will allow me to grow and foster BAME representation in both the School of Chemistry and the Science Faculty as a whole.

Why me?

As evident in this manifesto and my experience, I have plenty of ambitious ideas that will help shape up the School of Chemistry and transition everyone efficiently into the Post-COVID world that is finally on the horizon.

However, ambition alone is meaningless. Thankfully, I have the experience and a proven track record that will back up my ambitions. 20% of this manifesto are actions that I've already accomplished as Class Rep (such as Careers Fayres for opportunities both inside and outside of Chemistry, DiverSTEM, aiding future exam revision etc). If I can do all of that as Class Rep, imagine what I can do as President!

Experience:

In the past year, I served as a Class Rep for my year as well as being the Schools Careers Rep, in which I organized several careers events. Right now, I am the Project Organizer of an upcoming speaker series called DiverSTEM in which many scientists of colour will be invited to speak about their research and their journey.

Outside of Chemistry, I am the BAME Officer for the North East Fife Constituency Labour Party, and last summer I set up a group meeting with other academic schools, societies, and sports clubs about improving inclusion and diversity in the Uni. Previous roles include Co-founder of C.A.S.H, ACS Black History Coordinator and Deputy Campaign Director for Leyla Hussain's Rector Election run.



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I am proud to present to you a manifesto, reviewed and approved by chemistry students across the years, which outlines my plans for the School of Chemistry in the subsequent academic year. Thank you for reading and it will be an honour to have your vote on [Thursday 4th](#) and [Friday 5th](#) March.

Chemistry

1. Academia

1.1 Course Material and Papers

I would like to work with staff to provide accessible course material and tutorial papers that will aid exam revision. For years, I and others have felt that while the course material was indeed fascinating, to a certain extent it is provided in a way that does not prepare us well for the exams. A lot of staff have already made their lecture slides exam revision friendly, and I aim to work with the other staff so as to get there in the same place.

Additionally, tutorial papers provide a poor diversity of questions that leave us guessing on what to expect about exams. Something that I will actively try to do to do is increase the number of past papers and mark schemes. that students have access to. Another potential solution that I would offer is for staff to create an optional tutorial sheet for students to do that include questions that are even harder than the ones that would come up in exams. However, to put pressure off staff, they are not mandated to mark these optional tutorial questions if they don't have the time to go over them.

1.2 Exam techniques Workshop

Considering how COVID has made exams more about exam techniques, workshops will be run to accommodate these. I will try to run these in collaboration with CEED and other relevant bodies. If it is seen to be popular, I will lobby to keep open book tests after COVID.

1.3 Maths

As someone with an A in A level Maths, I still found the Maths to be explained in a somewhat inefficient way, despite understanding it. Asking around the school, a lot of students feel the same way or even more strongly about it, especially students who never did maths in High School.

I would aim to have maths be taught extensively in 1st and 2nd Year via having workshops in CH1401 and CH1402 (not just two lectures) and looking into how the CH2701 workshops can improve. Personally, doing MT1002 in 2nd Year has prepared me for a lot of the maths that appeared in honours, and a lot of people who I have spoken to have said very similar things. So with this in mind, I would like to take inspiration from the School of Physics and look into the possibility of making MT1002 a prerequisite to CH2701.

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1.4 The Future of Online Teaching

The school has done a phenomenal job during the transition to online teaching and over the past year, things have been refined even further. Therefore, I will look into ways that we can use programs and services such as Panopto and Microsoft Teams in a post-COVID world.

1.5 Extensions Policy

So far, the school's attitude to extensions has been inconsistent as it solely depends on the staff giving them out. Students are also not sure about extensions and when it is a good time to ask for one. I will work to establish a school-wide extensions policy for students to understand and for staff to follow.

1.6 Better Preparation for Honours

Actions that can be taken to prepare students more for honours have been discussed already. However, I have some more miscellaneous ideas that can help students even more before they go into honours. These include:

- Referencing workshops moved to 2nd Year.
- Planning tasks for Lab Experiments in 2nd Year.
- Lab Report guides for 1st Year.

2. SSCC and Representation

2.1 Revised Year Group Representation

I will revise the type of Class Representation that each year group offers. This is to make sure that all types of students are represented at SSCC meetings. For 2nd Years I will introduce a Direct Entry Rep that will work alongside one 1st Year Entry Rep. For 4th Years I will have a Bsc Rep, MChem Rep and a Placement Rep.

2.2 New Class Rep Positions/Expansions

I will establish new Class Rep positions that will help me implement my goals for the upcoming year better reflect the EDI policy of other schools and to ensure an even more diverse range of students are represented in SSCC. These positions include BAME Rep, LGBTQ+ Rep, Accessibilities Rep, Wellbeing Rep and Eco Rep. If any of these positions are not elected, they will become expansion positions that will be assigned to the Class Reps who were elected.

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2.3 Office Hours and Transparency

As a Class Rep, I established office hours, which are fixed hours in the week in which student can come and chat about any issue they have about their year. I wish to carry on this as School President. In these hours, anyone in the school can come up and chat about issues with the school or new ideas that could be implemented. In Semester 1 these will be online and in-person in Semester 2.

Also, I will make monthly emails in which I will update chemists on what progress I will make. At the end of semester 1, I will review this manifesto and highlight my accomplishments as well as areas that I need to improve on.

3. Sustainability - (in collaboration with the Eco Class Rep)

3.1 Making the School Greener

I will also work with the school to help its and the universities long-term goal to be climate-ready (energy reduction and switching to renewables) and Carbon Neutral by 2035. There will be no more print outs for Lab Reports and I will commit to a wide-scale paper-reduction across the school. I will also seek to work with staff to make labs greener (such as using/purchasing glassware that helps reduce water usage and disposable gloves, redesigning experiments that are too wasteful etc.).

A long shot, I know, but I would like to take inspiration from the Interhall Environment Competition and lobby for a similar competition where schools in the science faculty seek to be the most energy efficient. The winning school wins a sum of money from the uni.

3.2 Bringing Awareness to Climate Change

I will also host events about Climate Change, specifically growing awareness of its importance in Chemistry and the world as a whole. This will be done in various ways, by having staff talk about ways the school are improving, inviting guest lecturers (like someone from the RSC talking about their sustainable chemicals revolution), or perhaps designing teaching lab experiments that are more environmentally relevant. We could also bring awareness to local projects such as the Kenly Wind Farm and Skillshare.

3.3 Green Chemistry – a Growing Sector

Chemistry in the context of the Environment and Sustainability is a massively growing industry, so it is our duty to advertise research opportunities that can help us to combat climate change. I would also try to set up a fund for student research projects in environmental chemistry.

Another way we could train a new generation of Chemists for this sector this is perhaps coordinating with the School of Sustainable Development and formalising a new Joint Honours degree: Chemistry and Sustainable Development.

Careers

4. Internships - (in collaboration with the Careers Class Rep, 4th Year Placement Rep, and Staff)

4.1 Earlier Industrial Placement Training

The school provides incredible training and resources that consistently give St Andrews students the edge over most other schools when it comes to securing year-long Industrial Placements. However, the only issue that I have is that it is given to us way too close to the deadline of many Placement applications, thus leaving students very little time to prepare. This also affects the mental health of students as they have an additional thing to worry about on top of the demands of 3rd Year. Therefore, I will work with the School and the Careers Centre to find a way to provide these resources earlier, either at the end of 2nd Year or during the summer break before honours.

4.2 Summer Internship Informational Evenings

I will run a summer internship evening that informs students about summer job opportunities available, whether it be in industry or through academic research. We will have students who went on these placements to come to the event to talk about their time during the placement and how they applied. I will also be advertising research bursaries that students can apply for.

4.3 Sub Honours Chemistry Insight Days

I will run Introductory Chemistry insight days for sub-honours students who want to have an early look into what sort of careers and internships Chemistry has to offer. These will provide a basic introduction to what is out there (like industry, research etc) and how you can apply and prepare for these opportunities once they arrive.

5. Graduate Opportunities – (in collaboration with the Careers Rep and PGT Rep)

5.1 Non-Chemistry Events

As a Careers Class Rep, I created a careers panel event that highlighted non-chemistry careers that a chemistry degree can get you into (like investing, patent law, accounting etc.). This event was the first of its kind in my St Andrews life and I want to continue it and possibly expand by inviting several non-chemical companies to come and give talks about opportunities they have for Chemists

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5.2 PhD and Post Graduate careers events

I will also continue and expand upon the PhD careers event that I organised last year and make it more of an event series. In Semester 1 I will run an event for 5th Years looking for PhD's and Post Graduate Jobs, and in Semester 2 I will run an introductory event that lets 3rd and 4th Years know what a PhDs and Post Graduate job are all about and how to prepare for them.

5.3 Post Graduate Application Training

I will look into working with the school and CEED to provide resources and training for people looking for PhDs and other Post Graduate jobs. These will be very similar to the ones provided for industrial placement training.

6. *Miscellaneous*

6.1 Monthly careers bulletin

Every month, I will email the entire school of chemistry a monthly bulletin advertising jobs, internships and research placements that would email students, thus saving them the time looking for stuff on their lonesome. This list will be collected with the help of my Careers Rep, Staff and the Careers Centre.

6.2 Royal Society of Chemistry

I am keen on giving the Royal Society of Chemistry a bigger presence within the school to strengthen our ties with an organisation so important to Chemistry. This will be done through either hosting RSC events, advertising funding, careers etc.

Community

7. *Events - (in collaboration with ChemSoc and the Events Class Rep)*

7.1 Post-COVID events

One of the main reasons why I am running is so that I can reunite the Chemistry community and make it stronger than ever as we enter the post COVID world. I will also like to unite the 1st and 2nd Year students who have been isolated by this devastating pandemic.

Chem Tuesday – these will be weekly events designed to relieve any stress out hardworking students have (especially honours). Event ideas include Professor and student mixers/competitions, Bar games (darts, peanuts into a cup etc), Cocktail nights, Poker nights, BBQs, Honours mixers etc.

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Larger Events – we will occasionally organise large scale events that students and staff alike can get hyped for, such as charity events (which will be around the same time as RAG Week), cultural events and bonfires.

7.2 COVID Friendly events

If progress into the Post-COVID world is slower than expected, then I will host innovative online events that everyone can look forward to. These events could still happen even if things open up again. Ideas include:

- Netflix Party Viewings and Online quizzes.
- Professor and student mixers on Teams.

7.3 Events for PhD students:

I also want to organise some stuff for PhD students looking to socialise with their peers once in a while. Event ideas include:

- Wine and Cheese nights.
- Exotic food nights.

8. *Wellbeing and Mental Health - (in collaboration with the Wellbeing Officer, Wellbeing Class Rep and Student Services)*

8.1 Mentorship Scheme

As President, I would like to continue and expand the Buddy Scheme that is in place at the moment. This was a scheme in which Honours students teamed up with freshers and served as a mentor in both Chemistry and/or personally. Overall, mentorship has been co-opted and centralised by CEED, but I want to continue this in-house approach as it will lead to more intimate bonds forming between students.

8.2 Semi-frequent Wellbeing Pizzas (COVID dependant)

Once in a while, there will be an evening in which students can come down to Purdie for a Pizza and chat. This will provide them with an opportunity to socialise and overall look after themselves.

8.3 Sub-Honours Socials

As we shift into the post -COVID world I would like to set up some 1st and 2nd Year Friend Finders events to help ease in freshers as well as 2nd Years deprived of social interaction due to the pandemic.

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8.4 Other Wellbeing Plans

- Creating and promoting Wellbeing kits.
- Wellbeing Week
- Potential Collab with Societies such as YogaSoc.
- Monthly Student Services Information Evening

9. EDI - (in collaboration with the EDI Officer and the new BAME, LGBTQ+ and Disabilities Class Reps)

9.1 Black and Minority Ethnic initiatives

As the BAME Officer for the North East Fife Constituency Labour Party and someone who organised several events and initiatives for the Afro-Caribbean Society and the BAME Students Network, making BAAME initiatives in the school of Chemistry is another primary reason why I am running. This is something that I am already doing as Class Rep and I wish to continue and expand on this as School President. Right now, I am organising a new speaker series event named DiverSTEM, in which BAME scientists come over to host a speech about their research and their journey to where they are today. The purpose of this event is to inspire a new generation of BAME scientists working in STEM, and I will look to do this event again as President.

I would also team up with other School Presidents and BAME Reps in fostering a BAME caucus within the Science Faculty so we will be in a more solid position to lobby for better EDI policies. Also, throughout Black History Month I will be spotlighting black historical figures related to the world of chemistry and their impact.

9.2 LGBTQ+ initiatives

Gender Pronouns – over the past year, there has been significant progress in the use of gender pronouns by staff and students. As President, I will seek to continue this growth and make pronoun use more explicit (emails, lab coat labels etc.)

Within the school, I will encourage education about LGBTQ+ issues, especially with the staff. This is so that they can become more understanding of individual needs and approach things in a less problematic matter. Additionally, I will co-organise LGBTQ+ in STEM week and organise fundraisers for LGBTQ+ charities.

9.3 Disabilities Initiatives

I will look into ways to make lab work and lectures more accessible (image descriptions, lecture captions etc.) and I will seek to collaborate with the Disabilities Network to find new and innovative ways to make this happen.

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10 Faculty Relations - (in collaboration with the Education Committee)

Collaborations with the Science and Medicine Faculty as a whole has already been discussed throughout this manifesto, but other ideas include:

- Promoting and supporting student projects.
- Collaborating with other schools in faculty in events such as DiverSTEM, LGBT in STEM etc.
- Potential collaborations with Arts Faculty.

If you made it this far, thank you so much, and it will be an honour to have your vote on the 4th or 5th March!

Lots of love,

Sean Nwachukwu