

JOEL BUTCHER FOR DIVINITY PRESIDENT

Having been a class representative for the last two academic years and after exclusively taking theology and biblical studies classes during my time at St Andrews, I would love to be your divinity president! I have benefited so much from this incredible community of learners and educators, and I'd be so excited to take on this role. Here's what I'd do:

MODULE PREVIEWS

I want to start a video series with Theology faculty members, in which they explain and outline the content, assessments, and workloads of their modules, for students to watch whenever they want in the run up to academic advising.

MODULE EXPERIENCES

As well as what the teachers themselves have to say, I'd like to start discussions between students about their experiences in particular modules in order to better inform the decision-making process for students.

ESSAY- WRITING CLASSES

I believe that writing a university-level Theology essay is a skill, the fundamental elements of which can be taught separately from module content, either by experienced students or teachers.

MENTORING

I would love to further promote the current CEED mentoring scheme, allowing more incoming students to learn from those of us who know our way around this town. I want everyone arriving to be able to settle in as well and quickly as possible, and having a friendly face around could be a huge help!

CAREERS EVENTS

If elected, I'd strive to bring into view some of the opportunities that our degrees can make available to us. As president, I would reach out to alumni of St Mary's to find out how they got to where they are today and what we can learn from their experiences.

OFFICE HOURS

Of course, my primary role is to represent the student body. I will have regular, weekly office hours, and will be happy to meet in-person (once that's allowed) or online. If you can't make office hours, I'd be happy to set up a meeting at a different time.

THIS IS JUST A START

Scroll down for a more in-depth discussion of these ideas.

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Module Previews

Going into every semester, I've found choosing what modules to take to be one of the most stressful parts of university life. The classes you take define a huge part of the term, and this shouldn't be overlooked. For that reason, I plan to create a playlist on YouTube of recorded conversations with those who are going to be teaching, in which we will discuss module content, methods and nature of assessment, and potential workload. While live events where students and teachers can converse about future modules are brilliant, every student is different, and will be selecting their modules at different points in the semester. Therefore, a set of videos, available anytime, is a great way of informing students about future modules. I will also set up open lines of communication, so any individual questions that students have for teachers can also be asked.

Module Experiences

As I've outlined above, a major aim of mine is to better inform the module selection process. While the teacher's plans for a class are important, the past experiences of students are also invaluable. I would put students in touch with others who have previously taken particular modules, so that students can openly discuss their experiences in an honest and private way.

Essay-writing Classes

"What is a strong thesis? What kind of sources should I even be looking for, and where? What is a hanging indent?" These are just some of the questions that I had, when I had to write my first university-level essay. A lot of the skills that go into writing a good essay at St Andrews are independent of the content of a particular module. Therefore, I plan to organise sessions on elements like formatting, argumentation, structure, and research so that sub-honours students can grasp these skills as soon as possible, freeing them to show their knowledge effectively in their assessments.

Mentoring

When I first arrived into St Andrews, I was lucky enough to know a recent St Mary's graduate. I want incoming theologians to have a friendly face around to welcome them in, and my time as a mentor in the CEED mentoring programme showed me such a scheme's potential. I will aim to better promote this project at the start of the next academic year in order to ensure that everyone who wants support can find it easily among our St Mary's community.

Careers Events

Leaving university is a daunting prospect. Therefore, I want to make visible for all students here what doors will be opened by their study. Alumni are a tremendous resource, and I want to enable every St Mary's student to be able to learn from the experiences of those who have already gone through the process of graduating and heading into the world. I plan to organise panel and speaker events, where former students tell us about their stories of the world that we might soon be heading into.

Office Hours

I am never one to turn down a conversation! If you need to talk about something, or have an idea for an event you'd like to see, or just want to say "hi", I will have regular weekly spaces open for office hours. I will also aim to be as flexible as possible, so that anyone who can't come at that time won't be left out in the cold.

WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE FOR ME?



My Experience

I've been a class representative for both Theology and Biblical Studies for the last two academic years, so I am comfortable with how student concerns are to be brought forward to the faculty. This also means I am used to representing students at university, and would be proud and ready to do it more.

In my time at Dartford Grammar School, I was head student. My wealth of experience of representing a student body would stand me in an optimal position to take any concerns or questions to the right places, and communicate in an effective way with those around me.

The vast quantity of hours I have put into learning in this department also means that I am familiar with the spirit and community of St Mary's. I feel a real connection with this group of students and educators, and as I said above, would genuinely be thrilled to be able to serve the community in this way.

About Me:

I am a 3rd-year MTheol student from Lewisham, in south-east London. In my time at St Andrews, I've only studied Theology and Biblical Studies modules (which I hope will put me in the record books some day), as well as a couple of semesters of Biblical Greek.

I'm a keen singer, and do a lot of a cappella in St Andrews. Look out for performances from *The Other Guys* around town, when they're allowed again!

I also watch a lot of football! I'm an Arsenal fan, and a co-host of St Andrews Radio show, *Two's Kompany*. If you have any hot takes on football, I'd absolutely love to hear them!

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