



LUCIA GUERCIO

for ARTS & DIVINITY PRESIDENT

*As a humanist, I
want our Faculty to be
a symposium for ideas,
creativity and culture.*



VOTE ON
4-5 MARCH

Lucia for Arts & Divinity President MANIFESTO



“As a humanist, I want our Faculty to be a symposium for ideas, creativity and culture”

Preface

For those who don't know me, I am that tiny loud Italian always running late across campus or theatrically speaking in the library. After being eternally indecisive, having changed my modules every semester since my first year, I am finally a rising senior in Art History.

During the past three years, I have learned to love St. Andrews but my critical attitude has also made me realise many improvements our community could work on. I am running for this role because I believe I am outspoken, combative and realistic; I would aim for the best results possible while being faithful to my own beliefs and the student body's trust. The role of Faculty President is fundamental since it liaise between School Presidents (SPs) and Director of Education (DoEd), being pivotal in crucial developments for the future and prestige of our university.

I pledge to provide extended resources to our Faculty and allow for a smooth transition back to campus. I want to collaborate with the various institutions and representatives involved with education and wellbeing in order to give back to my community.

Key Goals

- Creating new career and research opportunities
- Assuring online learning strategies will continue as an option
- Work to create a community among students, professors and alumni of the Faculty
- Focus on issues of equality and diversity collaborating with other Association Officers
- Promoting innovative integrations in the curriculum

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I. Experience

I am a very engaged and resourceful individual; indeed I have already familiarised with the engagements the role demands. Moreover, I have been Student's President for two consecutive years at high school and I have been involved in multiple societies and extracurriculars during my time in St. Andrews, providing me with a great range of experience:

- Art Pot Magazine Co-founder
- UNICEF on Campus President 2019-2020
- Development and Outreach Officer for the Charities Campaigns 2019-2020
- Wardlaw Museum Programming Intern
- Laidlaw Foundation Research and Leadership Scholarship 2020-2021
- Exhibitions Coordinator for the Art Society 2019-2021
- Contributions to various on campus publications (Polis, The Stand, Concrete Catwalk)
- Involvement in Mermaids Productions
- Involvement in charity fashion shows (Ubuntu and CATWALK)
- Enterprise Week 2020 Organizing Committee Member
- Founding member of the (new) Italian Society

All these heterogenous experiences show my eclectic personality as well as my desire for being involved into the university life. From strictly creative roles to managerial ones, I provide the auspicial blend between the "left" and "right" hemisphere, being able to represent the broad range of humanities students our university.

II. Points of action

I. University Advising and Interdepartmental Dialogue

Overall, while the flexible system of our university is , there are still many areas to improve. Many first years are not aware of the implications of their choices and the pre-requisite system doesn't allow for much flexibility afterwards. Moreover, most students find themselves rushing across campus to make it on time for classes or find themselves with simultaneous deadlines.

- a. I would encourage **pre-advising meetings** since first year for every semester, so students do not rush at the last minute to choose their courses.
- b. More **flexibility for first and second year courses pre-requisites** (i.e. if the student has a pre-existing equivalent qualification, they should be allowed to take a course even if they don't meet the School pre-requisites).
- c. I would promote interdepartmental dialogue in **scheduling popular courses combinations and related deadlines**, whether possible.
- d. Running a **centralised mentoring scheme** in collaboration with the SPs both for first years and exchange students.
- e. I aim to run a special **mentoring scheme for William & Mary students** continuing the previous president Joe Horsnell's engagement.
- f. I would also promote a **postgraduate mentoring scheme**, so they could make the most out of their St. Andrews experience

ii. Career Opportunities

Since St. Andrews is geographically distant from the buzzing job market, I would focus on providing students with more hands-on opportunities to develop their careers.

- a. I propose to organise **workshops** in collaboration with CEED and the various Schools to target any student from the Arts and Divinity Faculty, expanding the range of the PSC courses beyond mere managerial and leadership skills. I propose the inclusion of creative writing, production and events development courses.
- b. I am to introduce a **humanities career fayre focused on summer internships for undergraduate and postgraduate students** in both semesters inviting experts and companies from all around the UK. Students don't deserve the stress of looking for an internship on top of focusing on their academics.
- c. Instituting a **mentorship scheme** for internships with either older students or alumni, who could also provide a character reference.

iii. Research Opportunities

Our university is small, but yet internationally renowned, therefore I believe we should have more opportunities for students' research, with a special focus on undergraduate interested in academia.

- a. I will ask to all school to send out a **research interest form** at the beginning of each semester, so that interested students can be more easily contacted.
- b. Many universities host an **annual undergraduate conference**, I want to propose to institute one in St. Andrews as well. Similarly to Harvard National Research Undergraduate Conference, for which I had the privilege to be a panellist, we would host both students from our atheneum and also undergraduates from UK-based and international universities. The conference would be a chance to foster student research since a young age and judges would provide effective feedback for panellists.
- c. I want to institute **Arts & Divinity Review**, which could allow students from our faculty to public original research pieces both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The editors would guide the selected contributors through realising a work of high academic standards. This would provide an opportunity to boost the CV and hopefully also connecting with other similar publications from other prestigious universities.
- d. I would promote the development of a **workshop for writing research ethics applications**. Those are compulsory for most dissertations or extracurriculars research project, nonetheless the guidance provided by the university is unclear. It would highly benefit the whole students community, especially for future projects.

iv. Library

The library is home for me as well as many other students in our faculty. Since I will be taking part to the Library Users Group, I will try to promote the following improvements.

- a. I would ask to **increase the selection of pre-scanned books**.
- b. I would encourage to **facilitate the access to special collections**, since the process is tedious and requires too many passages.
- c. I would promote to **expand free subscriptions to online journals** and archives.
- d. Regarding the lack of study space, I would promote to **set out libraries within the larger School buildings** that students can freely access. The atmosphere should be more relaxed and convivial with bean bags, snack and coffee machines to promote also our wellbeing.

- e. For our wellbeing, handing **free anti-stress colouring pages and crayons** at the entrance of the library spaces would allow us to enjoy artistic and mindful breaks.
- f. I would promote a **book swap** (that could be set up in the Main Library) both for academic and fictional texts.

v. Online learning

I realised most students have been enjoying some aspects of online learning, especially concerning recorded lectures. These points below are an expected development in a post-Covid restrictions scenario.

- a. **Lectures should still be recorded**, even if back in person.
- b. Tutorials also could keep following a **dual delivery mode** with a valid justification. In this case it would allow people to participate despite occasional disruptions that might incur, avoiding a self-certificate of absence.
- c. For similar reasons, I would encourage lecturers to keep the option for an **online office hour**, either by appointment or by splitting their dedicated office hour.

vi. Networking

We need to foster connections among our students. Despite the fact that many different Schools fall under the jurisdiction of the Arts and Divinity Faculty, all students could benefit from cultural and social encounters and widen their horizons

- a. I aim to organize a monthly or semesterly (depending on budget) **aperitivo** for the students and professors of the Faculty. It would follow the idea of a Greek symposium where attendants could meet, chat and also eat together sharing ideas and experience.
- b. In collaboration with the SPs, we could organize several **monthly cultural events**, ranging from jazz nights to museum visits, inviting alumni or professors to foster networking outside of the student body.
- c. If there is interest, we could think of organising a **Faculty ball**, so that also the Schools with less student could enjoy a night dedicated to their course of studies.

vii. Diversity and Equality

Despite many improvements, the university still has important steps to achieve regarding gender, class and racial equality.

- a. I would ensure every School develops an **EDI committee** and related events collaborating with BAME Students' Network, Saints LGBT+, and Disability Students' Network and the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee.
- b. I aim to support Schools to organise **inclusive events** also collaborating with other institutions within the university, as the Museums of the University and the Music Centre.
- c. I would push for more **diverse reading lists** in all courses.
- d. I would make sure to **support the Faculty staff** in claiming their rights, while also carefully **informing the student body** on various developments.
- e. I would also try to support students from a lower income background, working on **clear and detailed information on scholarships** at the university and at external institutions.

viii. Wellbeing

Students' wellbeing is fundamental to enjoy university experience, especially during worldwide crisis like Covid.

- a. I would **work closely with Schools' Wellbeing Officers** in order to make their presence more valuable.
- b. I would promote **wellbeing events** with the Schools throughout the semester, especially at deadlines times.
- c. I commit to **extreme confidentiality** and I would be happy to provide advice at the best of my abilities.
- d. I would promote a more **open dialogue with Student Advisors**, especially in case the distress comes from courses-related choices.

ix. New Developments

Working closely with the DoEd and the SPs, I aim to promote various additions to the curriculum that could help our students to excel.

- a. In first year, many students encounter difficulties in writing essays and referencing, therefore I would promote to the Academic Council and Education Committee the insertion of a dedicated **"Foundations for Academic Writing"** which could be considered as optional "20 credits" module for students
- b. **Dissertation-oriented workshops** in collaboration with the various Schools. Most students go from not receiving any information in third year to then be suddenly faced with a 10.000 word dissertation. I would propose to host dissertation-oriented workshops since the second

semester of third year in order to allow for a smooth transition and satisfactory results

- c. Integration of **new Vertically Integrated Project Modules** that can satisfy any student in the faculty and the development of **more successful Interdisciplinary Modules** with the Science and Medicine Faculty President.
- d. In collaboration with the **Environment Subcommittee**, I would integrate more **environmental-conscious material in our modules** or at least organising conferences or lectures to link fundamental ecological issues to the subjects we study.

III. Accessibility and Accountability

I pledge to actively collaborate both with the DoEd, the Science and Medicine Faculty President, the various School Presidents and the wider student body.

- a. I will offer **three office hours per week**, of which one on the weekend so that most people will have the chance to discuss with me
- b. I will **post on my official social media page** both the minutes, as well as a brief more **accessible summary of the main points of my meeting** with the Academic Council, Education Committee meetings, the School President's Forum, the Library Users Group and the Teaching Infrastructure Users Group
- c. I will offer **advice to School Presidents** having a **formative meeting** at the beginning of the Semester
- d. I will share on my official social media page **monthly updates** on my programme
- e. I will send out monthly **feedback forms** to School Presidents and one form per semester to the whole student body enrolled in our Faculty

IV. Contacts

If you need to contact me or would like to ask me anything at all, I am always available.

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Lucia Guercio

Candidate for Arts & Divinity President





LUCIA GUERCIO
for ARTS & DIVINITY PRESIDENT