

Vote Andrew

For
Debates
Officer

Introduction

Hi, I'm Andrew (he/him) and I have the ambition and the experience to deliver a debating society fit for the future. As the UDS Communication secretary, I led a transformative effort to effectively use technology across the debating union and spearheaded a rebranding of the society. I will build on this by modernising our approach to make the UDS one of the nation's leading debating societies. I started my involvement with debates during my first year, this past year I was appointed as Media Officer for society. I would love to be able to serve the debating union by truly making the UDS the finest society of its kind.

Public Debates

1. Building on my experiences of digitalising UDS events during the pandemic, I will ensure that all future Lower Parliament hall debates are recorded and uploaded to YouTube. This is something that the UDS has never done despite the fact most other major debating unions have a solid Youtube presence, and I believe this is essential for our audience's accessibility to our public events.
2. I will improve the quality of speakers at public debates by contacting high-profile individuals early and often.
3. I will bridge the divide between the UDS and other university societies and seek to collaborate more when organising public events. Societies are better placed to attract people of eminence when they work together.

4. I will ensure that the UDS continues to maintain relevance by organising events based upon the topical events of the week. For example, I believe at this present time a debate discussing the ongoing Myanmar coup d'état is necessary.
5. Public debates are supposed to be controversial. Within reason, I would like to invite speakers who have opinions different from most of the student body and give students a chance to challenge those individuals where they might disagree.
6. Where a speaker agrees, I would like to hold a dinner before public debates begin and operate a ballot system whereby we give the opportunity to members to sit down and talk in-person with prominent individuals.

Inclusion

1. This past year, I have worked hard to support events focusing on the experiences of BAME, LGBTQ+, and disabled students. I will continue to reach out to Saints LGBT+, the Disabled Students Network, the St Andrews BAME Students Network and others to ensure that we are doing everything we can to make the UDS more inclusive for every student.
2. Historically, women have been underrepresented in the UDS . By organising women-only workshops and reaching out to more female speakers I hope to make the society more gender diverse.
3. I will set up debates about key issues such as the gender pay gap and the experiences of LGBT+ students at university, ensuring that the UDS is discussing issues that matter to you.
4. If you are trying it out for the first time, debating can often be an intimidating experience. Debates can seem aggressive and public speaking is often anxiety-inducing, especially for neurodivergent people for whom these barriers are most significant. I will make sure that nobody is afraid to participate in the society by providing clear communication and tasking our equity officer to specifically support those with neurodiversity.

Technology and Engagement

1. I will provide a dedicated feedback channel that will run through the UDS website to provide updates on events and partnerships with other societies and institutions. The forum will also allow more direct engagement with the UDS board by allowing members to post motions and speaker suggestions.

2. I will build on my experience as Communication Secretary and ensure that UDS advertising continues to improve to achieve greater levels of participation in the society. I will ensure that events are planned and advertised well in advance so that people are more likely to come.
3. I will ensure that the UDS's branding and external image continues to improve. By doing this, we will be better placed to attract notable speakers and sponsors.
4. To boost engagement and the retention of active members, I will ensure that the social offering of the UDS is improved. Whilst I am keen the UDS continues to hold casual drinks and get-togethers, I will hold more organised socials such as an annual UDS Gala Dinner which will be open to everyone.
5. I will reach out to both local businesses and national ones in order to gain more sponsors. Through sponsorship, we will be better placed financially to hold the types of events you want to watch.

#VoteAndrew2Renew