

Zaine's Agenda for Change

Hi, I'm Zaine and I'm standing for Debates Officer. While the UDS has the potential to be the debating society St Andrews deserves, it needs real change to succeed. Having been on the debates committee for two years, I understand how the UDS can improve, and have the experience to get it done. Together, we can build a better UDS for everyone.

Public Debates

1. I will build up our contact list by collaborating and sharing connections with societies who are interested in hosting public figures. Where possible joint invitations would be sent, making it more worth their while to travel to St Andrews.
2. I will rebuild the UDS's alumni network, and tap into an underutilised source of speakers and connections.
3. I will ensure debates are planned semester beforehand, meaning invitations will be sent earlier granting speakers greater flexibility and booking them before their diaries are filled.
4. I will organise debates on a wider range of issues ranging, including issues of science and technology often overlooked in public debates, and invite speakers with new perspectives, including journalists, industry leaders, and scientists.

Single Speaker Events

1. High profile speakers have experiences that go beyond any single motion; they often want to speak without restrictions on time or topic currently imposed by the debate format. I will reform single speaker events to attract leading figures to St Andrews for you to challenge and question.
2. Single speaker events will be held more often, with flexibility given to speakers to attract them to St Andrews
3. An extended question and answer session will be incorporated into single speaker events, allowing for greater personal engagement with high profile speakers and for students to hold these figures to account

Diversity

1. The UDS should provide a space where all voices can be part of the conversation, particularly those underrepresented in our society. I will continue holding motions and panels that discuss issues that are important to marginalised groups and that reflect the international makeup of St Andrews like the Modi debate and disability panel.
2. I will diversify speaker recruitment, reaching out to ensure voices from women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ and disabled people are heard.

Inclusivity

1. I will create an Equity and Wellbeing Officer position on the Board of Ten to safeguard the mental and physical wellbeing of those at UDS events, and provide education to allow the discussion of sensitive topics respectfully.
2. I will organise a quiet room during public debates to give anyone who needs space for any reason a safe place to go to, allowing everyone to attend debates without fear of feeling trapped
3. I will hold debate workshops for anyone without previous experience. Having come to St Andrews from a state comprehensive without any opportunity to learn debating, I understand how intimidating it can be to start debating at university. By holding specific workshops to build confidence we can make debating more accessible and widen access to underrepresented groups.
4. More students than ever before don't drink alcohol, and those who do drink far less than previously. Whilst the UDS's regular socials will continue, I will also organise regular alcohol-free socials to create a welcoming environment for all and allow everyone to participate in the social side of the society regardless of whether they drink.

Transparency

1. The Board of Ten is often seen as inaccessible, and despite meetings being open to all students none has attended in the two years I have been on board. I will advertise board meetings, publishing them online and announcing them at debates to encourage students to attend and get involved.
2. I will maintain an anonymous suggestions form to allow anyone to submit feedback on the UDS and help us improve. Additionally, I will create a personal feedback form and hold regular 'office hours' to encourage students to hold the UDS and I to account.
3. I will ensure the physical minute book of the society is kept up to date, and available for anyone to view on request and weekly before public debates.