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1. Introduction – Opening Thoughts

At the crossroads of tradition and progress, I stand, humbly presenting my candidacy for Rector of the University of St Andrews. I envision a university where student voices don't just echo, but lead, guiding the progressive direction of our esteemed institution.

2. The Journey So Far

My name is Stella Maris, I was born in Nigeria in 1998, and left for England at the age of three, living in Leicester for 15 years. I moved to St Andrews in 2017 to study, and immediately fell in love with our little town. Since then, I have been tirelessly devoted to student representation, leading as well as serving on numerous committees, and working groups to enhance the overall student experience.

As a recent graduate of the University of St Andrews, I've come a long way since I first joined our esteemed institution in 2017. Initially, my goal was to earn a degree in Philosophy. Six years later, I stand before you as a 2023 graduate in English and Philosophy, enriched by experiences and opportunities I never thought possible. These experiences have led me to this moment, and though my campaign and this document, am honoured to ask for your vote to become the next Rector.

My involvement has always been underpinned by a commitment to genuine dialogue. Through my advocacy, I have emphasised the need for our institution to continually affirm its commitment to every student, particularly those from historically disadvantaged communities.

Central to my advocacy has been the emphasis on open communication. It's through transparent dialogue that we can truly grasp the significance of mental health, the need for community, and the undeniable impact these factors have on student outcomes and well-being. I've recognized, through my interactions, that there exists a need for the university to consistently reaffirm its commitment to all students, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.

Serving on the University Court was revelatory. I observed a chasm, an almost mutual misreading: minoritized communities perceiving a lack of institutional care, and the university, at times, either oblivious to these sentiments or mistakenly believing that unvoiced concerns equate to non-existent ones. However, I have also witnessed the incredible progress that can be made when those barriers are lowered and both sides are able to meet and work together to achieve a shared goal.

My engagement with the University's Student Services department has offered invaluable insights into effective student involvement. Initially invited to join the Participation and Engagement Working Group as a service user, I later continued my contributions as a student representative. Throughout this experience, the department's staff and leadership emphasized a key point: they can't solve problems they're unaware of. This underscores the essential need for ongoing consultation and collaboration, aimed at equipping those responsible for community well-being with a wide range of views and insights for shaping new initiatives.

It's evident to me that a collaborative path is our best way forward. We need to develop channels through which every student not only feels heard but also genuinely valued and understood. My vision for the role of Rector is unequivocal: I am committed to leading efforts that underscore the importance of shared testimony, cooperation, and decisive action. This approach will ensure that every member of our community is empowered to contribute meaningfully to our collective advancement.

3. Why Rector? Why Now?

Back in 2018, I embraced the role of Sport Representative. While my athletic prowess, or lack thereof, might be the topic of some light-hearted jests, my tenure in this position was less about sporting expertise and more about a deeper belief: that no one should be held back from trying something due to perceived inadequacies or fears. My mission was simple - to inspire participation, encourage stepping out of comfort zones, and promote inclusivity for all, regardless of their skills.

From this realisation blossomed a passion for student representation, which led me to serve as the Senior Student of St Salvator's Hall and Gannochy House for 3 years. In this role, I recognised that I had a genuine desire to ensure that every student voice was heard, understood, and acted upon.

My subsequent roles, from leading the St Salvator's hall committee as Senior Student, to serving two impactful years as Deputy Accommodation Officer for Halls, further solidified my commitment. These roles, coupled with my contributions to various working groups and committees, not only broadened my perspective but also sharpened my leadership skills. I learned the nuances of governance, honed my ability to negotiate, and above all, recognized the power of listening, understanding, and acting.

As my term as Rector's Assessor approached its conclusion, I also wrapped up my commitments as the EDI Rep in the schools of English and Philosophy. With my recent graduation from the university, I've had the chance to look back on these varied roles. Each, distinct in their capacities, reaffirmed my

conviction that true leadership transcends titles. It's grounded in a genuine and unwavering commitment to service.

Why does this matter for the role of Rector?

The university's Rector is more than just a figurehead. It's a position that requires not only an intimate understanding of the university's ethos and governance but also a genuine connection with its student body. My diverse roles within the university have gifted me with both. I've forged invaluable connections, gained insights into the administrative workings, and above all, listened to and understood the pulse of the student community.

Being a Rector requires the lived experience to navigate the university's intricate pathways, the connections to open the right doors for student concerns, and the unwavering dedication to always put the student voice at the forefront. My journey through St Andrews has granted me all of these and more.

To lead is indeed a privilege, one that comes with the immense responsibility of holding and nurturing the trust that's placed in you. If elected, I promise to leverage every bit of my experience, every connection I've made, and every skill I've acquired to serve with diligence, ensuring that the student community at St Andrews not only thrives but feels genuinely represented and cared for.

4. Do No Harm

I'm proud to highlight the 'Do No Harm' framework developed last year in partnership between Student Services and the Rector's Committee. This framework serves as a testament to the steps we have already taken towards creating an inclusive, respectful, and caring environment at the University of St. Andrews. Building on this pioneering work, I am committed to establishing an overarching Do No Harm framework that sets the standard for face-to-face interactions across all learning spaces—tutorials, lectures, appointments, and more. It will encapsulate reasonable expectations of conduct that respects the dignity of all individuals, reinforcing that compassion and understanding should be at the heart of academic discourse.

'Do No Harm' Framework: A Commitment to Safety and Dignity

The Do No Harm (DNH) framework was inspired by the Hippocratic principle to help or 'Do No Harm.' It was designed to create a set of guidelines and standards that make interactions within the University more respectful, caring, and inclusive. The core aims are:

1. **Clarifying Support Mechanisms:** To provide clear, comprehensible information on how students can access safe and participatory support services.
2. **Building Trust:** To establish Student Services as a trusted entity that is continuously evolving and responsive to student needs.

3. **Enhancing Feedback Loops:** To open clear avenues for feedback and complaints, ensuring that when DNH standards are not met, corrective action is taken swiftly.

Over the past two and a half years as the Rector's Assessor, I have been involved in increasing the funds and number of scholarships awarded through the Rector's fund. Similarly, I am committed to bolstering the DNH framework, working to extend its reach and effectiveness across the University.

Action Points for Extending the 'Do No Harm' Framework

- **Widening Scope:** Extend the DNH framework to cover all aspects of university life, including lectures, tutorials, and other face-to-face interactions.
- **Inclusive Training:** Conduct Do No Harm training for academic and non-academic staff, ensuring that they are equipped to implement the principles in every interaction they have with students.
- **Feedback Channels:** Introduce an anonymous feedback system for students and staff to report instances where they feel the DNH framework was not adhered to. This information will be invaluable for continuous improvement.
- **Integration with Existing Programs:** Liaise with Student Minds, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and other stakeholders to ensure alignment between the DNH framework and other existing mental health and wellbeing programs.
- **Community Outreach:** Develop templates and programs to extend the Do No Harm principles to extracurricular clubs, societies, and other student groups.

The aim is to create a culture that not only does no harm but actively supports the well-being and dignity of all its members, regardless of their background or individual needs. Whether in academic settings or support services, the University should be a place where everyone feels safe, heard, and respected.

5. Inclusivity

Championing Diversity: An Intersectional and Informed Approach

In my two-and-a-half-year tenure leading the Rector's committee, I was driven by a core principle: championing diversity from an intersectional standpoint. Recognising the richness that diversity brings to our university community, I orchestrated the establishment of a committee structure grounded in information and advocacy networks. These networks ensured that the Rector and I were continually informed about, and responsive to, the nuanced needs and views of various segments of our student body.

At the heart of this structure were dedicated coordinators, each liaising with distinct student groups, working collaboratively to foster a holistic and inclusive dialogue. Their efforts made certain that our decisions were always rooted in genuine student feedback, cultivating a spirit of teamwork that infused the committee's every action.

This spirit of collaboration and representation will remain paramount as I work to advocate for the distinct and diverse needs of our student body. I pledge to not just recognise but actively address the concerns and aspirations of our diverse student body. Their stories, experiences, and hopes will be integral in crafting a future where every student feels valued and empowered.

Minority Communities: Our diverse student body is one of our greatest assets; the unique perspectives and experiences of minority communities—including BAME, LGBTQIA+, and students from non-traditional academic backgrounds—enrich our campus culture and academic discussions. However, it's not enough to just acknowledge this diversity; we must work tirelessly to ensure these voices are both elevated and influential in shaping the University's actions and priorities.

- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Establish a yearly Diversity & Inclusion Week to celebrate diverse cultures, histories, and stories, fostering understanding and unity among the student body.
- **Representation in Decision-making:** Advocate for the inclusion of representatives from minority communities in university committees, boards, and task forces. These representatives would offer critical insights into how decisions affect these communities uniquely.
- **Curriculum Diversification:** Collaborate with academic departments to explore ways in which curricula can be more inclusive, reflecting a broad range of cultures, histories, and perspectives.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Implement mandatory cultural competency workshops for staff and faculty. These workshops would equip them with the tools to create inclusive classroom environments and to engage respectfully with students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Wellbeing Support:** Extend specialized mental health services that are cognizant of the unique challenges faced by students from minority communities.
- **Resource Accessibility:** Ensure that university resources are easily accessible to all students, regardless of their background. This could include translating key academic resources into multiple languages or offering them in formats accessible to students with disabilities.
- **Safe Spaces:** Create safe spaces for marginalized groups to meet, discuss, and share experiences, ensuring every student feels seen and heard.

Inclusive Engagement: The true essence of student representation lies in the heart of our community: the students themselves. To understand and advocate for every student's unique

concerns, I'll champion initiatives that offer students platforms to share their experiences, from BAME safe spaces to broader student forums.

- **Cultural Festivals:** Support and expand cultural festivals and events, showcasing the diverse tapestry of the student body and fostering unity.
- **Mental Health Support:** Advocate for increased resources towards mental health support, ensuring timely care for every student.
- **Increasing Student Engagement:** Organize regular town halls with university officials, ensuring students have direct communication lines to voice concerns and receive updates.
- **Collaboration with Societies:** Engage with various student societies, ensuring their needs are addressed and they play a pivotal role in shaping university culture.
- **Recognise and respond** to the harm and challenges faced by our students, ensuring their well-being remains a top priority.

LGBTQIA+ Support and Advocacy: Inclusivity must also extend to our LGBTQIA+ community. The university should not just be a passive observer but an active advocate, utilizing its influence to stand up for the rights and dignity of its LGBTQIA+ students and staff. The conversation around LGBTQIA+ issues should not be framed as a matter of debate over people's identities; rather, we should establish platforms that empower those from marginalized groups to guide the discourse based on their lived experiences and expertise.

This principle isn't just confined to LGBTQIA+ issues; it applies across the board for all protected characteristics. Academic freedom is vital, but it shouldn't come at the expense of compassion and understanding. Our university has the responsibility to lead by example, ensuring that both academic and social settings are not just tolerant but actively inclusive.

Widening Access

In a world that's increasingly diverse and interconnected, it's vital for educational institutions to reflect that diversity within their own communities. But inclusion doesn't happen by accident; it requires deliberate effort and targeted initiatives. The following outlines my commitment to widening access to the University of St Andrews, ensuring that each student, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive.

Rector's Fund for Internships

During my two and a half years as Rector's Assessor, I have actively advocated for increasing the funding and number of scholarships available through the Rector's Fund. This fund is critical in levelling the playing field, providing financial support to students who might otherwise be unable to afford valuable internship experiences. If elected as Rector, I intend to continue this trajectory,

ensuring that more students than ever can benefit from the career opportunities these internships offer.

Support for Specific Groups

- **Young Carers, Independent Estranged Students, and Care Leavers:** For young carers, independent estranged students, and care leavers, the university can often feel like a labyrinth of challenges. I will advocate for targeted support mechanisms that address the unique circumstances of these individuals, including enhanced emotional and financial support.
- **Students with Childcare Responsibilities:** Balancing academics with childcare responsibilities is a monumental task. I propose exploring the possibility of on-campus childcare services that can ease this burden, enabling student parents to focus both on their studies and their families.
- **Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students:** For students from less affluent backgrounds, including what are often categorized as 'working-class' students, the cost of higher education can be a major obstacle. I will strive to extend the reach of existing scholarship programs and explore additional avenues of financial aid, especially for those who rely on part-time jobs to afford their living and educational expenses.
- **Students with Mental Health Issues and Learning Difficulties:** Mental health and learning difficulties shouldn't be barriers to academic success. By advocating for enhanced support services and academic adjustments, I aim to create an inclusive learning environment that accommodates everyone's unique learning needs.
- **Students with Physical Disabilities:** Physical accessibility on campus remains an area requiring more attention. I will push for an audit of current facilities and services, with a commitment to prioritize improvements that make our university more accessible to all.

Widening access means more than just opening doors; it means making sure everyone can thrive once they step through them. The unique experiences and perspectives these groups bring are not just added benefits but essential assets that enrich our community. The university would be doing itself a disservice if it does not fully embrace the unique contributions each student can offer. Together, let's build a St Andrews where everyone is not just included but valued.

International Students

As we stand at the crossroads of a digital revolution with the university's new digital strategy, it's vital to ensure our international students, who face unique funding challenges and integration concerns, feel genuinely part of our global community. Their perspectives and needs, especially in the context of evolving digital spaces, are invaluable.

- **International Student Integration:** Launch a mentorship program that pairs international students with domestic students to facilitate their transition into the community. This

program aims not only to encourage meaningful interaction between students from different cultural backgrounds but also to guide international students in understanding the academic standards and practices at the University of St Andrews. While the mentorship program itself will offer firsthand peer support, it will also actively signpost to additional resources such as the Academic English Service (AES) provided by the International Education Institute at St Andrews, and the Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development (CEED), helping students easily navigate the wide range of support available.

- **Collaborate** with student groups to host cultural exchange events, ensuring international students feel integrated into the wider community.
- **Relaunch** the '**Rector's Spotlight**' initiative, where every month, student groups or societies can showcase their work, events, or concerns directly to the broader student body.

6. Strengthening Student Connections

At the heart of every thriving academic institution are its students—individuals whose diverse experiences, perspectives, and aspirations enrich the university community. As your potential Rector, I recognize that effective student representation is a multi-layered endeavour, requiring focus not just within the confines of academic halls, but also extending into relationships with the broader community and the faculty and staff who shape our learning environments.

Advocacy & Student Representation

The role of the Rector isn't simply a title; it is a promise to be the students' advocate. Drawing from my experience in University Court and as Rectors' Assessor, I believe we can enhance the understanding between the student body and the university. Our governing structures, while steeped in tradition, should be agile enough to adapt to the needs of a rapidly evolving educational landscape. By fostering an environment of ongoing dialogue and collaboration, I aim to ensure that our governance structures evolve in ways that directly benefit our community. As the student's advocate, I will be unyielding in pushing for reforms that better serve us all.

One of my primary goals is to dismantle the barriers of understanding between students and the university's governing bodies. Over the years, many students have expressed to me a sense of disconnection from these groups, perceiving them as distant or opaque. Leveraging my two-and-a-half years of experience on the University Court, I aim to serve as a bridge, offering guidance, information, and improved access to these governance structures.

- **Enhanced Responsiveness and Accountability:** I will push for more responsive and transparent channels of communication between students and the university leadership.

- **Regular updates** on the actions taken as a result of student feedback, as well as opportunities to examine and apply performance metrics relevant to similarly structured governing bodies, will be shared with the student community.

Commitment to transparency is key to building trust, which is essential for meaningful engagement from both sides.

- **Strengthened Student Representation:** Review and potentially restructure representative bodies to better reflect the diverse student body, ensuring every faculty, year group, and extracurricular group is well-represented.
- **Open Forums:** Create spaces where students can openly share their concerns, suggestions, and experiences, bridging the gap between administration and student body.

The role of the Rector is a vital one for enhancing the relationship between the student body and the university's governing bodies. I am committed to making that relationship more transparent, more accountable, and more beneficial for every single student at the University of St Andrews.

Postgraduate Student Engagement

Postgraduate students are an invaluable part of the St Andrews community. Their specialised knowledge, research pursuits, and varied experiences bring a unique depth to our academic and social fabric. However, it has come to my attention that there's room to enhance our engagement with these students, particularly those pursuing taught postgraduate courses (PGTs) and postgraduate research (PGRs).

- **Pre-Arrival Engagement:** It's evident that many of our incoming PGT students are eager to get involved even before they set foot on campus. We must capitalise on this enthusiasm. I pledge to work with the union to develop a robust pre-arrival engagement program. This could include virtual meet-and-greets, informational webinars, and online forums where incoming PGTs can connect with current students, faculty, and each other.
- **Dedicated Events in the PG Lounge:** The PG Lounge is a space specifically for our postgraduate students, and we should make the most of it. I propose a series of centrally organized events held in the lounge. These could range from academic workshops, networking events, to informal coffee mornings. These events not only serve as a platform for postgraduate students to interact but also foster a sense of belonging within the postgraduate community.
- **Tailored Orientation for PGRs:** Recognizing that many of our PGRs begin their academic journey at the end of September, I will advocate for tailored orientation events that cater specifically to their needs. These events would introduce them to the university's resources, research facilities, and help them integrate seamlessly into the broader St Andrews community.

Postgraduate students offer a wealth of experience and perspective that we should continuously seek to integrate and celebrate. By enhancing our engagement efforts, we can ensure that their time at St Andrews is as enriching and fulfilling as possible.

Town and Gown

Bridging Town and Gown: A Harmonious Coexistence

One of the unique aspects of a university community like St Andrews is its relationship with the town it inhabits. As your Rector, I recognize the importance of fostering positive "town and gown" relations—that is, the relationship between the residents of St Andrews and its student population. A symbiotic relationship between the town and the university is essential for the prosperity and well-being of both communities.

- **Community Dialogues:** In my capacity as Rector, I propose to host quarterly community dialogues that bring together local residents, business owners, university officials, and students. These dialogues will serve as an open forum to discuss common challenges, share ideas, and work on collaborative solutions.
- **Civic Engagement Initiatives:** Encouraging students to take an active role in the local community can significantly improve relations. I will advocate for more community service opportunities, local mentorship programs, and civic projects where students can contribute their skills and learn from local expertise.
- **Public Statements and Media Outreach:** To keep both communities informed and engaged, I'll leverage the reach and history of the Rector's role to make public statements that invite dialogues on pressing issues. By doing so, I intend to bring national media attention to community achievements or concerns, furthering constructive discourse.

Through these initiatives, my goal is to establish a more harmonious relationship between the University of St Andrews and the town we call home. Let's work together to build a community that thrives on collaboration and shared success.

Nurturing Student-Staff Relations

Fostering healthy and constructive relationships between students and staff is critical for a thriving educational environment. As your Rector, I am committed to enhancing this relationship by creating open channels for dialogue and representation, while acknowledging the distinct needs and concerns of each group.

- **Mutual Representation and Forums for Engagement:** While the role of Rector primarily focuses on student representation, it's crucial to recognise that issues affecting students often overlap with staff concerns. I will work closely with staff associations and unions to co-create spaces where both cohorts can meet, discuss, and problem-solve together. These

spaces will facilitate a shared understanding and encourage collaborative action on various issues, from academic workload to mental health support.

- **Inclusivity in Representation Structures:** Creating more accessible routes to student representation opportunities is a priority. In doing so, I aim to include staff input on how to make these structures sensitive to individual needs, particularly in relation to protected characteristics and lived experiences. I'll also work to ensure that the issues being discussed include staff perspectives, offering a more rounded view of the challenges and opportunities we face as a community.
- **Guidelines and Codes of Conduct:** Clarifying what constitutes acceptable behaviour in teaching and learning environments is important for both students and staff. I propose to work with university authorities to develop comprehensive guidelines that clearly outline appropriate conduct. These guidelines will aim to pre-emptively address microaggressions and other situations that could unintentionally impact a student's access to education.
- **Teaching and Learning Accessibility:** When establishing codes of conduct, particular attention will be paid to fostering environments that are free from any form of discrimination or bias. Staff should feel supported in their roles as educators, and students should never feel as though their identity is a barrier to learning.

By setting forth these initiatives, I aim to strengthen the sense of community and mutual respect between students and staff. While the role of Rector is fundamentally student oriented, I believe that taking a comprehensive, inclusive approach will enrich the academic and social fabric of the University of St Andrews for everyone involved.

7. Accommodation, Affordability and the Cost of Living Well

A Vision for Equitable Financial Support in Higher Education

One of the integral facets of the Rector's responsibility is to be the staunch advocate of the student body at St Andrews. As your Rector, I aim to use this platform not just for internal university matters, but to actively address broader systemic issues that impact our student community.

- **Addressing Regional Disparities in Maintenance Loans:** London's elevated living costs have been recognised and adjusted for in maintenance loan calculations. It's high time we extend this consideration nationally. I will lobby for the university to commission and support research that evaluates average rents and living expenses across different regions. With the weight of this data, St Andrews can actively champion for a nationwide review, ensuring our students, irrespective of where they choose to live or work during their studies, have financial support that reflects the actual cost of living where they are.
- **Promoting Financial Equity:** Every student, regardless of their socio-economic background, deserves a level playing field. The current system, which burdens students from less affluent

backgrounds with larger debts, undermines this principle. I will use my position to rally support within the University Court, encouraging St Andrews to be a vocal advocate for national reforms. This might include proposing means-tested grants or advocating for non-repayable bursaries for those from lower-income families.

- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** To effect real change, we need allies. I will actively engage with relevant stakeholders, both within and outside of our university community, to push for a holistic review of the maintenance loan system.

By leveraging the influence and reach of the Rector's position, I aim to create ripples of change that go beyond our historic walls, advocating for a financial support system that truly upholds the ideals of equality and fairness.

Accommodation

Housing is at the heart of every student's experience in university. A comfortable, affordable, and secure accommodation forms the foundation for academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being. It's imperative, therefore, that our university stands firm in its commitment to ensuring all students have access to quality housing options.

- **Prioritizing Affordability and Security:** The university must reaffirm its commitment to offering the most affordable and quality-driven accommodation options. It's essential that every student can find a home within the university's precincts without being burdened by excessive costs. Further, financial aid and housing guarantees should be extended for the duration of a student's degree to provide both comfort and certainty.
- **Enhanced Communication and Public Engagement:** The Rector's office, with its historic significance and reach, can act as a bridge between students, the university administration, and the wider community. By fostering open dialogues, addressing concerns publicly, and ensuring timely responses, we can build trust and transparency in the accommodation process.
- **Efficiency in Housing Assignments:** Collaborating with the accommodation services, it's crucial to reassess and create more efficient processes to aid the team in their work. By optimizing our systems, we can expedite housing assignments and reduce unnecessary delays for returning students.
- **Strengthening Town and Gown Relations:** The university doesn't exist in isolation; we're an integral part of the larger St Andrews community. It's vital that we foster positive relations with local businesses and residents. By promoting understanding and cooperation, we can ease some of the animosities that arise around housing issues. Encouraging local landlords to

partner with the university and ensuring that rents for university-managed properties remain reasonable, can be steps towards a harmonious community relationship.

- **Supporting the Accommodation Services Team:** Our accommodation services team plays a pivotal role in the student housing experience. It's crucial that we provide them with the necessary resources, training, and support to ensure they can effectively meet the diverse needs of our student population.
- **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Work with the university's finance department and external donors to increase the availability of financial aid options, scholarships, and bursaries for students in need.

Cost of Living

The cost-of-living crisis has increasingly become a significant concern for many, and its impact on students is palpable. As the rector, I pledge to ensure that every student's right to affordable housing, education, and living is recognized and upheld.

- **Student Employment Opportunities:** Promote and expand on-campus employment opportunities, ensuring students have a way to support themselves while gaining work experience.
- **Engagement with Local Authorities:** Collaborate with local authorities to discuss the wider implications of the cost-of-living crisis on students, aiming for actionable solutions that benefit the entire student community.

8. Communication and Accountability

In my role as Rector, I am committed to ensuring that the University's actions and policies are directly aligned with the needs and aspirations of its students. Having engaged with the intricacies of university operations, I pledge not only to challenge the system when necessary but also to work collaboratively towards solutions. I will strive for open channels of communication, ensuring student concerns are met with respect and responsiveness.

- **Quarterly Feedback:** Initiate quarterly feedback sessions where students can directly communicate their experiences and concerns, with clear actions and follow-ups.
- **Open Rector Hours for One-on-One Conversations:** Building a relationship with the student body requires more than official meetings and emails. To foster a culture of approachability and openness, I plan to hold bi-monthly "Open Rector Hours." These will be opportunities for students to meet me, share their thoughts, seek guidance, or discuss any issues they're facing, no appointment needed.

- **Review Mechanism:** Establish an annual review of the representation system, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance.

In essence, my role as Rector will focus on open communication, proactive engagement, and genuine responsiveness to student concerns. I will strive to create a university environment where every student feels empowered to take an active role in shaping our community.

9. Climate Action and Sustainability

Anger and passion can be catalysts for change, but for lasting impact, we need sustainable strategies. It's my ambition to ensure that students have clarity on issues and the challenges ahead. By treating lived experiences as invaluable expertise, I want to harness these insights to influence real change. We need to reevaluate our student representation structure, ensuring every student feels connected and empowered.

In recognising the invaluable work of the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB), I remain deeply appreciative of its efforts since February 2020, especially in accelerating our university's response to the global climate emergency. With the expert leadership of Professor Sir Ian Boyd and the ongoing strategy development for a sustainable St Andrews, there's a robust foundation already in place.

The environmental challenges facing our world are immense, and it's paramount for us, as a leading institution, to be at the forefront of tackling them. The University of St Andrews, with its rich legacy and bright minds, has the potential to champion climate action not just on campus but globally.

As rector, my goal is to further amplify the student voice and ensure that their concerns, ideas, and solutions are at the forefront of the University's sustainability strategy. Here's how:

- **Lead by Example:** Work closely with the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) to ensure that the University's strategies for sustainability are effective, student-inclusive, and aligned with global best practices.
- **Student Forums & Participation:** Expand on the success of the student forums conducted by the ESB, making them a more frequent occurrence, thereby ensuring that the student community continually contributes its voice, concerns, and innovative solutions.
- **Green Campus Initiative:** Push for more green spaces within campus, energy-efficient infrastructure, and waste reduction campaigns.
- **Collaboration:** Partner with other universities and institutions globally to share knowledge, resources, and effective strategies in combating climate challenges.
- **Continued Student Forums:** Advocate for the regular hosting of student forums, ensuring consistent student input into the ESB's decisions.
- Allow for **remote participation** in these forums to accommodate all students, including international ones, given the increasingly virtual nature of our university community.

- **Localised Sustainability Projects:** Encourage student-led sustainability initiatives, providing them with a platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing with the ESB.
- Support grant applications and fundraising for student groups that wish to undertake community-based sustainability projects. Advocate for a **town-wide glass recycling** initiative that aligns with our broader sustainability goals, reduces landfill waste, and contributes to environmental conservation. This could include establishing partnerships with local organisations and businesses to promote the use of these recycling facilities.
- **Feedback Loop:** Establish a feedback mechanism wherein students can offer their perspectives on the Environmental Sustainability Strategy's progress, suggesting real-time amendments as necessary.
- **Yearly ESB Report:** Advocate for an annual report from the ESB that's student-friendly, outlining the progress, challenges, and future directions of their sustainability strategy.

10. Aligning with the University Strategy: A Rector's Role in Realizing a Shared Vision

The University of St Andrews has crafted an ambitious yet comprehensive strategy for 2022-2027, focusing on five essential themes: World-leading, Diverse, Digital, Sustainable, and Entrepreneurial. These themes resonate deeply with my vision as a prospective Rector and are woven into the fabric of my manifesto.

- **World-leading Excellence in Research and Education:** As Rector, I will ensure that the student body's aspirations and experiences are integral to the university's world-leading status. From working to optimize research opportunities to pushing for a robust pedagogical environment, I aim to ensure that St Andrews continues to advance knowledge for the greater good.
- **Fostering a Diverse and Inclusive Environment:** One of my core commitments is to champion diversity in all its forms. By focusing on intersectionality, advocating for international students, and pushing for widening access, I aim to build a culture where everyone feels authentically themselves. In essence, a compassionate and inclusive environment serves as a backbone for academic and societal contributions.
- **Pioneering Digital Transition:** The University aims to expand its reach through digital platforms and online education. In this spirit, I will push for more virtual spaces where students can express their concerns and give feedback directly to university leadership, ensuring every voice is heard no matter where they are in the world.
- **Sustainability:** From Curriculum to Campus: The climate crisis requires immediate action. I will collaborate with the university to speed up its transition to sustainable practices, from green energy systems to incorporating sustainability into the curriculum, aligning with the institution's strategy to become a role model for societal responsibility.
- **Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Spirit:** With a clear focus on innovation, my aim as Rector is to open up channels that allow students to express their creative and entrepreneurial

instincts. From mentorship programs to funding opportunities, I will work towards a framework that lets ideas flourish.

- **Local Community and Global Influence:** Strengthening the relationship between the university and the town of St Andrews will be of significant focus. The university's commitment to nurturing and promoting our local community and environment aligns with my goals for enhancing town and gown relations.

By continually measuring progress and refreshing frameworks, I will be accountable and transparent, aligning my role as Rector with the broader objectives of the University Strategy. My role will not be one of mere oversight but active participation and advocacy, ensuring that we collectively steer this great institution through the exciting yet challenging journey ahead.

11. Commitment to the Role and Responsibilities of the Rector

In assuming the role of Rector at the University of St Andrews, I am deeply cognisant of the many responsibilities this esteemed position holds. My commitment to fulfilling each of these duties reflects my dedication to the students and the broader university community. Here's a snapshot of how I plan to engage with and embrace these responsibilities:

- **University Court Meetings:** Recognizing the importance of governance and decision-making at the university, I will ensure diligent attendance at all four University Court meetings annually. I understand the significance of each of these sessions, especially the all-day event, where pivotal discussions shape our institution's future.
- **High-Level Engagements:** It's a privilege to be invited to participate in high-level meetings or events. Whether it's a graduation ceremony celebrating our students' achievements or alumni events that connect our rich history with our promising future, I am committed to being a present and active figure.
- **Continuous Learning:** Like all Court members, I pledge to attend pre-approved training events. This commitment to learning and staying updated ensures that I bring the best knowledge and practices to my role as Rector.
- **Student Engagement:** The voice of our student community is paramount. To ensure I am in touch with student concerns, needs, and aspirations, I will regularly participate in student 'surgeries' organized by the Rector's Assessor and the Students' Association.
- **Chair of the School Presidents' Forum:** In this capacity, I will lead and facilitate meaningful discussions, ensuring that each School President has a platform to voice their views, concerns, and ideas.
- **Rector's Fund:** Recognising the immense potential of our students, I am honoured to serve as the Principal Fundraiser and Patron of the Rectors' Fund. This scholarship scheme plays a

crucial role in aiding our students to realise their career aspirations, and I pledge to champion it vigorously.

- **Charity Trustee Responsibilities:** The University of St Andrews is more than just an educational institution; it is a charity dedicated to serving the broader societal good. As Rector, I will uphold my duties as a Charity Trustee with the utmost integrity and commitment. This involves:
 - **Prioritising** the interests of the university over any other affiliations or groups.
 - **Acting consistently** with the university's charitable purposes.
 - **Exercising** due care, diligence, and responsibility.
 - **Ensuring full compliance** with the provisions of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and other pertinent legislations.

Lastly, understanding the significance of physical presence, I am committed to being regularly present in St Andrews. This proximity ensures that I remain engaged, accessible, and effective in fulfilling my responsibilities.

Together, with a spirit of collaboration and a shared vision, we can navigate the challenges and celebrate the triumphs that lie ahead for our world-leading institution.

12. Final Thoughts

St Andrews is a place of tremendous potential, and incredible people. As I look back on my journey at the University of St Andrews, I see a tapestry of experiences, challenges, and growth. In each thread, there's a lesson, a story, a voice. As Rector, I promise to weave these voices into the future narrative of our university, ensuring each one resonates with purpose and clarity. Let's build bridges, not barriers. The University of St Andrews is a melting pot of traditions, innovations, aspirations, and achievements. It's a place where every student should feel empowered, heard, and celebrated. Through collaboration, communication, and a genuine commitment to sustainable growth, I pledge to make our university a haven of progress, inclusivity, and excellence. Together, we will ensure St Andrews not only stands the test of time but also leads the way into the future.

With gratitude to St Andrews and hope for our collective future, I humbly ask for your vote.