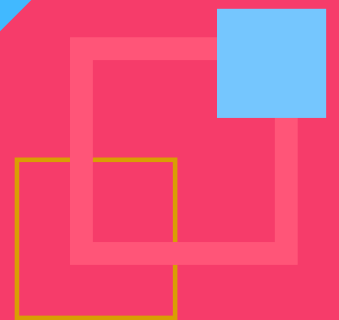


SEMESTER ONE REPORT

Cam Brown
Director of Education



January 2024



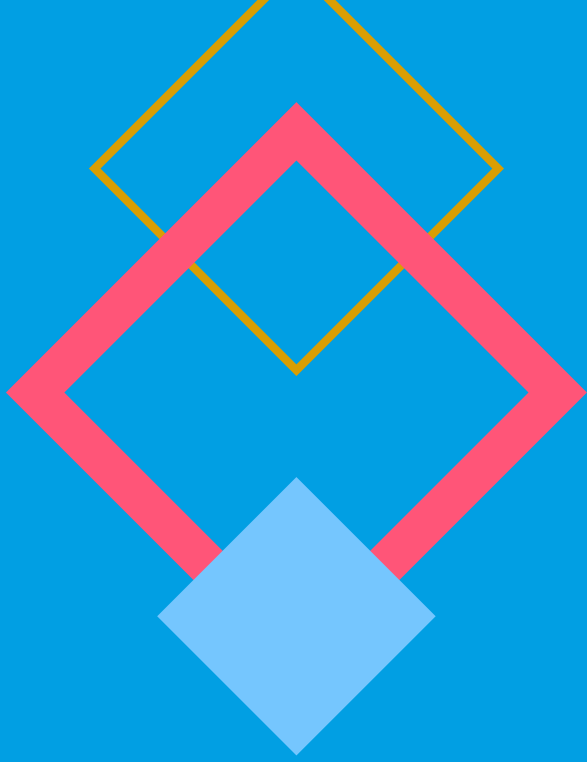
WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to Semester 2 of the 2023-2024 Academic Year!

The first half of my term as Director of Education (DoEd) is already over and only six more months remain until the end of my first elected term. As a Sabb Family, we are already preparing for the upcoming elections and can't wait to make some more big changes in Semester Two.

This report reflects carefully on the work I've done so far for students in Semester One and projects ahead to what my priorities will be for the remainder of the Academic Year. I review the progress I've made toward my original manifesto goals, explaining where those have changed and why, as well as discussing some of the opportunities that arose on the job.

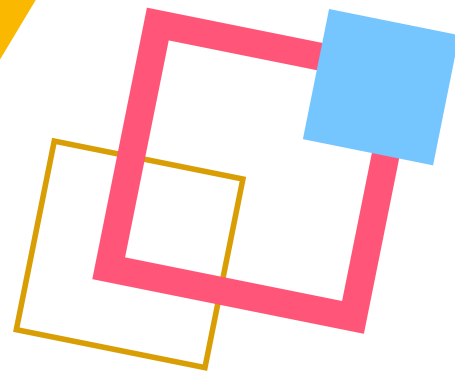
I am eternally grateful for the team around us, from our Class Reps to the School Presidents and Language Convenors, our outstanding Academic Representation Co-Ordinator, Chase, the Education Executive Team, and to the rest of the Sabbs - without whom, none of my achievements would have been possible. I hope you enjoy this reflection on what has been a very full, but meaningful semester.






MANIFESTO GOALS







MANIFESTO GOALS

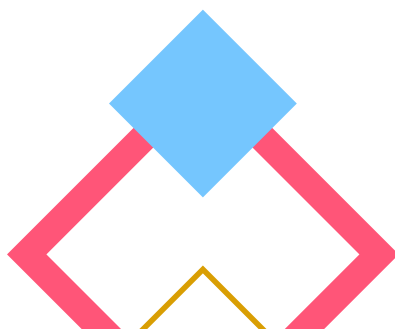


My original manifesto contained 20 individual goals split across five areas: (1) Be Visible (2) Deliver for You (3) Make Your Voice Heard (4) Ensure Every Person Matters (5) Supporting the Sabb Team. While many of my goals have changed since taking office, I am proud to have made significant progress on many of my promises to you. Here is a brief description of what I've done so far on my original campaign pledges.

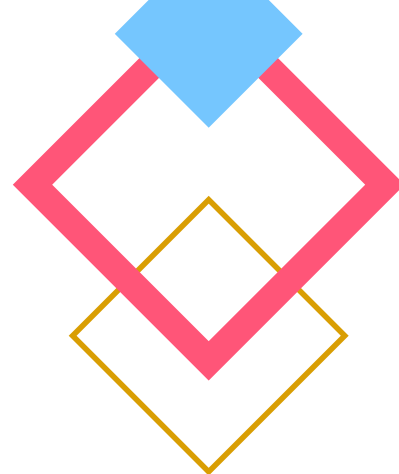
Manifesto Goal	Current Status	What I've Done
Visible and Accessible	 (Always In Progress)	I've been out and about, meeting students where they are all semester. On various projects (like the Academic Calendar consultation), I've gone on "road shows" to listen to students' views in buildings and in spaces. I've posted regularly on my social media , have spoken on podcasts, and have co-hosted open forum meetings as well. If you've missed all that, you've probably at least received one of my infamous "you've been nudged..." emails during Class Rep Elections! I'll continue to be visible and present in semester two and beyond.
Access My Diary	 (Complete)	I've made my diary publicly visible on Microsoft Outlook. Anyone who wants to can view my calendar (doed@) through the Outlook App or Web Browser to see what I'm up to on a daily and weekly basis
Retention and Reintegration Programme (Leave of Absences)	 (In Progress)	Beginning in December 2023, my team and I began reviewing University policies and procedures on returning from leaves of absence. We've also started doing a peer comparison at other Universities to see how St Andrews can be better supportive of students who take a gap in their studies. We'll be launching a more thorough investigation, consultation, and potentially a campaign in Semester Two.

MANIFESTO GOALS

Manifesto Goal	Current Status	What I've Done
Listening & Championing and Representing YOU		<p>Listening to student ideas and championing them underpins all of the work that I do. In the second section of this report, I detail all of the work I've done on topics that students have told me are priorities, like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extension policies · Academic appeals · A Change Programme at the Union <p>I've taken action to strengthen the student voice wherever possible; for example, I expanded the number of student seats on the Academic Senate by adding the PGT and PGR Presidents as voting members of this high-level decision making body within the University.</p>
24 Hour Study Spaces	 + 	<p>This semester, I successfully lobbied the University to open up access to the Butts Wynd Building (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for seminar and group study rooms. We've also rebranded the PG Lounge, keeping and respecting respected important PG Access through the day, while opening it up to any student who wants to use it when the Library is closed.</p> <p>There's far more to be done on 24 hour study spaces; I'll be working with the Library on reviewing outcomes from the open forum we held in November, and conducting a wider student consultation on study spaces. I'll continue pushing to grant better access to study spaces, which remains a high priority for students in St Andrews.</p>
Personal Academic Tutors	 (Not Started)	<p>I've paused work on the Personal Academic Tutors scheme I discussed in my manifesto. This was in-part due to industrial action; I wanted to be sensitive to teaching staff and not adding a review of that workload during ongoing strike action at the start of term. I'm prioritising other goals at the moment, but may partner with University leaders to explore options for academic and pastoral advice in schools in the future.</p>







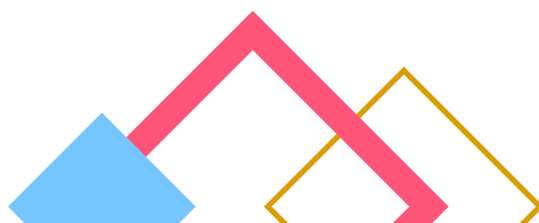
MANIFESTO GOALS



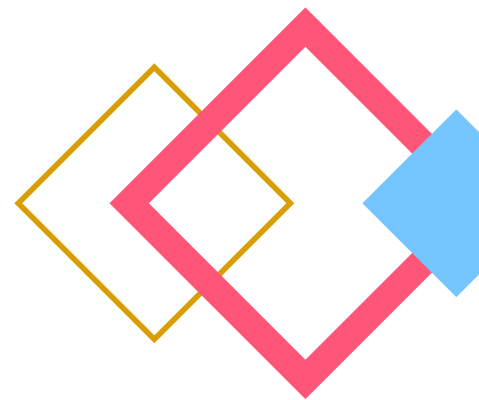
Manifesto Goal	Current Status	What I've Done
Tuition Receipts		I've also paused work on tuition receipts. As above, auditing where spending goes within Schools wouldn't have been possible with ongoing industrial action and other priorities have been more time-sensitive and able to be actioned. I'm considering starting a student campaign on this in the future.
Expose Hidden Fees		I'm working with the Associate Deans on how to coordinate this project within Schools and expect more work to happen starting from Semester Two.
We'll Ask & More Regular Polling		As DoEd, I'm taking steps to ask for student opinions and am driving my decisions based on what you want and need. The new Academic Calendar, for instance, will be based on students' top preference of model. My team also ran a Library open forum, and conduct regular smaller polls through our Class & PG Rep system and social media to gather student opinions about what we do.
Supporting School Presidents and Reps (and Building Up PGT & PGR Reps)		Early in summer, I worked to remodel the PG Rep System, and my proposed changes were ratified by the SRC and Academic Senate. We're now assessing those changes and examining ways to continue to expand support for PG Reps and Officers in Semester Two.
		At the Undergraduate level, I've worked to build a supportive environment for School Presidents, creating opportunities for partnership between senior University decision makers and our top student leaders in Schools. I've also diversified the student voices serving on University Committees (see below in the "Reimagining Representation" heading!)


MANIFESTO GOALS

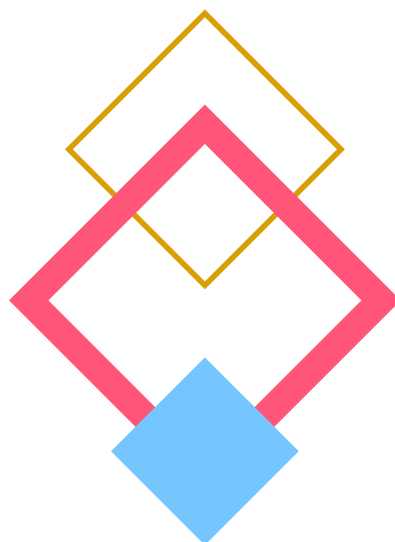
Manifesto Goal	Current Status	What I've Done
Introduce Q&A with the VP		In addition to regular meetings with the Vice President Education (the Proctor), I've also co-hosted podcasts and interviews with her on topics like the calendar. The Proctor attended our first Undergraduate Academic Forum of the year, where she interacted with School Presidents and Language Convenors about important topics like academic alerts and extensions. We'll be expanding more regular Q&A with the VP in Semester Two as well.
Here For You at Every Level		From the Student Representative Council to the University Court and Senate, I am representing student voices at every opportunity. I take action on emergency situations, like the discovery of RAAC in teaching spaces and industrial action, ensuring a strong presence for students so that our needs are represented and met.
Cutting Red Tape		Both within the Union and the University, there's a lot that can be changed and simplified. For example, I reformed the Education Discretionary Fund (EDF) to make guidelines clearer and more transparent, ensuring student money is accessible to our Reps. I've also worked to build better links between our SRC Officers on topics of shared priority (like Employability) and will continue to change the shape of Education Committee to best represent students. Most importantly in this section, I led the initiation of a Change Programme, which is detailed in another heading.
Putting You at the Heart of the SU		To make the Union more responsive to students, I worked with the Students' Association Board to initiate a Change Programme (see the heading below for more details).



MANIFESTO GOALS

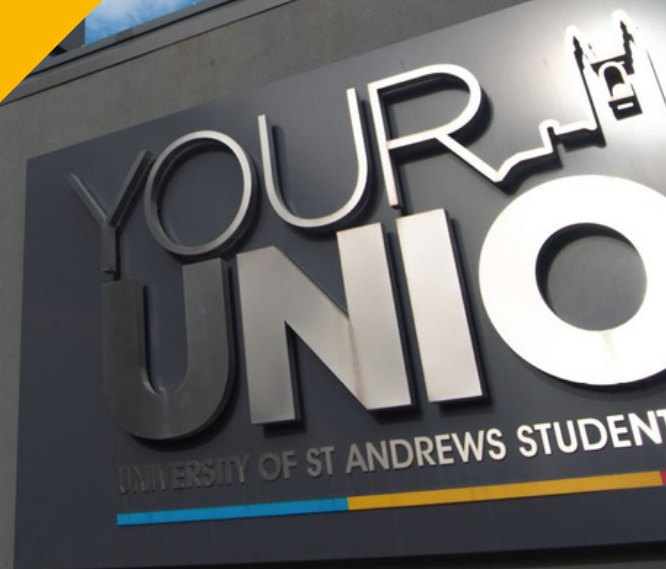


Manifesto Goal	Current Status	What I've Done
Supporting other Sabbs		<p>I'm grateful to work in a team of five other amazing full-time Sabbatical Officers. We get to partner and collaborate almost every day, but some highlights from the last few months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting Barry (Association President) on setting up and advertising the Campus Larder. - Backing Caitlin (Director of Wellbeing and Equality) on her work with the Race Equality Charter. - Partnering with Sam (Director of Student Development and Activities) to review Postgraduate Activity Support. - Working with Fiona (Athletic Union President) to expand the Wednesday Afternoon Protection (for sports and activities) to PGTs and PGRs. - Supporting Lucy (Director of Events and Services) and her staff team during Freshers by taking on shifts in the bars, just to help out! - Working with all the Sabbs to allocate our Activities Budget, giving funding groups like Saints LGBT+, Debates, and the Academic Representation Team.








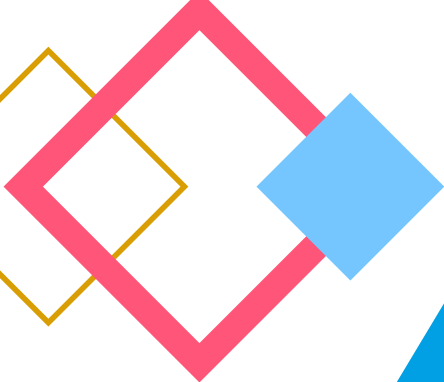
ACHIEVEMENTS & **PROGRESS**






ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

This section encompasses the projects and initiatives I have progressed *outside* of my original manifesto plan. While many of my initial ideas outlined in my manifesto remain important, many opportunities to positively affect student learning and research have presented themselves since taking office. Here are a few of the opportunities I've jumped on:





Achievement or Project	Current Status	What I've Done
Remodelling the Academic Calendar		In the largest-ever consultation run at the University, I worked with senior decision makers to get a new model for Semester Two passed and adopted through the Academic Senate. Thanks to the hard work of your representatives, Semester Two will include an independent learning week, a longer winter break, and a restoration of the May Dip tradition BEFORE exams, all while retaining two weeks of revision time and allowing staff to have time off during school holidays. We overcame substantial resistance; when the University wanted to delay changes by another academic year, I pushed hard to ensure changes for 2024/25 (the soonest possible timeline). The new calendar will be based on 65% of students' first or second choice of model.
University-wide Extensions Policy	 + 	<p>Working with the Deans and the Academic Representatives, we've put together and launched a new University-wide platform and guidelines around extensions. The new portal is live NOW and has been adopted by all but two Schools. From AY2024-25, the guidance and portal will become mandatory, ensuring every student has access to the same basic system and entitlements for extensions, regardless of subject area.</p> <p>The School Presidents and PGT Reps have brought to our attention that how the new portal is being used still varies widely by school, and I'm working on this with the decanal team to ensure consistency in Semester Two and beyond. There's more to come, but we're well on our way to an extension system that is equitable and supportive for students.</p>







ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

Achievement or Project	Current Status	What I've Done
Students' Association Change Programme		Along with my fellow Sabbatical Officers and Students' Association Board Members, we've launched a comprehensive review and restructure of how the Association functions. As the Vice-Chair and Convenor of the Change Committee, I secured partnership and funding from the University to support the Change Programme, which is being led by a newly hired Change Director. This work will bring our Union up to par on the services and representational support we offer, and will look at ways to make us more responsive to the student voice. There is much to come on this much needed work in Semester Two, and I am excited for the student leadership to work together with the Change Director to set a new strategic direction for the Students' Association.
Academic Alerts	 	Partnering with the Deans, the DoWell, the Disabled Students' Network, and the Disability Reps, we've successfully reviewed and improved the Academic Alert system. This includes a softening of the language used in these emails, focusing first on student wellbeing rather than employing blaring warnings and punitive language. The DoWell and I will continue working with Deans for overhaul of the Academic Alert mechanism in Semester Two.
Purdie Building and RAAC Response		<p>In response to discovery of RAAC in the Purdie Building, I stepped up to provide a student voice an response at weekly check ins with University Officials. I've consulted with School Presidents and Reps about alternative venues, the move to online study, and what further support was needed while these spaces were closed. We also made sure that there were QR Codes in the Willie Russel Building to collect feedback from students about the alternative teaching spaces put in place, and have sent out a variety of communications with the University to students whose classes were affected by the closure.</p> <p>I'm pleased to report that Purdie Theatre A will be open again in January 2024, with more specific updates coming soon!</p>



ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

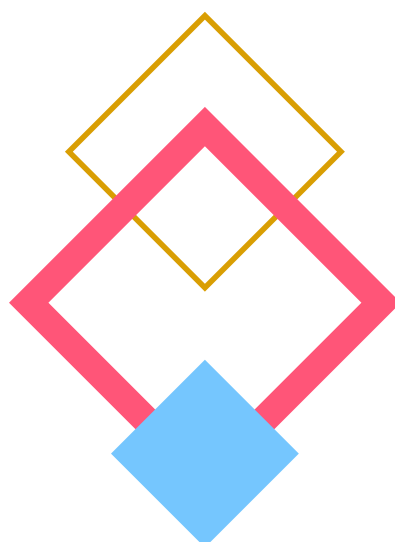
Achievement or Project	Current Status	What I've Done
Reimagining Representation on University Committees		<p>This year, I implemented work that was started by the past two DoEds to improve student representation on University Committees within my remit area. As part of this process, the Students' Association and the University have agreed on a new method to appoint students to serve on University Committees in the first place – diversifying the voices on these decision making groups and ensuring all levels of Academic Reps are speaking for students on important policies and priorities.</p> <p>We've also improved the guidance given to student reps on these committees and ensured that committee staff are more actively consulting students and student reps on any proposal they are drafting that affects the student experience. These changes mark a larger culture shift to make the University more responsive to student voices, and strengthen our position as your representatives.</p>
Rebranding and Upgrading the Student-led Teaching Awards	 + 	<p>Ahead of our annual Teaching Awards, I rebranded them to be the "1413 Awards" (named after the year the University was founded), and making internal changes to make the awards and accompanying ceremony feel more special and important. Our teachers do excellent work, and it's important that we give the staff recognised by students a celebration that is as exceptional as they are.</p> <p>As happens annually, the Education Executive Team has reviewed and modified the award categories and criteria too. <u>Nominations</u> are open until 21 February, so be sure your recognise a deserving teacher this year!</p>
Rectoral Election		<p>Along with the Sabbs, led by the Association President, we ran a successful Rector's Election with three candidates. I made sure to bring all three candidates before the Education Committee to answer questions from School and Postgraduate Presidents and to test their views on important academic and research issues.</p>

ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

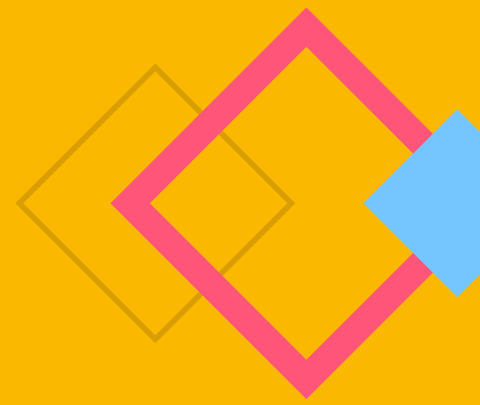
Achievement or Project	Current Status	What I've Done
Library Open Forum		The Education Executive Team partnered with the Library to run a student consultation on topics like opening hours, facilities, and collections. We're working actively with the Library staff to review the incredible amount of student feedback we received, and will be working together to make improvements and enhancements based on student feedback. More specifics and a second forum will follow in Semester Two.
Quality Enhancement (URLTs, QESR, Annual Academic Monitoring)		As part of my role, I served on three University-led Reviews of Learning and Teaching to ensure Schools are meeting quality teaching standards. (I'll serve on three more of these all-day reviews in S2). I'm also preparing student views for the next external review of the University, our Quality Enhancement Standards Review (QESR) and am updating the "student engagement" section of the Quality Code that the University responds to on an annual basis.
Education Committee Constitution Review		The Education Executive team is reviewing the Educom constitution to clarify remits, formalise partnerships with equalities subcommittees, and improve accountability structures for officers. This review will be complete by the first SRC meeting of Semester Two, where we hope it will pass with flying colours!
Student Partnership Agreement		Working with the other Sabbatical Officers and the Proctor, we've written a draft Student Partnership Agreement between the Union and the University. The draft will be ratified and implemented later in Semester Two.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

Achievement or Project	Current Status	What I've Done
Class and PG Rep Elections		Earlier this semester, the School Presidents and EduExec team set a record for the highest number of candidates in a Students' Association Election – with over 9% of the student body choosing to run for a Rep role! This exceptional involvement is the result of immense dedication from School Presidents and Language Convenors, and thanks to our team efforts, we now have over 500 Reps in place, trained, and making improvements in your departments
Subcommittee Budgets		Working with the Director of Student Development and Activities (DoSDA), I introduced a new budget for Education Operations (which allocated £4,000 for Education projects and Rep support). This will prevent funding that should go to School-level Reps from being eaten up by annual projects like the Teaching Awards, recognition for volunteers, and Rep Election materials.



LOOKING TO SEMESTER TWO



As you can see in many sections of my report, there's still much to do in Semester Two (and beyond)! That said, I also know that there will be many unexpected opportunities and situations that arise as well, and I am committed to being responsive and expressing a strong student voice wherever that need presents itself.

My top few priorities coming back from the winter break will include:

- Working on a review of the Academic Appeals system at the University, and lobbying for policies that are fairer and simpler for students, especially those in distressing circumstances.
- Establishing better procedures for retention and reintegration of students who take a leave of absence, including a consultation with students about how they can be supported.
- Smoothing over the work done on extensions and ensuring that every School adopts the new guidelines and portals consistently.
- Lastly, internal to the Union, I'll be working hard to execute and implement our Change Programme, which will leave a lasting mark on our goals as an organisation and set us up for a future where we offer even better support for our representatives and students in St Andrews.

If you have questions about this report, what I'm up to, or have an idea, I'd be delighted to hear from you at (doed@st-andrews.ac.uk). You can also stay up to date on my projects and priorities on Instagram @yourdoed.

