

Hi, I'm Lewis Wood, and I want to be your Association President. I believe that our Union has an essential role in sustaining our unique community here in St Andrews, and I want to make sure that your time as part of it is the best that it can be.

I care deeply about St Andrews. I've experienced the transformative powers that this town has first-hand, and I believe that its potential to improve the lives of those who study here are boundless. I want to see St Andrews thrive for all of us.

Over the last three years, I have devoted my time to engaging with the student body within and without the Union. I've been on the Association's Board of Trustees, I've sat on student councils as the President of LGBT+, and I've also been a member of the Equal Opportunities, Wellbeing, and Community Relations committees. My life in the bubble has been one of diverse experiences and high engagement, and I believe it's given me a special understanding of how the Association can change for the better.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is an enduring and complex issue that I intend to address promptly. There's no simple solution, but I believe that my dynamic approach to this issue will succeed.

Short-Term Solutions:

- 1) I will prioritise the expansion of University Managed Properties, increasing the number of high-quality, low-cost beds in town.
- 2) I will fight the HMO ban. The ban is being reviewed by Fife Council in June, and I will work with the outgoing Association President to present a strong case against the ban. The original intentions of the ban have failed, and it is important that further attempts to change the housing situation work for the best intentions of both student and full-time residents of our community. I will navigate the discussion with diplomacy, confidence, and a focus on expanding accommodation capacity.

Long-Term Solutions:

- 1) My accommodation priority is simple: high-quality, low-cost housing. I will advocate for this in all long-term accommodation development plans, constantly working to represent the best interests of students.
- 2) I will create a redevelopment forum to ensure that the student opinion is heard and advocated for in redevelopment plans at the highest levels, especially in relation to the current Albany Park redevelopment.

External Relations

Brexit and national negotiations will have a huge impact on the student experience, and I'm committed to making our opinions loud and clear. We need to conserve some of the best features of our community and safeguard them for the future.

1) I will work closely with the Principal's office to respond to the latest developments decisively and authoritatively, using the voices of the University and the Association harmoniously and powerfully.

2) I will liaise with Scottish sabbatical teams to harness our collective voice and lobbying power. We will ensure that our voice is as loud as possible and that national politicians acknowledge and incorporate student demands and concerns into Brexit negotiations.

3) I will work closely with the Proctor to fight for the Erasmus scheme. A majority of the financing for year abroad students comes from this scheme. Losing access to the scheme is a potential consequence of Brexit negotiations; this would drastically reduce our ability to finance student study abroad and thereby massively hurt the student experience. I will ensure that everything in the President's power is done to prevent this through a coordinated effort with the Proctor.

4) Tuition fees are an ever-present concern, and the future of tuition fees is uncertain. My attitude towards them is not; I believe that they should be kept to an absolute minimum and that we should preserve our University's intellectual rigour and ethnic diversity by keeping tuition fees for both EU and non-EU international students at a low and sustainable level. I will engage in these negotiations, and I will make this advocacy a priority.

Transparency

I value advocating for student opinion as one of the most important parts of the President's job. The President has access to every tier of the University and to a wide reach of councils and committees that make up the St Andrews community. I want to make sure that your voice is heard on all of them. That's why I'm committed to increasing transparency and communication between the sabbatical team and the Association, and here's how I'll do it:

1) Feedback forums; The President will never hear your opinion if you are never given a platform to voice it. I will create feedback forums, to which all students are invited to attend, and which will function in a question time manner, to ensure that you can discuss wide ranging issues with the sabbatical team.

2) Outreach development; I want increased Sabbatical outreach. Going into halls, engaging with first-year students who may be unfamiliar with the Association's government, and widening the net of people contributing to the discourse is crucial in accurately reflecting the opinions of the student body.

3) Student Council reform; I will reform student councils, and transform them from a bureaucratic exercise into a prosperous tool of debate, engagement, and productivity. Adherence to the strict standing orders of councils, and the intensive technical jargon used makes them inaccessible to visiting students, who are prevented from engaging. We need to change councils to invite the students into the debate, and publicise councils to make students know that they are welcome, wanted, and valued in the activity.

Widening Access

I'm a firm believer that strength comes from diversity. According to HESA statistics, only four in ten students that we admit come from state schools - excluding Oxford, that's the poorest state school intake in the country. We need to ensure that we're encouraging applications based on academic ability, not financial or educational circumstances.

1) I will continue the widening access initiatives that are just beginning to take shape, collaborating with the Ambassador programme, and ensuring that the outgoing President's first steps towards a national widening access initiative are built upon.

2) I will instigate subcommittee workshops and interactions with local Fife schools. By having groups such as Saints LGBT+, or Mermaids, join existing programmes ran by UDS, we can engage local students with the Association, opening access channels into the University, and encourages applications from non-private school students.

Alumni

Leaving St Andrews doesn't represent a desire to leave the University or the Bubble community. We need to capitalise on this desire for engagement beyond graduation and use it to benefit present students and alumni.

1) I will work with the DoSDA to centrally digitise affiliated society membership lists. This will provide the Association with a database of student memberships, helping us to recognise ways in which we can encourage Alumni to return to the town.

2) I will work with the Alumni Officer to further develop the Alumni Mentor scheme, working to partner students with University alumni. It encourages alumni to engage in a non-financial capacity and creates a personableness to the alumni-student relationship.

3) I will continue to represent the Association at alumni events. It's been clear in the past that alumni respond well to engaging with the sabbatical officers, benefiting their experience, and ultimately, fundraising efforts.