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A GUIDE TO YOUR SU PRESIDENT CANDIDATES



SPRING ELECTIONS

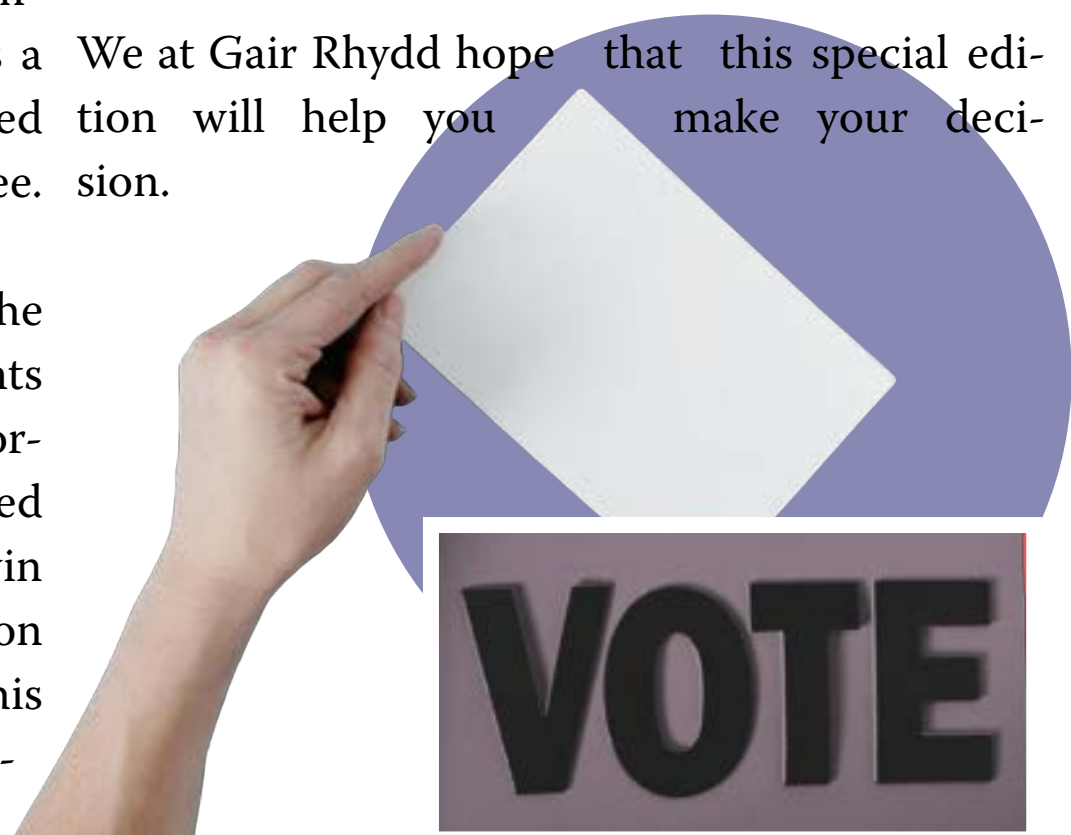
This election, as has been said by many of the candidates in it, may be one of the most important in recent years. We all know that change, in whatever form it takes, will come to affect every one of us. Thus, it is more essential than ever that we are well informed about who we choose to represent us through the Students' Union. We have compiled the responses of five candidates in this year's election for the next President of the Students Union, in the hope that you might find it easier to choose someone who best represents your views and interests. The President of the Students Union is the highest ranking of all the elected officers, the others being the Vice Presidents of, Sports, Societies and Volunteering, Welsh, Postgraduate Students, International Students and The Heath Park Campus. Like the vice-presidential positions, it is a paid role, one which is normally performed for one year after the completion of a degree.

Although one can interrupt study to take on the role and there have been cases of SU presidents being re-elected for a second term, this is normally not the case. It is common, as happened last year, for a vice president to run for and win the presidency. In role of president a person oversees the running of the Students' Union, this means advocating for students interests to Cardiff University, local government and within

national and devolved contexts. It also means heading, with the assistance of permanent staff such as The Chief Executive, a multimillion-pound organisation with a reported income of £12,908,971 last academic year. Cardiff's student union has grown into one of the country's largest and thus running it has become a great responsibility in addition to commitments to advocating for students.

Turnout tends to be low in these elections, around 7000. Yet with the urgency which has been injected into this election by recent events, such as the announcement of cuts to teaching, perhaps there will be greater engagement with the election process.

We at Gair Rhydd hope that this special edition will help you make your decision.



All available Sabbatical Positions



Student Union President

VP Cymraeg

VP International Students

VP Postgraduate Students

VP Sports and AU President

VP Societies and Volunteering

Aris Prevost

Why are you running for SU President?

I'm running for SU president because of the brutal cuts that have hit Cardiff University. As a student activist and a socialist, I think the way to stop these cuts is through linking up with the trade unions and students, and as SU president, I would be at the forefront fighting for your courses and your education! I have strong ties with the trade union movement that will allow me to get everyone to continually push back against these cuts until we win, as this issue can only be won through mass movements, not individuals fighting for change.

If elected, what do you intend to keep the same?

I think there is a lot that I would not change but rather add onto or expand. One such thing is the showcases in the SU do a brilliant job at bringing together societies and people alike. I would want to keep them the same, though I would be more than happy to expand them if the need arises! The student services, such as IT support is something I would not change, but rather expand so that more people can connect to eduroam easier!

If elected, what do you intend to change?

My three main campaign points are to fight back against the cuts, put more money in your pockets, and further democratize the SU. One such change I would enact to follow these three points is to expand the Feed Your Flats scheme. Currently, it is good but inconsistent. I want to make the scheme a permanent or semi-permanent fixture, with a regular schedule so everyone can benefit from the scheme at a time where the cost-of-living crisis is hitting everyone hard. Other things I would change is to improve student housing through making sure that student housing is easier to navigate, through working with ACORN and improving the communication with students about what traps to look out for and how to fight for your rights if your landlord/letting agency is not playing ball.

In what ways has your time at university influenced your platform in this election?

I've been a student representative, president and treasurer of the Socialist Students campaign, and been involved with various groups on campus fighting for students. This breadth of experiences has allowed me to tap into the student body and understand what they want to change. I also know a lot of people who are involved with causes that I am not in, and I have used what they have been demanding for to guide my manifesto.

When did you decide to run for the position?

I decided to run in response to these cuts, to show our VC and University Executive Board that the student body cares about these cuts and won't let them get away with it! I've been fighting on the outside for student change, and with the cuts being announced, I decided to fight on the inside instead.



Jake Enea

Why are you running for SU President?

I'm running for SU President because I believe every student deserves to have their voice heard and valued. My time at Cardiff has shown me just how important community and representation are. I want to ensure that all students feel empowered to share their thoughts and concerns. It's crucial that we fight for our needs—whether that's standing up against budget cuts or addressing serious issues like discrimination and sexual violence. My vision is to create a student union that genuinely puts students first and amplifies all our voices.

If elected, what do you intend to keep the same?

If elected president, I plan to uphold the liberal values of inclusivity and open communication that are already part of our student union. I believe in the importance of representing all students and ensuring their voices are heard in decision making. I'll also continue to support existing initiatives that promote student well-being and engagement, while looking for ways to enhance them even further.

If elected, what do you intend to change?

I intend to bring meaningful changes to boost student engagement and representation. This includes establishing regular feedback opportunities, like weekly surgeries, where students can share their concerns directly with me. I'll advocate against cuts to essential programs and push for improvements in student services, such as mental health support and campus facilities. By increasing the frequency of Student Senate meetings and commissioning reviews on critical issues, I want to create a more responsive and accountable student union that truly puts students first. Together, let's embrace the freedom to voice our needs and create a stronger community.

In what ways has your time at university influenced your platform in this election?

My time at university has deeply shaped my platform. Interacting with so many different students has taught me that everyone has unique experiences and needs. Cardiff's challenges, like funding cuts and the fight for student representation, have inspired my "Putting Students First" plan. I want to create a more inclusive environment where students feel comfortable voicing their concerns, and I've learned firsthand how important it is to tackle issues like discrimination and mental health.

When did you decide to run for the position?

I decided to run for SU President after spending time reflecting on my journey at Cardiff and noticing the struggles students face. It became clear to me that our union needs new energy and a stronger commitment to student engagement. After participating in leadership roles and listening to my peers, I felt a strong urge to step up and lead with a plan that truly represents our diverse student body.



Maria Pollard

Why are you running for SU President?

I decided to run because I think the SU needs a shake-up! It is also a chance to stand up for students and help out across the community! I've got previous experience advocating for students (as an EMA campaign organiser and as a youth worker) which puts me in a strong position to deliver a better student experience, to fight the University's school cuts, and to go after dodgy landlords. More gigs and club nights, no compulsory redundancies, and much less mould behind the sofa.

If elected, what do you intend to keep the same?

I think the current Sabb team has been working on some great stuff! I'd like to continue their work advocating for Postgrad Research students, fighting student parking bans and tackling sexual violence on campus. Everything's a work in progress, of course, but I've got a lot of time for this year's officers, and I'd be glad to pick up where they left off on those three points in particular.

If elected, what do you intend to change?

I want to see our SU standing even stronger against cuts and working with affected students. I want a focus on housing, the cost of living and the issues that face every single student at Cardiff. I'd also love the SU to seem more accessible and less intimidating to engage with! If elected, I want to have weekly office drop-ins so that students can just pop by to have a chat, whether it be to just meet me or to tell me the issues they're facing. I want to create an online suggestion box and to do weekly Q&As on my socials. A lot of people don't actually know what the SU does, so I'd really love to make short videos explaining who sabbatical officers even are, what things like Student Senate and AGM are and why they're so important.

In what ways has your time at university influenced your platform in this election?

My first year was impacted a lot by strikes. I spent a fair amount of my time at protests and on pickets, and really got to know my lecturers and the issues they face. That's why the cuts were so shocking to me and why it's so important to me that the SU fights them. When staff lose out, so do students, and we've got to stand together when they're threatened or when we are. I'm really big on housing because I've lived in houses with mould and rat problems (who hasn't, right?). We had no clue how to stick up for ourselves at the time and I really wish that there were resources for students like us to stand up to our landlords! It goes further than that, the SU has more power than we think to push back against poor quality housing and extortionate rent, and we could really have done with some help when my housemates and I were in a tough spot.

When did you decide to run for the position?

I started thinking about running around Christmas time and then officially decided in the middle of January.



Alice Nicholson

Why are you running for SU President?

I'm running for SU president, because we desperately need to turn our students' union into a militant, fighting union. Management are cutting 400 jobs, closing courses and taking decisions that are not in the interests of staff or students. For too long the SU has facilitated management's decisions rather than building links with staff to organise a fight back against them. It is no wonder most students won't engage with this election, when they see the SU as incapable of representing them? Being SU President shouldn't be a stepping stone for careerists, that's why I will use the position not to negotiate with management or to facilitate their decisions, but build a movement of staff and students to fight back against them.

If elected what do you intend to keep the same?

I think the SU has failed as a union that represents students for too long, even this election has been barely promoted and advertised, there are over 30,000 students here, how many of them know about the election? How many of them will actually vote? The fact is, the SU has had little to no mandate for too long. It needs to be turned upside down and that means drawing in the widest layer of staff and students possible, so that there is a truly democratic and representative movement that can fight for the needs of staff and students at this university.

If elected, what do you intend to change?

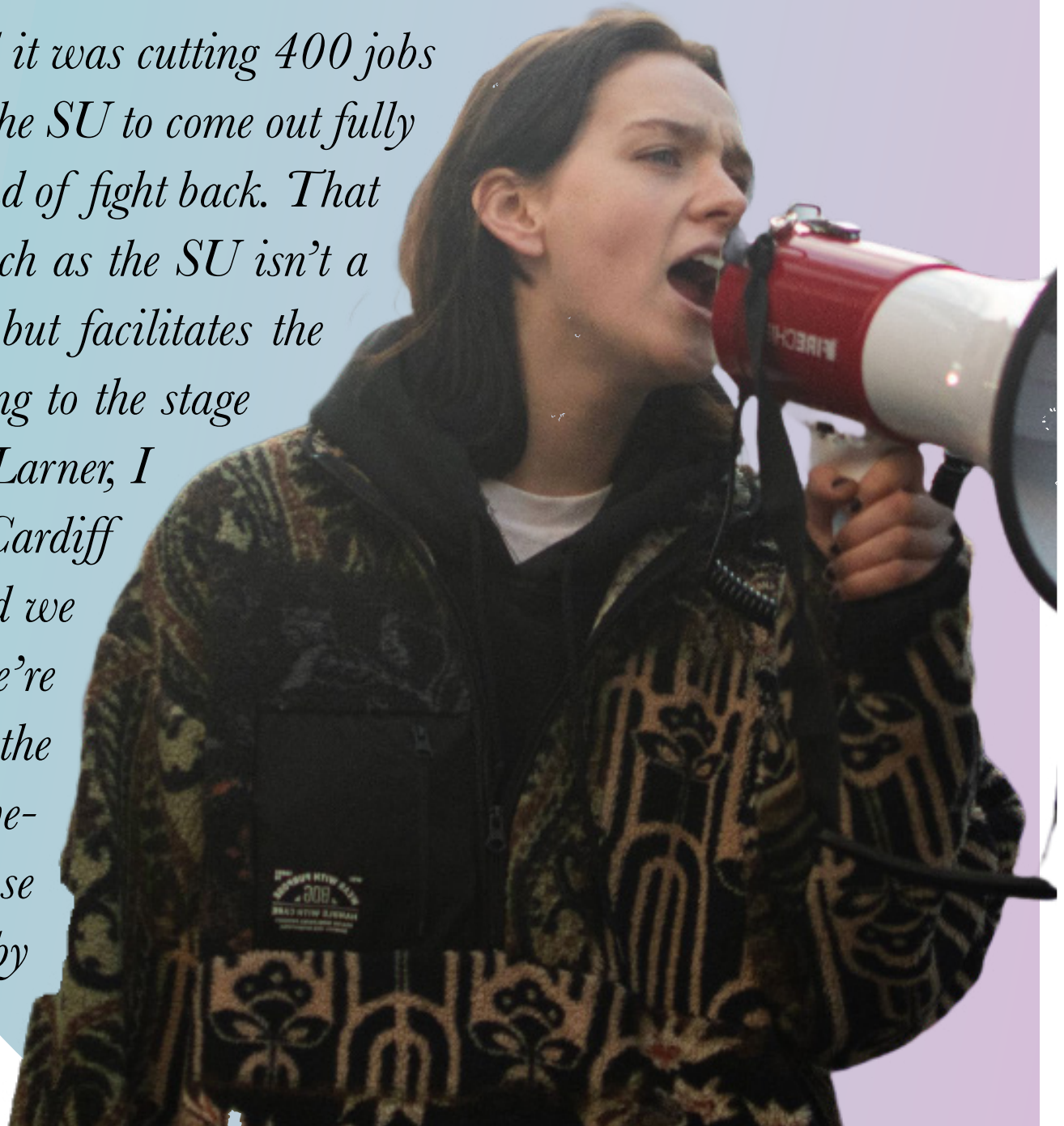
First and foremost, the role of the SU. It should be a militant, fighting union, not a glorified charity for careerists to pocket a nice salary and then move on. If elected I will spend all my time building links with staff and their unions, as well as engaging students and encouraging them to organise in their classes and amongst their fellow students, to build a movement that can fight back against management, their cuts and kick capitalism off campus once and for all.

In what ways has your time at university influenced your platform in this election?

From cracking down on Palestine protests, to attacking staff and students, it has been clear to me during my time at the university that management run it like a business and not in the interests of staff and students. It's crazy, because it's staff and students that run the university, who work ridiculous and stressful hours, all while those on 6-figure salaries in management make decisions. This is frankly an injustice that needs to be resolved and that can only happen by building a movement of staff and students to wrestle power away from management.

When did you decide to run for the position?

When the university announced it was cutting 400 jobs and closing courses, I expected the SU to come out fully against it and organise some kind of fight back. That was probably expecting too much as the SU isn't a union that fights for students, but facilitates the will of management. After going to the stage managed meeting with Wendy Larner, I talked with my comrades in the Cardiff Marxist Society and we decided we needed to stand. That's why we're running on a programme to use the SU presidency to build a movement of staff and students, because clearly things can't be changed by one person through the SU itself.



Catrin Edith Parry

Why are you running for SU President?

I am running for SU President because I am passionate about championing student voice and working to improve all aspects of the student experience. After having a years experience as a sabbatical officer, I can say I don't shy away from challenging the University when it comes to any matters ranging from issues surrounding student support to the current Academic Future proposals.

If elected, what do you intend to keep the same?

I intend to carry on the work that the officer team have been doing this year, especially in regards to tackling sexual violence - I intend to keep on working with Time To Act to tackle the issue that our students are facing on campus, also I intend to carry on representing the student voice at all times, ensuring that students are heard in all conversations and decisions that are made at our university.

If elected, what do you intend to change?

I intend to ensure that we have suitable prayer rooms across all of campus, all students who wish to pray, and/or have a quiet space should have somewhere to go without having to ask for this provision, it should be something that already stands. I will also hold Cardiff University accountable on the promises they make.

In what ways has your time at university influenced your platform in this election?

During my time at university I was on Y Gym Gym and UMCC committees, I was also a student representative for the School of Welsh. These opportunities led me to running to be an officer last year.

When did you decide to run for the position?

A short while after being a sabbatical officer I decided to run for a second term, and when the Academic Futures proposals were announced i wanted to ensure that I could continue the work of challenging Wendy Larner and UEB.

