

# Trust Dave!

## David Patterson for Association President: My Manifesto

### **WHY I AM RUNNING**

The day I arrived in St Andrews an Ambassador told me “we make our own fun here” – four years later, I can definitely say she was right. St Andrews is unique. It offers you the chance to truly indulge in what drives you and ignites your passion.

Frankly, I love St Andrews. It’s made me thrive and grow as a person. And now I want to give back and guarantee you get the best out of your time here too.

St Andrews is diverse but we all face the same problems. With an Association President that’s passionate, experienced, and understands how to get things done we can make real headway with our accommodation situation, sail smoothly through the redevelopment, and speak as one at University level and beyond.

It would be an honour and a privilege to work to better the lot of St Andrews students. I strongly believe I have the drive and practical ideas to make real improvements to student life at St Andrews.

For a President with experience, Trust Dave.

### **EXPERIENCE**

I’m a candidate with real, extensive experience both inside and outside the Association. Some of the things I’ve done at St Andrews include:

- Association Executive Committee, SSC Deputy Senior Officer (2013-Present)
- Co-Chair, Scott Lang Dinner Committee (2012-2013)
  - Secured Baroness Williams as Speaker
  - Organised Dinner for 140 students and staff
- Student Representative on the Community Council (2012-2013)
  - Stood for students on HMO issues,
- President of Mermaids and SSC Performing Arts Officer (2013-Present)
  - Organised over 40 events: plays, socials, workshops and Christmas Ball.
  - Directed organisation’s overall strategy
  - Worked to increase Students drama’s presence in the local community.
- Mermaids Productions Treasurer (2012-2013)
- Member of the St Andrews Preservation Trust (2013-Present)

- Fellowship of St Andrews
  - Organised and directed historical tours of St Andrews, and a special ghost version for local groups.
- Class Representative: MO1007, MO1008, LT1003, LT1004

## **OVERVIEW**

My goal is to be an Association President that is ambitious for the Union and focused on improving your time here at St Andrews. One year is not a long time, so I'm committed to practical, deliverable policies that can help make a difference.

Below is a more detailed run-through of my ideas, but my big pledges are:

1. Working towards improving our **accommodation** situation through partnership, letting you know your rights as renters and building relationships across the town.
2. Keeping the **student experience** open to all, tackling the barriers preventing those applying in the first instance and keeping Wednesdays free for sport and activities.
3. Navigating the challenges and restrictions on space in the final stages of **redevelopment**, ensuring your Union is open and running smoothly.

I hope this manifesto shows you I am someone with the drive and ideas to make St Andrews a better place for you, the students. If you want to talk to me about any of my policies, or even suggest a few ideas of your own, feel free to contact me at [trustdave@gmail.co.uk](mailto:trustdave@gmail.co.uk)!

## **POLICIES**

### **Accommodation**

As fantastic as it is to study at St Andrews, perhaps the biggest problem faced by students here is accommodation. Almost all of us know the difficulty of ever rising rents and all-too-often poor services from landlords and letting agents. No Association President can solve in one year problems that have built up over decades, but there are small yet significant things we can do together to improve accommodation for the students of St Andrews, particularly through scrutiny and letting students know their rights as tenants. Through collective action, we can improve the lot of St Andrews students and demand a better deal.

As Association President, I will:

- Build on and substantially improve our annual renting workshops. These will be held in Halls of Residence, focused on letting students know their rights as renters and will include services such as breaking down leases

and offering concrete advice on tenant/agent problems. I will make sure they are more effectively promoted and better tailored to students' concerns.

- Build links with the university's renowned Centre for Housing Research, to come up with innovative ideas together on what the Association can do to improve the accommodation situation.
- Ensure that the role of our Accommodation Advocate plays in helping students is much more widely known.
- Take a data-driven approach to my accommodation work. I will make sure the next Accommodation Survey is effectively targeted and expanded, so it can best inform decisions about which areas should be focused on.
- Lobby to ensure the new private halls come with a full wardennial and pastoral care system in place.
- Work with the university to make sure low-cost rooms are always a priority in its wider accommodation strategy.
- Work to improve the often-ignored problem of postgraduate housing. I will be a strong advocate for more dedicated postgraduate hall rooms, and will set up an online matching service for incoming postgrads looking for flatmates, to help make up for their late entry into the search for housing.

## **Accessibility**

The St Andrews student experience has no rival. However students must be able to access it in order to flourish. I want to ensure students get the very best out of St Andrews. I will work to reduce the worries that come with strained personal finances, allowing students to access as much of what this university has to offer as they desire. St Andrews is also at its best as a place where any bright person can come to study, regardless of background. Widening access will therefore be a key part of my work as your President, and I want to go out to encourage more young people from Scottish high schools to choose St Andrews as a place to study.

As Association President, I will:

- Work closely with the university and the Ambassadors to coordinate open days so that prospective students can see the variety of student activities, from Fine Food to Fencing, first-hand.
- Encourage the university to reach out further to potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds, tackling the problem of so few applying here in the first place.
- Reinvigorate the 'Beyond Fife' initiative, putting a special focus on reaching out to state schools and promoting higher education as an option for pupils across the country. I will also direct funds to reimburse the expenses of prospective students from Scottish state schools in deprived areas who attend open days, allowing them to see the best this town has to offer.
- Strengthen the link between Halls of Residence and the Association. I will build on the new training programmes for Hall of Residence committees, with a focus on equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for managing large amounts of money. I will introduce an audit service to

help treasurers make the most out of their budgets and free them up to do as much as they can in putting on activities for students.

## **The Student Family**

The idea of a student family, that we are all part of a bigger whole and get the most out of being a student by being involved together, is central to making this place so special. I want to see students enjoying their time here by encouraging participation in the Association and our phenomenal range of societies. I've been privileged to spend the best four years of my life here as an undergraduate, and want others to enjoy St Andrews as much as I have.

As Association President, I will:

- Fight to make sure Wednesday afternoons are completely free for sport and student activities. I will work to reverse the encroachment of classes into what should be time for students to enjoy the wide variety of non-academic pursuits offered by St Andrews.
- Be proactive in talking to students and getting to know as many as I can, letting them know about my work and what the Association can do for them. As well as keeping up a big presence online and in student media, I will endeavour to visit a variety of student societies throughout my year as President. Gigs, plays, and public talks: you name it, I'll be there. I'll be your president, it's important that you can reach me.
- Make sure students involved in sports are not overlooked by the Union. Sports are a huge part of University life and source of much pride – and social life. As President, I'll work to maintain a solid dialogue with the Athletic Union. If you're a forward in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV, a chaser in Quidditch or play off scratch its your union too.
- Lobby the university to provide scholarships for a wider range of sports, to encourage top-class sportspeople to study at St Andrews.
- Foster strong town-gown relations. I will build on my existing working relationship with residents and make sure we can act as partners on issues such as planning and HMOs. I will also ensure there is a dedicated section of The Book focused on town and gown relations, encouraging students to go out and meet local neighbours and providing advice on how to make the most out of living next door to one-another.
- Maintain an open-doors policy for students wanting to chat with me in my office (now we've got a glass-fronted Union, there's no excuse for me to hide anyway!).

## **Redevelopment**

The redevelopment of the Union is a much-needed opportunity to improve the building we all use and rely on. However this process has been and will be disruptive for many student societies as the year goes on. I want to make sure the final phases of the redevelopment happen as smoothly as possible.

As Association President, I will:

- Communicate any major updates to the redevelopment in as transparent and open a way as possible.
- Lobby to give societies access to space in underused and untapped areas of the university, allowing student activities to continue despite the disruptions faced right now.

### **University Relations**

The Association President is, above all, the leading voice of the students in the wider university. A President who will engage in a constructive and respectful dialogue with the university's leadership is vital if we want to get things done. In all areas, from accommodation to the Library, we need to work with the university to further our goals. As President, I will provide this, whilst at the same time always making sure the interests of students and the Association are at the heart of all my dealings with university management. I already have substantial experience of working with people throughout the university, and will build on these good working relationships, always giving management a fair hearing, whilst making clear what matters most to students.

### **External Representation**

The President is also the voice of St Andrews students in Scotland and the wider UK. It is easy to think of ourselves as a bubble, but political decisions on subjects such as maintenance grants, international students and tuition fees made elsewhere have a big impact on what goes on in this town.

As Association President, I will:

- Be an energetic and constructive voice for St Andrews in Holyrood and Westminster. I will work to ensure the concerns of St Andrews students are high on the policy agenda.
- Make sure St Andrews students are given a fair hearing in national media and challenge stereotypes of this university. I will highlight the excellent work done by all kinds of student groups, from the Ambassadors in widening access, to the charity fundraising work of some of our biggest student-run events.

### **Environment and Ethics**

I am dedicated to making sure our Union is a clean and environmentally friendly one for us to enjoy.

As Association President, I will:

- Be a voice for sustainable practices in the redevelopment, maintaining the goal of excellence in the 'BREEAM' ranking system for buildings.
- Work at every level with the Environment and Ethics subcommittee to push for a union that wastes less, is environmentally sound and enjoys lower energy costs.

## Big Questions

Next academic year we will be facing two significant events: the Scottish independence referendum and the rectorial elections. I will make sure that as students, we are able to meet these with confidence.

- Scottish Independence: Scotland is facing the biggest question it's been asked in over 300 years. Regardless of the result, this will have a huge impact on our town, our community and our University. We must work together to ensure that the fantastic, varied and international community of students is protected, addressing how St Andrews students will deal with the impact of this monumental decision, particularly on subjects such as fees.
- We will also be seeing our annual Rector elections take place. The position of Rector is an incredibly important one, acting as the voice of the students on the University Court. As President, I will make sure the elections and role of Rector are widely publicised. Furthermore, I will encourage students to be creative and bold in finding candidates to put forward for election.