



The University of Surrey
Students' Union

SurreyDecides
www.ussu.co.uk/surreydecides

Elections 2014
NOMINATION INFORMATION

www.ussu.co.uk/surreydecides

Elections 2014

Thanks for taking the first step in getting more involved in your Union by reading this nomination pack.

The basics:

Every year, the Students' Union holds an election which will choose the people who will lead the Union in the following academic year.

We will be electing our full time officer positions:

President

VP Education

VP Welfare

VP Societies and Individual Development

VP Sports and Recreation

If you are elected into a full time officer role (known as a 'sabbatical officer') you will be working full time at the Students' Union, for a full time salary. It is recommended that you take accommodation on campus and as such will be eligible to apply for a room. As this is full time, you will be taking a year out ([a sabbatical](#)) from your course or from entering your chosen career after graduation. **You cannot do this as a placement**

Our part time officer roles:

We will be electing our Union Chairperson (who is also our student trustee), and 7 part time executive officer positions:

Communications Officer

Community Officer

Ethics and Environment Officer

Equality and Diversity Officer

Events and Trading Officer

International Development Officer

Postgraduate Development Officer

If you are elected into a part time role, you will be continuing with your studies and fulfilling your role at the Union as a volunteer.

We will also be electing our RAG Chair – the student who will lead our 'Raising and Giving' committee for the 2014/15 year, and our Editor in Chief, who oversees our student media.

You perform these roles part time as a volunteer, whilst you are a student. For this reason you should not stand for one of these roles if you are a final year student, unless you intend to progress to a postgraduate course and remain a student.

*Union Chairperson takes the place of the student trustee on the Union Trustee board, you **cannot** be paid by the Students' Union when you take this role, therefore if you are currently employed by the Students' Union (e.g. as bar staff) you will not be able to take this role **and** carry on in your job.

**Editor In Chief has an allowance of £3,500 per annum. This is not a salary; this is an allowance so the student filling this role does not take on a part time job outside of their studies and has the time available to dedicate to the role.

Campaigning for an election is a unique experience, and will give you valuable skills that you will need in later life. Think of an election campaign like a job interview where there are 14,000 members on the interview panel.

Becoming a member of the Union Executive is a big commitment, and a full time sabbatical officer even more so not just in terms of time, but physically and emotionally as well. Please be aware of this when standing. There are a number of legal obligations (for the full time roles) on your part if you do get elected, and they are listed later, so make sure you read through the whole nomination pack.

Nominations must be completed by 12 noon on Wednesday 12th February. **Don't leave this until the last minute in case of technical problems and remember your proposers can only sign propose one candidate and must be a full member of the Student Union.**

The Election Timetable & Deadlines

It is your responsibility to know the election timetable and stick to the deadlines. You should attach the Election Calendar to your own e-mail account so you can see it live. Instructions on how to do this are here

<http://www.ussu.co.uk/yourvoice/Pages/Election-Calendar.aspx>

The calendar is as follows (however this may be subject to change)

Date and time	Event
Monday 3 rd February 2014	Nominations open
Monday 10 th February 2014 6pm TB02	Campaigning Workshop – 6pm (pick up tips for running a successful campaign).
Wednesday 12 th February 2014 12 noon	Nominations close (take note of the 12 noon deadline)
Wednesday 12 th February 2014 6pm Lecture Theatre E	Candidate's briefing/information session (learn more about the rules – this is essential for candidates).
Thursday 13 th February 2014 5pm	Manifesto deadline
Thursday 13 th Feb – until midnight on 26 th Feb	Campaigning period (10 days)
Sunday 23 rd until Tuesday 25 th February	Election Question Time – 7pm until Midnight each night, confirmation of question time schedule will be sent nearer the time.
Midnight on 26 th Feb until 7pm on Friday 28 th Feb	Voting will be online
Friday 28 th February 8pm	Results announced
Week beginning Monday 30 th June 2014	Training week for all new officers*
Week beginning Monday 7 th July 2014	Training week for new full time officers*
Monday 7 th July 2014	New team take office

*it is compulsory that all newly elected officers are available during the whole of these essential training weeks.

Campaign Finance

You can spend **up to £80** on your election campaign, of which you will get £40 back providing you produce appropriate receipts. You will have to complete an expenses form at the end of the campaign to show what you have spent the money on and submit it before the votes are counted. If in the opinion of the returning officer, it appears that you have spent more than £80 on your election campaign you may be excluded from the election. **The limit is what is spent in total on your campaign, not necessarily by you .**

Club or Society support

You may be officially supported by a club or society, this will enable you to declare this on any election material you write, and of course hopefully rely on the votes of that club or society. Each candidate will be required to fill out a form of club or society support which will be available from the Union website that is required to be signed by the club or society committee signatories. These forms should be returned to the Union reception.

Posters, banners & campus publicity

Posters **are permitted** in this campaign. A poster is defined as

- Larger than A6 or smaller than A1
- Anything fixed to vertical surface in a public or communal area

Banners are permitted and are defined as

- Larger than A1
- Produced on material other than paper

When advertising your campaign on the Stag Hill campus, you need to be aware of the following don'ts

- Don't put anything on the 'public facing side' of campus. This is the area from the Stag statue round the perimeter road past the Piazza and lake – stay within the internal section of campus
- Don't do anything that is permanent or semi-permanent (e.g. stickers), you have to have removed all of your campaign publicity before the votes are counted
- Don't use blue tack on painted surfaces
- Chalk on walls & pavements gets messy and annoying

This may seem like your options are limited, however in previous years there have been some very ingenious solutions to these restrictions.

Your term of office

Handover & training for all new officers begins Monday 23rd June 2014 for one week. There is then a further one to one week for the sabbatical officers only from Monday 30th June, and you formally take office from gam on Monday 7th July.

Election Complaints

Anyone can complain about an aspect of an election campaign, and there are a range of sanctions the returning officer may take including recommending expulsion from the contest. The process of complaints will be explained at the candidate briefing.

Your Manifesto

"A manifesto is a public declaration of principles and intentions"

So says Wikipedia. Your manifesto is the most important part of your nomination, it is a list of what you intend to achieve, or the principles by which you stand. When people vote for you, they are voting for what you say you will do. If you are successful in your election, then you will be elected on your manifesto – so if you say you want to paint the Union blue, you cannot then paint the Union red if you are elected.

Try and keep any specific aims and objectives to a concise list, a list of three pledges is both reasonable and realistic. Don't leave your manifesto to the last minute as an afterthought, you will be held to it for your year in office

Manifesto Format

You can put whatever you like in your manifesto, the format we need it in is **A4 Landscape**. It can be in the following formats, DOC, DOCX, PPT, PPTX, CDR, PDF, INDD.

Your manifesto will be reprinted in the election special edition of The Stag, and made available on the Union website. It is also recommended that you take copies with you when you campaign. It can be comprised of just words, or include a picture of yourself – please make sure it is not too colourful so it looks legible when reproduced in black and white. Your manifesto should also include a short paragraph introducing you from one of your proposers, and list who your proposers are (although this is entirely up to you).

Please ask if you would like advice on the layout of your manifesto.

Your Manifesto should ...

Have three or four specific pledges

Be A4 Landscape

Tell the reader a bit about yourself

Only contain the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Your Manifesto should NOT ...

Be too colourful or complicated

Contain 'woolly' or unspecific pledges

Cause offense

Talk about others rather than yourself

Campaigning

The most exciting part of the election is the campaigning itself. You are trying to convince as many Union members as possible to put their faith in you. The best way to do this is not by putting up lots of posters, but by speaking to people face to face.

Campaigning Suggestions

- Come along to the campaigning workshop on Monday 10th February at 6pm (room details tbc) and pick up tips on having a successful campaign.
- Get out and meet as many people as possible
- Do not forget that the vote is STV (single transferable vote), so you are asking for voters to mark 1 in your box, you can also campaign for voters second preference
- Use YouTube, Facebook, Twitter
- Do not use University auto lists on e-mail.
- Knock on doors
- Be positive
- Don't forget Manor Park, Hazel Farm, Bellerby Court, etc

Voting System

Take a moment to understand the voting system, this is not a simple 'the most votes win' election; it has been seen in many elections that the candidate with the most 1's does not actually win, as other candidates have picked up second, third and fourth preferences, etc. For more information see the Union mini guide on Voting.

Being a Trustee (sabbatical & Union Chair only)

If elected you will become one of the trustees of the Students' Union; and although this sounds like a great thing to have on your CV, it is also a legally binding arrangement that makes you personally liable for the conduct of the Union while you are in office, and ignorance is not a defence. In the unlikely event of the Students' Union becoming financially insolvent, the trustees may become personally liable for the debt. You will also become a company director (unless for any reason you are barred from being a director) – again, although this might sound cool, especially that you are no longer liable for all the losses – there are more obligations that you perform your duties competently as a company director and you are still a trustee. For more information on being the trustee of a charity see the following information from the charity commission <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.asp>

Sabbatical officers are also not permitted to serve as signatories on society or club committees.

Guidance for company directors– (from BERR)

- 1) Act in the company's best interests, taking everything you think relevant into account
- 2) Obey the company's constitution and decisions taken under it
- 3) Be honest, and remember that the company's property belongs to it and not to you or to its shareholders
- 4) Be diligent, careful and well informed about the company's affairs. If you have any special skills or experience, use them
- 5) Make sure the company keeps records of your decisions
- 6) Remember that you remain responsible for the work you give to others.
- 7) Avoid situations where your interests conflict with those of the company. When in doubt disclose potential conflicts quickly
- 8) Seek external advice where necessary, particularly if the company is in financial difficulty.

A view from the Vice Chancellor:

"If you would like to have a say in the running of the Students' Union and influence how the University is managed, then becoming a Sabbatical Officer is the ideal way to make a real difference. It is also a very enjoyable and satisfying role, which allows you to proactively shape the policies and activities at Surrey and gain real leadership experience to help develop your career. I know from personal experience from my own student days, how rewarding this can be and also how important it is to ensure good representation of the student community. I encourage you to stand as a candidate in the sabbatical elections and help shape the future of the Union and the University."
(Professor Sir Christopher Snowden).

A view from the current team, in their own words:

President

The President is the elected head and chair of the board of trustees that oversees the charity and organisation that is the University of Surrey Students' Union - with ultimate leadership in all aspects of the Union including our activities, commercial outlets, finance, professional relationships, national representation and the local press. As well as all this, the President is the only student representative who holds the position of trustee on the University's Council (the highest decision-making body in this, a top 10 University). In this role, the President represents all Surrey students - past, present and future on high-level University issues and matters e.g. the University strategy - which encompasses new academic facilities like the Vet School - new research initiatives like the 5G Centre, and on the body that will decide on the new Students' Union building. The President is open to very sensitive and highly confidential data.

The President chairs all but one Union decision-making meetings, sits on nearly all high-level University meetings, and meets one-on-one with University management, including the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Finance Manager, ensuring issues important to students remain on the agenda, and our partnership with the University continues to develop. The President manages the Sabbatical team and is the go-to person externally for all things Union-related (this involves being on top of your emails and answer-phone messages as well as drop-in meetings).

I did have preconceptions and misunderstandings about what being President entailed before coming into the role. I've always felt that a step up means a step further away from the action and so in this setting, less interaction with students. The thought of dwelling in a lonely office and dressing smart in order to attend long and boring University meetings didn't thrill me. However, I've come to understand that the role really is what you make it - the opportunities are there, and you can either fully embrace and use them to benefit our students, Students' Union and University, or you can sit back and let them pass you by. Choose not to be removed from students - this year, I introduced a new initiative that enables the Sabbatical Officers to come alongside students in their lectures, labs and practical sessions - further developing that relationship and understanding in order to truly represent them at the highest levels. You are not bound by your office - it's up to you to walk around the Union and University including others and being included yourself on current projects people are working on. Communication is key. And as far as the 'smart dress' etiquette is concerned, you don't actually have to over-do it - the University management loved my Christmas jumper, and Onesie Monday was a blast!

In some ways, after I won the position, I fitted right into the role; I could finally stand up, speak out and make a difference for students. In others ways, I had some growing to do... Politics are real, people are complex and it isn't all plain-sailing. But the support network you have in this role is absolutely second to none.

You will be working closely with University management staff who have an unrivalled depth and breadth of experience: from the former finance manager of Marks and Spencer, to head of Lloyds of

London and friends of the Prime Minister. Staff within the Union have the long view and are on hand to help you make sense of it all, but what really keeps you alive? The students - full of passion and enthusiasm, and deep down are just really good people.

If I could give you just a little advice about campaigning for election... The student body isn't stupid. Your words and actions are an overflow of what's in your heart. You could have the best campaign ever on paper, but if your heart's not in it and your interest is not in the welfare of the student body and direction of the Students' Union, it *will* come across. Don't stress yourself out about what your 'tag line' will be, or what gimmick you're to pull out of the bag. Make sure you know *who* you are and *what* you stand for. Also, remember that I've served my 2-year limit and will not be running in the elections this year. Use me. I'm here to help, but only if you ask!

The benefits of being an officer are different for everyone. I can look back and be proud of so many successes we've achieved both individually and as a team: winning Jenson Button's racing helmet, Tinie Tempah's surprise appearance at the Vice-Chancellor's talk, securing £70,000 worth of maintenance on our current SU building, a jump in NSS satisfaction and consulting the student body on what they would like from their Union in the next decade to name but a few! By the end of this year, we will have recruited a new CEO for the organisation, 2 new trustees, helped to create an appeal process which is quicker and fairer for all students, and finally got tickets online!

From this year experience, what I will take into the rest of my adult life is the beginnings of an unshakeable character. In this role, I have had to face my insecurities head-on, learn to strive for something without seeking credit, and learn the valuable life-lesson of not taking criticism or attack personally. I've learned so much about conflict resolution, team-development and management as well as developing a new understanding, respect and passion for politics, finance and both the education and charity sectors.

My advice to a potential candidate for the role of President is as follows:

Never give up on people. Some of your ideas and plans may be picked up and others lost, there may be disagreements and misunderstandings along the way, but at the end of the day "ideas compete, not people" [Anderson, former USSU CEO]. Always choose to see the best in people.

VP Education

The Vice President Education represents all Surrey students on matters relating to their learning experience at Surrey. Students are all so different, but learning and studying are two things we all have in common – it's crucially important that the resources and support are of a good standard, and that students know how to change something if there is something that could be improved. It's absolutely key for students to know how to be successful in their studies and come away with the degree that they are aiming to achieve. That means so many different things to students, from getting feedback on time and understanding what it says, to having an examination timetable that allows some space and time to take in information between exams, to knowing that the library has the relevant books and resources.

On a typical day in the office, I find myself attending University committee meetings to discuss developments to teaching and learning, communicating with course reps about upcoming meetings,

and taking part in student union projects such as re-freshers' fayre and student awards. No two days are the same, and every day sets a new challenge.

Although I'm sure it sounds like a cliché, I stood for election because I wanted to make a difference to students. I didn't have the best time out on my work placement, and I was a joint honours student who did not always receive the most joined-up support from my departments. I took these experiences with me into the role and have used them to motivate me, alongside my manifesto points which were the basis of my campaign. I had a few pre-conceptions, but I suppose the biggest one was that I never expected that there would be quite so many meetings involved and different roles to fulfil – as a sabbatical team member I am a trustee of the Union, member of University panel hearings, and member of the student executive team. I did not realise that I would need to balance these roles every day, and this can be a challenge, but I have really enjoyed what each role has involved.

My main piece of advice for anyone campaigning for election is to make sure you get out there and meet as many people as possible, face to face. You'll find that the face to face contact creates an important level of communication between you and the students you approach, people appreciate you introducing yourself in person and asking them to vote for you, rather than relying on social networking. Get a good team of friends around you who will support you when you are at your most tired, campaign on your behalf and keep you energised. You will be tired, it can be a very exhausting time, but it's worth it – even if you are unsuccessful – the experience of running for election is one that you won't forget.

There are so many benefits from being an officer, the skills that I have gained and the people I have met being two of the main things for me – but we are not the only people who benefit from us being in the role. We get to leave changes behind which will positively benefit all Surrey students for several years, and it's brilliant to think that I was part of a team achieving positive changes that students want to see. It's also the most fun, and best job you'll ever have. You're a company director before you have left University – and not many people can say that.

If I had one piece of advice for a potential candidate it would be make sure you know what you really want to do in the role – you will never achieve everything, but set your sights on your main goals and work towards them. Good luck!

VP Welfare

If I'm honest, when I was first thinking about running for a sabbatical position I had no idea why.

I was passionate about the university, about the student experience and about our amazingly friendly campus community, but I had no idea about the ins and outs of working for a Students Union.

From the outside the union can seem like a bit of a party. And for the most part, that is true, not only are there some incredible events going on in our venues (overseen by the full time commercial staff team) but we have one of the friendliest and most fun working environments I've ever seen. But on the inside there is so much more that goes on. I guess, to use a hyperbole, working at the Union is a bit like the Tardis.

After doing a little bit of thinking and talking to a few people I decided that running for VP Welfare was something I wanted to do. Don't ask me to explain the specifics, I just went for it. Something about the sound of the role resonated with me and I decided to stand as a candidate for election.

I was constantly thinking to myself "how would I know if I'm right for the role?" My main passion at university was running an arts society ("So why didn't you run for Societies?") but it wasn't running the society itself that was important to me; it was the way in which the community of that particular society contributed to the student experience of its members. There were also things I wanted to support at the university. During my second year I had my fair share of personal problems that started to affect my academic studies and the university support services were soon on my radar. It's important to remember that it's not the VP Welfare role to run these services, or in fact take on the role of centre for wellbeing when talking to students. But working **alongside** these services does form a large part of the day to day activities of the VP Welfare.

The VP Welfare role, I would argue, is possibly the most 'flexible' of all the sabbatical positions. Whilst there are always similar requirements for running sports clubs and societies and working with the university on educational issues, welfare issues are usually a lot broader, and can encompass many aspects of university life.

I would suggest that the role is actually divided into three main areas; being a trustee of the union, being a vice president of the union, and being the welfare officer.

Firstly the sabbatical officers (and the part time officer, union chair) are all trustees of the students union. Alongside the external trustees they are jointly responsible for the corporate governance of the organisation, overseeing everything that goes on and being ultimately responsible for all of the union's finances. This is not a widely known fact about the sabbatical positions and forms the biggest part of responsibility.

Secondly, the role of Vice President comes *before* the remit of 'welfare'. This means the sabbatical team, under the line management of the president are one team who will work on many projects together. There are so many areas of the union that do not come directly under the remit of welfare that I have been involved with this year and there are many areas in which the VP roles will overlap. Union pride has been a big part of our vision this year and, led by the president, we have worked together on promoting and celebrating the successes of the students union in many different areas. This is one example of how the VP's don't just work on our own projects, but we make sure that the wider vision of the union is worked out in every area of what we do.

Team work is a massive part of the job. Before I started I was a little worried that I would be thrust into a world of student politics and campaigning that I had no idea about! I was a music student and had never worked with anything to do with student welfare issues. But working as a team with the other sabbatical officers helped to refine what I really wanted to do with the role this year and focus on what we could achieve together. The full time staff are just as supportive, when I started I didn't know the difference between an AAFG and the SESC but I can truly say that even the staff working at the highest levels of the university love seeing a new sabb learning about their role. They love seeing us learning all the time about how the university actually works, and helping us to gain the knowledge and understanding of how to ensure that students' views are continually valued by those making the big decisions about student experience.

The most important thing about standing for VP Welfare is to know what you're passionate about. Don't get too bogged down in the reasons for why you're standing, just know that you want to. You may never again have the opportunity to become a trustee, company director, vice-president and a

representative for 15,000 students, all at the same time. It is truly a life-changing job and one that you can really make your own. Now is your chance to do something exciting.

If you want to talk about any aspect of running for VP Welfare in the union election please do get in touch. I would love to chat more and answer any questions that you might have.

VP Societies and Individual Development

The VP Societies & Individual Development is responsible for all student societies on campus, overseeing membership and promoting involvement. This role gives you the opportunity to be really creative, to think outside the box, and nurture your passion for representing students. I stood for VP Societies & Individual Development to strive towards recognition for our incredible committees – whilst aiding them to get the best out of their time running their society. I'm aware first-hand of the amazing work our volunteers carry out during their studies, even if stressful at times, to better student experience – and I wanted to be a part of celebrating that. I have personally gained so much from this role and couldn't recommend giving it a go more.

After winning, the reality of stepping into the role was different to what I had imagined – it's completely okay to not fully understand what you've got yourself into..! The staff at the Students' Union are simply brilliant, and are in place to support and develop elected officers to get the most out of their time in office. I hit the ground running; planning work for the new academic year was the theme of the university summer break – I then started to realise just how much I could do and just how fantastic the Students' Union is.

My one piece of advice if you are thinking of running (even if it's just at the back of your mind)? Come and talk to me. I can't cram the depth of the position and the Students' Union into a blog post. Email me or drop in, and be inspired!

VP Sports and Recreation

VP Sports & Recreation is a fantastic role for anyone interested in sport and you get to work with a wide range of great people to make sport at Surrey better. The role has a wide range of different responsibilities and you can really make it what you want. You can gain experience in marketing, event planning, budgets & finance, strategy and sport development.

I stood for election because I felt that I could make a difference and improve sport here at the University of Surrey. I had been involved with my club for three years, including two on the committee and thought that my experience could help make sport better for all students.

Starting in the role, there was a great summer of planning events, promotional materials and opportunities ready to hit the ground running. Term time was hectic when it came around and it is a much busier role than I first imagined. I didn't realise before I ran that the role is not solely focused on Sports & Recreation but first and foremost you are a Vice-President of the Students' Union. This means that you have responsibilities for all areas of Students' Union activity and get deeply involved in a wide range of areas including the commercial services as well as helping the other VP's.

Being VP Sports & Recreation is a fantastic opportunity to work with people and to represent students with senior members of University and Sports Park staff. There is a great team at the Students Union and at Surrey Sports Park to help your events and ideas happen. When campaigning it is really important to get out and talk to as many people as possible. Remember it's not just sports club members who are voting in the election and that the role is VP Sports & RECREATION! Do plenty of research before writing your manifesto and question time so you are well prepared and also realistic.

Union Chair (Part time Volunteer Position) and student trustee:

The title gives it away slightly - as Union Chair I chair a number of Union committees, such as the Union Exec and Democracy Committee, whilst sitting on others such as the Board of Trustees. I am also responsible for interpreting and reviewing the Union bye-laws. However, the role is so much more than that, and in a lot of ways changes each year. For example, this year another of my duties is to sit on the search committee responsible for appointing a new CEO of the Students' Union.

I stood for election as I was interested in running for a sabbatical position after graduation, and wanted to learn more about the Students' Union and how it operates. I anticipated the role being fairly time-consuming, but ultimately I've found I've been able to juggle the responsibilities of being Union Chair with the demands of final year and having a part-time job. One thing I didn't anticipate however, is that a lot of my workload falls outside of meetings. A meeting may last an hour, but I can spend several doing pre-reading, replying to emails and reacting to unforeseen circumstances.

More than anything though, I hope to emphasise how much there is to gain from being a part-time officer here at Surrey. You learn a lot about how you work with others, and also gain invaluable skills which help in handling difficult and sensitive situations. You also get the responsibility of being involved in decisions which have a massive impact on student life - both now and for years to come.

A small piece of advice for potential candidates? Start as early as possible with your campaign preparation, as you would be amazed how long everything takes and how draining campaigning can be. And for the future Union Chair: embrace as many opportunities as you can, and by the end of the year you'll be amazed at some of the things you've done, and been a part of. Good luck!

Any questions?

If you have any further questions before you submit your nomination, please contact the Returning Officer, Charlie Eastaugh on c.eastaugh@surrey.ac.uk.

The Deputy Returning Officers are:

Kath Phillips in the Students' Union Katherine.phillips@surrey.ac.uk or phone 01483 683265 (ext 3265 on campus).

Alex Tolley in the Students' Union a.tolley@surrey.ac.uk or phone 01483 689987 (ext 9987 in campus)