Who am I?

I believe that I have the experience and skills necessary to represent you and ensure real positive change is made on the issues you care about.

Member of Societies Committee and Union Assembly

I was elected to represent Special Interest societies on Societies Committee. We have twice termly meetings with the Activities Officer where we discuss what's working well and current issues for societies, and decide on funding applications. I also have a seat on Union Assembly, LUSU's highest political decision making body. I talk to many student leaders and I have a good understanding of issues from both the student side and LUSU operations side.

Student Community Activator

I hold this role within the LUSU Student Voice Team, supporting Liberation and Campaign Officers and Academic Reps to build communities and campaign for change. I know how to support students and will continue to do so if elected.

Campaigner and activist

I helped set up and coordinated the Fossil Free Careers and Students Support the Strikes campaigns at Lancaster. I wrote and presented motions to Union Assembly in support of both campaigns, which were successfully passed, meaning they are written into LUSU policy. I have a good understanding of LUSU democratic processes.

As a campaigner, I communicate with students, LU staff and LUSU staff, and I am confident in working with and negotiating with stakeholders. I have organised events, including the Big Green Fair, the Veganuary Gathering and a regular free waffle stall last term.





Many troubling things are getting worse here on campus, including rent spikes, misogyny, erosion of trans rights, and mental health. **I'm Sam (she/her)** and I'm proud to be part of the **strong student community organising against these injustices**. If you elect me as President, I will continue to **stand up for what matters**.

Sam's Six

1. **Anti-misogyny, anti-hate**

I'll work to make campus safe for all, including making incident reporting easier. You will be heard and appropriate action will be taken.

2. **Affordability**

We struggle to get by while senior management earn six-figure salaries. I support concrete interventions to bring down bus, food and rent prices.

3. **Climate Justice and Free Palestine**

I'm committed to fighting injustice and will ensure that LU and LUSU take stronger action on climate change and the genocide in Palestine.

4. **More support for student leaders and campaigns**

I'll help student leaders navigate LUSU and build thriving communities, as I currently do through my role as Student Community Activator and member of Societies Committee.

5. **Represent postgrads and international students**

As a postgrad, I know postgrad and international students are underrepresented in LU decision making. We must increase dialogue with students and their reps.

6. **Stand up for the arts**

I will showcase student talent in the arts and ensure that the University values the contribution these subjects and societies are making to culture and community.

Like what you see? I've got a lot more to say! Find out more here and on Instagram @Sam_Burgess5.

Anti-misogyny, anti-hate

Many students are noticing and being affected by the rise in discrimination, hate speech and sexual misconduct on campus and online, and we will not accept this. The anger among students is clear: there was an overwhelming vote to ban the Reform society at the LUSU AGM at the end of the 2024-25 academic year; a statement saying Reform UK and racism are not welcome on our campus has been published this year and signed by 11 student societies; and there have been strong reactions online to comments posted on confession pages, including a video made by the Chair of the LU Ethnic Minorities Committee which received 885 likes (and counting).

Students know there is a problem and are taking action. As President, I will continue being a part of the fight for a campus where all students are welcome and safe. This includes amplifying the voices of students pushing back and working with student reps of marginalised communities, including our Liberation and Campaign Officers, to identify and challenge hate speech or discriminatory behaviour. Additionally, I will push for mandatory training for student leaders in community building and creating a welcoming culture.

Additionally, I will ensure that LUSU is listening to its students and responding rapidly and appropriately to any incidents that are reported. Currently, neither the University's incident reporting service (Unisafe) nor LUSU's incident reporting service (LUSU Advice) are working for students: they are hard to access, act like a black hole where incidents reported simply disappear, and fail to take meaningful disciplinary action where its needed. These services need to be reformed to make them student-focused and reliable, so that students have somewhere to turn. I will ensure this is done through student consultation and regular reporting to hold these services to account.

There are particular challenges for inclusion in sports, with women+ students participating less and being underrepresented in leadership. Ensuring trans inclusion in sport also requires greater focus. These are issues that I would push to be in mandatory exec training, and work throughout the year to voice and promote.

Affordability

It is unacceptable that the high prices of rent, buses, laundry and food on campus mean that students do not have the funds to eat properly or socialise and have fun.

Concrete interventions must be implemented in Lancaster to address this:

- After selling more parking permits than spaces, the University is interested in talking to Stagecoach about reducing student bus prices, and I will strongly support this.
- The company who own 2/3 of accommodation on campus (UPP Ltd.), and the University's head of commercial services (who administers the rest of the accommodation) are willing to discuss the affordability of accommodation and I will ensure these discussions are fruitful. Currently, college allocation means students who ask for the cheapest colleges don't always get them, and I will challenge this process to ensure students aren't given what they can't afford.
- I am not alone in mourning the loss of Pendle Brew and its Cheap Eats (a hot meal for £2.50). While Cheap Eats are available elsewhere on campus, they are badly advertised and their availability is unreliable. I will address these problems, and work on implementing an SU-run food stall, modelled on Hawthorns Hatch in Bristol, which serves a £1 soup and £2 hot meal every day.
- Circuit Landry know they are disliked by Lancaster students and want to restore this relationship; I will use this opportunity to push for cheaper laundry and drying options.

Additionally, I will continue the fight on the national level, joining other SUs in challenging the reduction of maintenance loans (which are not increasing with inflation) and pushing for the parental earnings threshold - which determines how much loan students get depending on how much their parents make – to be increased, as it has not changed since 2008.

Climate Justice and Free Palestine

While Lancaster University encourages its students to see themselves as global citizens, and welcomes students from all over the world, it drastically underperforms in its global responsibilities and I will continue to speak out about and take action to reverse this.

Climate Justice

The University declared a Climate Emergency in 2022. It has taken important steps towards reducing its emissions through the new Net Zero Energy Center and solar farm, but these trophy projects have failed to engage students and little has been done to address sustainability in other areas. Lancaster University's position as 71st in the People and Planet Sustainability League demonstrates how much more needs to be done

A report by Student Minds reveals that 71% of student respondents were quite or very concerned about climate change and the 2024 SOS-UK student sustainability survey showed that 87% of Lancaster student participants believe that Sustainable Development should be actively incorporated and promoted by the University.

If elected, I would empower students to act on environmental injustice, including offering support and a larger platform to student campaigns, societies and college sustainability groups. As I have been involved in these groups, I will be able to offer advice and resources and will advocate for them at higher SU and University decision making levels.

As mentioned in my page on affordability, I will make the most of the opportunity given by the University showing willingness to talk to Stagecoach about lowering student bus prices. I will also work hard to improve bike infrastructure on and to campus, and ensure more students are comfortable with using their bike. This includes putting out a student-wide survey and organising focus groups to understand what students want and need to make cycling easier. I hope to work with Yim "the bike man" to increase the availability of bike repair facilities, work with the council to improve the bike lanes between town and campus (an A6 bike lane is long overdue, and LUSU has voted to support the students advocating for this!), and run bike confidence sessions for students, so that everyone can benefit from the cycling hype around the Tour de France coming through Lancashire in 2027.

Free Palestine

LUSU recognised the overwhelming concern among the student body for the genocide happening in Palestine by approving a motion in 2024. This called on LUSU to lobby the University to, among other things:

1. Call for a permanent ceasefire;

2. Agree to cut all ties with arms manufacturers, particularly BAE systems.

Neither of these demands have been met, and I am determined to continue working with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to secure their implementation. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign at Lancaster University has historically not felt supported by LUSU, and I plan to reverse this by being vocal in my support for the campaign and ensuring their concerns are heard by University management. On top of the demands of the motion, I will support student campaigning on this issue by facilitating travel to demonstrations and advocating for scholarships for Palestinian students.

More support for student leaders and campaigns

Student life is dependent on the many students who volunteer their time to make societies, sports, JCRs, campaigns and other communities thrive. I know that finding time to take on this work alongside studies and paid work can be hard. Therefore, I want to make it as easy as possible for student leaders, so their time can be spent on running activities rather than organising meetings and solving financial issues.

Many of the difficulties student leaders are dealing with are due to the lack of capacity of LUSU staff to support and help them: the number of LUSU staff has reduced by over half, from 60 to 25, in two years. The easiest solution to this is receiving more money annually from the University in what is known as the block grant. All Universities are legally obliged to financially support their Students' Union, but the amount of money is variable, and the amount given by Lancaster is decreasing every year, meaning it is considerably lower than other universities such as Manchester. The new University Vice-Chancellor, Steve Decent, has shown to share our concern with the lack of funding for LUSU which means it's unable to carry out basic functions like supporting student leaders, and I am hopeful that I would be able to work with him to secure a significant increase in LUSU's block grant. This would help to streamline many of LUSU's operations, and would enable them to support more students, for example through reopening society affiliation, which has been closed for over 2 years due to lack of capacity to support more societies.

Additionally, I will hold regular coffee mornings, open to all students, to help students get to know the FTO team (and vice versa) and understand what we do, so that we can work better together. Additionally, this will mean the FTOs will be more aware of the issues student leaders are having with LUSU and this will be a time when we can talk together about the best solutions.

LUSU finance and banking

The biggest problem facing many societies and sports clubs is the LUSU finance and banking system. Changes have been made without sufficiently working with student leaders and not enough guidance has been given to enable student leaders to navigate these changes. This has led to resentment and distrust towards LUSU, with many societies having told me that they do not interact with LUSU and therefore they do not benefit from the support and funding available.

One immediate solution to this is greater transparency, and more information about the changes taking place. This includes better exec trainings and inductions, especially for treasurers, and better online resources, such as clear guidance videos. In the long term, the finance/banking system is still evolving, and I will ensure that students are involved in the decisions and are able to continually give feedback to make improvements.

JCRs and PG Board

JCRs and the PG Board have had a rough deal: several have lost their bars, which served as a central place for community building. They have also seen their budgets cut while the number of students per college increases each year. Colleges make Lancaster unique and provide a really valuable smaller community and sense of identity for students, however they are not currently working for most students, who are not engaged with their college.

I recently attended a college redesign workshop, and I'm glad to see the university working to improve the college system. I am keen to work with the current JCRs, PG Board and other students to make these changes as positive for students as possible.

The college that needs the most support is Grad college, which is currently represented by a PG Board of only 3 students, and this ties into the work I will do with postgraduates.

Campaigns

The student campaigners who have passed policies through Union Assembly, meaning that LUSU supports their demands, have received very little help from LUSU, and LUSU has often failed to implement the policy demands. Student campaigners are frustrated that it is left to them alone to implement the changes they are demanding, despite LUSU agreeing to support them and despite these students being volunteers and having little power over University decision makers. If elected, I will offer the support that I, as a campaigner, never received. This includes regular meetings, support with developing a campaign strategy, promotion and publicity, and advocating on their behalf at stakeholder meetings. As an experienced campaigner, I am competent in delivering this support and committed to doing so.

Academic reps

I love working with academic reps through my role in the LUSU Student Voice Team! If elected, I will support the Education Officer in navigating all that is being thrown at us through CTP (Curriculum Transformation Programme) and LU Future (with the reduction of academic staff).

Represent postgrads and international students

24% of LU students are postgrad (Masters and PhD) and 29% are international. These students often have a very different University experience to home undergrads, and this leads to them being less engaged in the wider university community and student politics, which means that LUSU needs to develop more targeted strategies to support them and respond to their needs.

From talking with different postgrad reps, I have found that there are several prominent issues specific to postgrads, that I would work on if elected:

- Many postgrads would like there to be a stronger postgrad community, with more opportunities to socialise. If elected, I would work with the PhD Forum and PG Board to hold more regular opportunities to socialise and ensure that all postgrads are aware of these and feel welcome.
- The PG study space in the Storey in town was recently closed down. With an increase in bus prices discouraging many students to come onto campus, there is increasing demand for a new town study space. Many students would also like this to provide a social space, perhaps by having a shared kitchen and relaxed communal area. The University is already looking into a new town study space, and I will ensure that postgrads are sufficiently consulted and our opinions considered, so this can be a well-used community space.
- FHASS PhD students have been moved to a space that is unsuitable for working in: an attic in Bowland Annex with shared desks and very limited social space. This is part of a wider disregard for arts subjects by the University. I will ensure FHASS postgrads are included in discussions around alternative workspaces and in any further changes that are made to their department.
- There are limited opportunities for postgrad academic reps to work together on postgrad issues, which are often more about community building than academic concerns. I will address this by establishing a dialogue with reps and establishing a framework for the PG Board, PhD Forum and academic reps to work together.

International students

The current international students officer, Ifaz, is doing great work bringing the international community together through regular forums, where the Presidents of international societies meet to discuss issues they're facing and work together to address them. Additionally, they run incredibly successful events, such as the International Food Fair and Open Iftar. I would continue to support this work, advocate for their demands and help them to establish a strong structure that will continue to support international students into the future. One of the key campaigns they are working on is creating a University Guarantor scheme, which would mean international students don't have to pay an entire year's rent up front and make university affordable for many students.

Stand up for the arts

Arts societies and departments are often undervalued and underfinanced, which leads to an unequal university experience for different students. Many departments only have a corridor of physical space on campus, with no areas for students to socialise, academic staff losses are greater in the arts, and more courses are being cut.

Arts societies often require technical equipment, and therefore more funding than most societies, and flat floor space to practice and perform, which is hard to get on campus. The university has done little to address these issues, despite them being raised on several occasions by the current Activities Officer.

If elected, I would advocate for the arts as representing both a large group of students, and as a service-provider and a vital contributor to the vibrancy of campus.

I would love to see more theatre, music and dance performances by students, for students, at Lancaster, and will work with students to make this happen!

Should LUSU leave NUS UK?

I will open the debate on LUSU's continued membership of NUS (National Union of Students) UK. This follows several other students' unions holding referendums and voting to disaffiliate from NUS UK, including Cardiff, Cambridge, Brighton, Surrey, Loughborough and LSE.

NUS UK works to represent students and Students' Unions nationally. Students' Unions can choose to affiliate with it or not. Affiliation of NUS UK allows Students' Unions to contribute to a collective voice and influence the direction of the organization. Currently, NUS UK is working on issues including cost-of-living and has recently won the reinstitution of a maintenance grant for certain students.

The cost of affiliation (up to £30,700 a year) is considered to be poor value for money considering the lack of benefits that being a member brings due to its failures to support students and its failure to stand up in the interests of its students.

The NUS's has consistently failed to oppose the genocide in Palestine, or to support students who do so. It has failed to support Palestine solidarity student protests and encampments and has not supported students who have faced extreme disciplinary proceedings for protesting. The NUS has failed to act on the motion passed at its highest decision-making level to campaign against the genocide in Palestine. Additionally, SU officers from several universities who signed an open letter calling on the NUS to "take a stand on Gaza or face mass disaffiliation" were threatened with being banned from NUS events. It is highly questionable whether the values of LUSU are represented in the actions of NUS UK.

Finally, NUS UK is eroding its democratic processes and limiting grassroots student input, notably by abolishing its own all-member conference.