

Aastha Dahal Manifesto for President (PG)

I am PhD student in criminology and a lawyer by training. Professionally, I have worked in areas of domestic violence, armed conflict, prosecution services, (against) police torture, human rights training and indigenous peoples' rights. I headed a nonprofit organisation with a membership of over 500 students from all six law schools across Nepal. This organisation established scholarship funds for students and provided free legal services to 2000 women from marginalized communities in Nepal. This model of service delivery was featured by the United Nation's Access to Justice Programme as a "success story."

University of Cambridge experience

- MPhil Representative, Institute of Criminology (2014/2015): Successfully lobbied course restructuring to improve student learning.
- Vice President, St Edmund's College Combination Room (2018/2019): Improved dining services, reduced rent, negotiated greater infrastructure for student space. I also worked to build a six month long sustained campaign against racist academic research backed by support from all JCRs, most MCRs and academics across departments in Cambridge and universities around the world.
- Volunteers and Activities Assistant, Graduate Union (2020 ongoing): supporting sabbatical officers and executive committee members on campaigns such as graduate students' rights, international students' rights and family welfare.

My priorities

Consolidating the vision of the elected officials to establish an organisational culture of the Cambridge SU as one of fearless activism against the marketisation and commodification of university education. Student welfare is the core philosophy guiding my platform and to this end my chief priorities are:

- Making trainings for graduate supervisors mandatory to introduce a minimum basic standard of care in supervisor-student relationships.
- Increasing student access to mental health services and encouraging greater diversity among counsellors to better support the needs of minority groups
- Collaborating with the postgraduate funding project to improve availability and distribution of founding for postgraduate students including institutionalising funding support for 4th year PhD students. Lobbying for all scholarship funds administered by the university to automatically cover visa costs for international students.
- Campaigning for transparency in access to teaching and research opportunities and fair pay for graduate students as employees of the university.
- Facilitating coordination and knowledge sharing among movements and groups that work to decolonise and deconstruct curricula to bring the voices of BAME groups into mainstream teaching, learning and research.
- Collaborating with MCRs and department/faculty reps to examine and reform mechanisms to address sexual assault and harassment at all levels from access to reporting to accountability for perpetrators.
- Campaigning for fair and equal housing, rent and living expenses.