

LUISA DERAGON for Cambridge Students' Union PRESIDENT (PG)

Why do I want to be the SU President (PG)?

I am a final year PhD student in Biological Sciences at Girton College. My main drive to become SU President (PG) comes from my personal experience during my time in Cambridge. I had issues with my supervisor, which eventually led me to change supervisors, research project and lab – halfway through my third year! Needless to say, my mental health suffered tremendously. The system is far from being ideal, falling short when dealing with some of the most common, difficult issues graduate students may be facing. I would like to contribute in finding solutions and mitigating problems that deeply impact students' quality of life and wellbeing. I hope you'll vote for me, and together, we can make a difference!

Goals

- Tackle issues between graduate students and their supervisors. Engage with students to identify and comprehend common reasons that would drive the relationship “south” and liaise with University, Colleges and Departments how to navigate challenges and find solutions in a sensitive way to all involved.
- Help create a healthy work/social life balance. Promote the importance of life outside the office/lab, emphasizing how regular exercise, socializing, and making time for hobbies and cultural activities is vital for personal wellbeing and ultimately long-term success. Organizing diverse social events to promote inclusion and renew bonds in our community.
- Identifying and understanding current, prevailing issues graduate students face. Taking lessons from past GU and CUSU administrations and reforming our knowledge concerning student problems. This can be accomplished with debates, surveys, or targeted campaigns, followed by intense investigation on strategies to dealing and solving different situations.
- Discover possible sources of secure funding. Working together with University, Colleges, councils and charities to find pragmatic solutions and establish no less than short-term solutions for when students run into “money problems”. This should give students, supervisors and respective Departments, a chance to figure out a plan of action that yields the best possible outcome for all – especially the student.
- Support and embrace minority communities. Work together with the Black and Minority Ethnic Campaign (BME), the Women's Campaign, LGBTQ+@cam initiative, Disabled Students' Campaign, to support and guide students that may suffer from harassment or sexual misconduct, any kind of discrimination – race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious belief, disability, sex. Implementing a ‘zero tolerance’ campaign across the University of Cambridge.

Experience

- I have personal experience with the Disability Resource Centre (as I, myself, am dyslexic), the Students' Union Advice Service, the International Student Office and the University Counselling Service.
- Admissions and Outreach Officer (Nov 2018 – Sep 2019) and currently part of the IT & Marketing team (although this role is on hold at the moment, whilst I finish my PhD) for Shaping Horizons – Summit & Action Programme, an initiative that gathered 150 young leaders from the UK and Latin America and senior world leaders to discuss pressing issues related to science, policy and innovation.