

Emilia Silaste – Academic Affairs Executive Manifesto

Hi, I'm Emilia and I'm a second year historian running for Academic Affairs Executive. I truly feel that Academic Affairs is a role I would enjoy doing; being part of the JCR is an incredible opportunity to make change and represent the voices of students. Academics are an essential part of Cambridge life (degrees are ostensibly the reason we're all here), and I want to do my best to make sure we are all as well-equipped to cope with work as possible!

Experience

- 2nd Year Student Representative on the History Faculty's Teaching Learning and Quality Committee
- Fitzwilliam College History Society Committee
- School Prefect and Vice-House Captain
- Reserve for the Fitz University Challenge Team last year

Why me?

- I have experience representing the views of students to faculty committees, so I would be comfortable in attending and representing Fitz students at the Education Committee meetings that are an essential part of this role.
- Being part of the Fitz History Society Committee has given me experience collaborating with other students in college to organise events.
- This has included engaging and communicating with fellows and inviting them to give talks; I have experience organising events with speakers.
- General knowledge is genuinely something I really enjoy; writing quizzes and organising the University Challenge team would be both very fun, and something I'm well-equipped for.
- I'm organised and have good time-management skills.

Policies

Coronavirus/Online Teaching, Learning and Examinations

- (Obviously) the pandemic has significantly reshaped the way we learn and work.
- Publicise ways of coping with online working, particularly as we get closer to Easter Term and exams.
- Make sure that college are aware of student views about online teaching, learning and exams – put pressure on them at meetings to represent us to the University as a whole.
- To achieve this, run a secondary tutor survey with regards to how tutors have handled complaints related to the pandemic, present the results (and those of the first survey) to the Master and Senior Tutor.
- Use this to support better, subject-specific training for tutors.

Student Welfare

- Academics is often one of the main factors affecting the welfare of students, I think it's important for the two roles to work together wherever possible.
- The most important aspect of this role is serving as a port of call for students with regards to academic issues – I want to make sure students know who I am and how they can get in touch with me so I can put them in touch with the right people/resources.

- Work with welfare officers, not just during week 5, to support students (Academic Affairs is a fairly flexible role so it will be easy to collaborate with/support other members of the JCR).
- Regular drop in sessions (online or in person depending on what's possible) where students can raise concerns/take a break/get help writing emails to/contacting their DOS or Tutor. Particularly important for freshers in Michaelmas – work can often be overwhelming in the first few weeks of term – continue the subject rep scheme established over the summer this year.

The Library

- Make sure all students are aware of the Library's policies on social-distancing and the wearing of face-masks.
- As soon as it is completely safe to do so (this might be some time away) relax restrictions in the library where possible so students can make comfortable use of the building.
- Bring back jigsaws in the library basement, again whenever it's safe to do so.
- Support welfare execs with library sweeps, should they choose to continue.

Events

- Academics are important but it's also important to have a healthy work-life balance.
- Work with Ents Exec to organise regular quizzes throughout term.
- Organise a post-exams celebration for students – I know this was planned for last year but was unable to go ahead.
- Build on the recent collaborative event with the MCR on postgraduate applications – make sure students know where to go for further information.
- Continue to publicise information from the careers service so students are aware of events and opportunities taking place.
- Work to get speakers into college at least termly, particularly on academic issues that aren't often discussed/left out of syllabuses.
- Ensure regular training and practices for the University Challenge team – I want Fitz to have the best chance possible of getting on the show.
- I'd also like to organise a book group, particularly for those of us that aren't English students and don't get much time to read, this would be a good opportunity to meet new students and have relaxed discussions on a topic that isn't work.