

Hi! My name is **Ben Dolbear**, and I would like to be your next **VP Education & Democracy**. My experience as Faculty Officer for Arts & Humanities in 2018/19 showed me that some students feel *left behind* by both the Union and the University, and my motivation in running for this role is to ensure that trust and community cohesion is restored at the University of Southampton. I know that students feel angry and disappointed at their lost contact hours due to UCU strikes, and I am acutely aware that printing costs are an irritating source of angst for many, despite recent progress. I have observed the substandard educational facilities at all of the non-Highfield campuses, and have experienced first-hand the barriers to academic success for students like me with mental health differences. I am also conscious that many postgraduate and international students sometimes feel excluded from the full University experience, and am committed to fulfilling the Union's mission of unlocking the potential and enriching the life of every student.

As **VP Education & Democracy**, I will commit to working with the University and the UCU to ensure that the likelihood of future strike action is reduced dramatically, and that during any such action, the welfare and academic interests of every student are prioritised. I will also work with University staff to noticeably change the printing culture at Southampton, which will include cutting costs at University printers but also bringing down the demand for printing in line with the Union's sustainability commitments, a process that will see technology and online learning materials become more accessible to all. I will prioritise the enhancing of learning spaces on non-Highfield campuses, taking from projects at other Students' Unions to ensure that students based at all campuses feel academically accommodated for. I will fourthly explore measures to improve academic accessibility in and out of the classroom environment for those students living with, and coming to terms with, mental health differences, who feel that their potential is unreachable at present. Finally, I will use my experience of studying at other universities to give a voice to postgraduate, international, and non-traditional students at the University of Southampton, who thus far may feel that their representation has been limited to peripheral roles.

Thank you!