

De Minimis

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LSS Election Special

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PRESIDENT



As President, what would be your **key policy focus**? In practical terms, how would you bring this about?

CAMILLA DOYLE

I will focus on two key areas of policy: accessibility and communication.

Accessibility:

The JD was established as a degree relying on a learning community in the classroom. Whilst I understand and appreciate this, our student body is diverse with varied learning needs. This is why we need increased accessibility to learning resources.

A key focus for me is access to lecture recordings. The current policy states that only students who have missed more than 10 consecutive days of university can access recordings. The policy overlooks the commitments of many students, such as parents and carers. This is not fair given the investment of students in this degree.

The LSS has already made considerable progress when it comes to lecture recordings. Previously, no lectures were recorded. However, I will ensure that we push further to ensure policies remain equitable and fair for all. At a minimum, there should not exist a time threshold as a condition for access.

Communication:

Communication between the student body and the LSS is essential. However, currently there is no formal opportunity for dialogue between the two.

The LSS needs to create genuine and effective feedback channels. We should ensure a platform to enable all students to offer constructive feedback and air grievances so that every voice is heard.

This information should be addressed by both the Leadership Team and Directors to ensure that, where possible, students' ideas and feedback can be incorporated into future LSS initiatives.

TILLY HOUGHTON

Advocacy. And not in the "wellbeing and inclusivity" sense of the buzzwords that are dominating this election, but understanding that people are stressed because they have to miss lectures and skip readings sometimes so they can pay rent and eat. Or because they're carers, or parents, or have long-term health issues. Or because they're human and being human is fucking hard. That, realistically, changing university policies involves more than raising awareness, but taking tangible steps, which will make a huge difference to those passing through 185 Pelham Street.

Ayu and I have been putting in the work all year. It's why we've trialled a new version of Book Fairy to reimburse more students. Or why we're holding a forum for students to discuss wellbeing with Faculty (19th September, be there). Or why we've asked for more books to be put in the high use section (thank you for the suggestion Clare van Balen!). Ask either of us for a more detailed list.

Some of it worked, some of it didn't. We tried, unsuccessfully, to push for subsidising law ball tickets (just fyi, unless the next one is held in an abandoned warehouse, it ain't getting cheaper). We tried to have support groups for people who failed subjects, but found Faculty was more suitably placed to help.

I'm not promising the moon and the stars: I'm asking you to think about what it is you want the LSS to do for you. I know that I want a student society that takes an active position on pushing for changes that are often in the hands of main campus (see: special consideration), and works in solidarity--not as the sole voice.

GUS VIOLA

The chief focus of my presidency would be to improve the way the LSS engages with student concerns.

I've found that the LSS (which is very programme-oriented) has a procedural gap in addressing specific issues that come up for students through the year. The President is uniquely placed to address this: the role is both representative of the entire student body, and coordinator of the various portfolios and directors.

I'll approach this reform across three main areas:

Firstly, I'll address how the LSS listens to student concerns. I'll work with every portfolio to develop publicised mechanisms for students to formally engage with the LSS. More broadly, "listening" also depends on improving the atmosphere of the LSS. I want to continue the Presidency's advocacy for an "Open-Door" LSS (both in the office and at events), to build a welcoming organisation.

Secondly, I'll better collate student concerns. I'll work to record student concerns across portfolios. Collating similar concerns will give a better sense of the scope and recurrence of the various causes.

Thirdly, I want to improve how the LSS acts on those concerns. Foremost, I would like to turn collated concerns into petition-like documents with which the LSS can approach faculty and other parties with a clear, single voice and manifest student support.

These reforms to hearing, recording, and acting on student concerns will build a more robust support structure.

What do you see as being the special value of the LSS, as distinct from the role of other student groups?

CAMILLA

The LSS is the official student representative body of Melbourne Law School; every JD student automatically is included. As such it represents a broad and unique group of students. They are mature, post-graduate students with varied career pathways and prospects. They all come from different backgrounds and different socioeconomic status'.

LSS initiatives ensure that all students are supported in every aspect of their development. There are 3 key pillars around which the LSS operates: to provide a social experience, professional development opportunities and support (both academic and wellbeing).

As an individual who is committed to living a holistic life it is important to me that all students can manage a balanced experience of university.

TILLY

The LSS is distinct because it has more money than other student groups. There was a time in its history where it was a political body that held Faculty accountable, including main campus. It's a double-edged sword: we have incredible workshops (thanks Women's), tutorials (thanks Education), panels (thanks Queer) and events, but corporate 'stakeholders' have sway in shaping the cultural life of MLS. But the tradeoff is that the days of ruffling feathers, fearlessly and unabashedly, are gone.

Much as I'd like to, I'm not purporting to rip the LSS apart—but I do want to use the presence it has within MLS by virtue of its history, and let it be the voice for all students: unfazed by attacking the systemic issues, and not maintaining the status quo.

GUS

The LSS's unique role is evident from its membership criteria: you're in simply by being a JD Student. Unlike other groups, the LSS belong to every single one of us, regardless of status or interests.

The LSS's special value comes from that unifying role: it engages (through events and programmes) and supports the entire, diverse student body. As a postgraduate society, there's enormous value in LSS-created opportunities to engage together socially and professionally, fostering valuable skills, and a collegiate attitude for life beyond MLS. There's also special value in the LSS's duty to represent and work on behalf of all students. Rather than operating as siloed groups, the LSS must advance a communal discussion: issues facing all students are shared, but also, importantly, issues facing specific groups and individuals are communally highlighted.

What should the student body expect of the LSS? Are you able to deliver on those expectations? If so, how?

CAMILLA

The student body should expect the LSS to be representative, supportive and act at all times with integrity. I am committed to delivering on these expectations and will do so in 2 ways:

The initiatives surrounding accessibility and communication will ensure a representative LSS with greater support mechanisms.

My approach of being interested, involved and inclusive reflects the style of leadership I respect. Personally I aim to be honest and genuine in these attributes. I wish to provide every student an experience of university that makes them feel a valued member of the Law School community. The student body however large and diverse it might seem, should be one integrated community.

TILLY

Transparency and communication as election promises are a sign of the times. If these are goals to be achieved, and not a bare minimum, then the LSS is obviously doing it wrong. If we aren't approachable, that's our own cross to bear, and not a reason that students should vote for us. I'm happy to agitate. I don't promise what I can't do, or know realistically can't happen. If you want a President who refuses to maintain the farce that All Is Well, you know what to do.

GUS

Students rightly expect the LSS to operate efficiently and inclusively of all students. Nonetheless, a concern repeatedly raised with me is that the LSS seems exclusive, unapproachable and self-serving.

It's a shame that this is the impression given: I've known the LSS to be a team of dedicated volunteers working hard for students and delivering their programmes.

I know the LSS can dispel that culture and meet expectations with key improvements. I'll work to this by concentrating on improving fundamental LSS activities: support, communication and advocacy.

However, meeting those expectations depends on communication with the LSS. This is your LSS: scrutinise it; engage with its services; approach its members. As outlined above, I'll focus on bridging the gap between concerns and LSS performance precisely to meet students' expectations of the LSS.

VICE PRESIDENT

We asked the nominees for Vice-President to speak to the same three topics as above - their key **policy goals**, their perspective on the unique **role of the LSS** within the law school, and delivering on **student expectations**

AYU MAYLINDA

1. Student equity and wellbeing. It's what I do and what I know.

Unaddressed systemic issues are a stain on MLS' reputation. For instance, a friend of mine has recently fallen through the cracks due to the combination of draconian Special Consideration policies and an overworked Wellbeing Coordinator (us who sit on the Student Equity and Wellbeing Committee know that one Wellbeing Coordinator is insufficient). MLS still doesn't have support in place for students who simply cannot afford to study full-time (rent is a real thing), and for minorities who feel uncomfortable navigating what is a rather homogenous (and homogenizing) place; it sometimes forgets its nature as a public institution, and ignores the fact that meritocracy is not foolproof. I'm saying this not to promote an agenda, but because it is the reality that Tilly and I have witnessed.

The difference between the LSS and Faculty is that they have the ability to make lasting systemic changes, while we can propose solutions and agitate for change. I would continue to provide feedback to Faculty via the SEWC (the VP also sits on this committee) and direct advocacy. I wasn't afraid to address a Faculty member about the way he spoke to students in a revision class; why should I stop now?

2. Technically, every JD student is a member of the LSS; combined with its visibility and diverse range of portfolios, it becomes the main port of call for most students. Doesn't mean it's special. It's just the largest.

3. The LSS comprises students who voluntarily adopt roles to promote students' interests. With power comes responsibility, albeit tempered with an acknowledgement that LSS officebearers are also fellow students. However, part of delivering on expectations is also being flexible enough to accommodate responses to valid criticism. With that in mind, hopefully we can deliver on our promises.

SARAH STRANGIO

1. My key policy is to make the role of VP more external, using the privileged position of VP to allow greater feedback. I'm passionate about how the LSS has enhanced my time at MLS so I want everyone to be able to feel that way. This means giving students opportunity to voice opinions, not just at election time or in de minimis.

In order to do so I want to start monthly drop in sessions where people can raise any issues that are concerning them.

2. The LSS does more than any other student group I've come across in my time at Melbourne Uni. While many provide drinking events, the LSS does so much more.

There is so many facets to the LSS, with each attempting achieve various aims. For me, not only have I made so many great friends but I've sharpened my skills through competitions and met some leading lawyers in the industry through the careers events. And finally, when I'm done with thinking about law, the LSS has provided me with yoga and netball to take out my stress. This is all for free too, meaning there is access to all. While some people may forget, this is why the LSS is special and something we are so lucky to have.

3. The student body should expect an inclusive LSS that cares about all students. I want people to stop feeling intimidated in approaching the office and instead feel that it is a place they can stop by for a chat. I like to think that starting drop in sessions will create a dialogue and show I am happy to listen. In this way, I feel the LSS will then be able to receive input from the wider student body.

Furthermore, the students should expect the events the LSS delivers to be continued in a the best way possible as well as a few more initiatives to further involve students. I plan to work actively with each of the Directors of the portfolios, helping them to develop new ideas.

KARRI WALKER

1. Positive cultural change within the law school: I think the Indigenous Student portfolio has made such a difference to the LSS and I am really dedicated to keep pushing the initiatives that I have been driving.

A less stressful experience: I think that it is important to be reminded (myself included) of the bigger picture. I want to help the other portfolios to have as many events as possible to make our experience as stress free as possible.

I also want to work with faculty to review take home exams as I think 3 day take home exams can have a really negative impact on people's mental health.

A stronger student voice: I want the initiatives to be driven by what the students! As the Indigenous Student Representative I have created really strong networks with faculty and this will enable me to act as the bridge between students and the faculty to address any issues faced.

2. I think that the LSS is what makes the MLS experience so enjoyable. We are so lucky to have access to so many amazing social events and comps! The reason that I want to be VP is to ensure that everyone's experience at law school is the best that it can be!

3. The student body should expect the LSS to be committed and dedicated. This year I have, organised a lecture with Uncle Wayne Atkinson, introduced an acknowledgment to country, organised an on-country walk and am working on introducing another Indigenous law subject. I think I have made a real impact on MLS in such a short time, and I really want to continue fostering such positive social change within the law school.

ALANA MIA PERNA

1. I will work to diminish the pressures law students face, whether that be with wellbeing, access to resources or feeling like their concerns are leaps and bounds away from faculty's reach. I have personally struggled with all three issues and felt that I had nobody to turn to.

I will be attentive and approachable, enabling MLS students to share how they want MLS to change. My focus is to advocate, support and promote engagement.

2. Honestly, law school has been the most difficult experience of my life. I have struggled to maintain or even find that ~balance~ everyone talks about. However, I will confess that law school feels like home to me, and it is, for the most part, because of the connections I've made through my year as Comps Director/Mom on the LSS.

This is a community I feel I belong to, and hope to keep developing so that everyone feels like this is their community too.

3. The student body should expect that their representatives do just that - actually REPRESENT what they want and need from their time here. We aren't superheroes and we aren't robots, but we certainly do care. This year I listened to criticisms about judge's consistency and the lack of feedback and made effective changes that promoted confidence, learning and engagement.

The student body should expect that I will do everything in my power to ensure the directors I am overseeing feel supported (read: adding an external comps director), yet challenged to be transparent and continue strengthening their individual portfolio and the LSS in its entirety.

The student body can expect that I will do everything in my power to hear them, advocate for them, and take on the feedback leaders need to hear to be good at what they do.

I hope to work with you & make the changes we need. Vote 1 Alana.

JIMI MUIRHEAD

1. We've finally made the idea of Non-Drinker Discount tickets a reality (see: Spring Social) and I'd love to make it routine at events next year. It's the largest piece of student body feedback I've received as Activities Director and would like to be responsive to that.

My idea of "how-to" manuals comes from my and others experience of needing lecture recordings or special consideration at a time of crisis only to realize the arduous process of accessing these services. Orientation information should include manuals that clearly outline the requirements and process for access so students are prepared before the crisis or illness arises.

Finally, VP's are there as much to facilitate change as they are to create their own. I will push directors under my management to be proactive on election policies and be responsive to student feedback.

2. MULSS goes further than other student societies I've experienced. I kept away from that side of Uni in undergrad, but moving from Perth for the JD I found the LSS to be the main facilitator of how I made friends, built a network, and found careers paths and jobs. I am blown away by the variety of initiatives the LSS undertakes simply because students would probably find it useful or enjoyable - and there's always room to grow.

3. Students should expect an LSS that is responsive to the cohort and brings effective change when addressable concerns arise. My ideas are practical, achievable and direct responses to issues I've seen arise in the building. I will help others on the committee bring tangible change to MULSS and the law school at large. I've seen the LSS evolve a lot over my two years on the committee. I know what can and can't be done and the best ways to go about it.

SECRETARY

What does the Secretary bring to the character and functioning of the LSS? What makes you suitable for this role?

ANNA TUPICOFF

Planning, scheduling, emailing, strategising, staying abreast of every detail - leave it to the Secretary! This role is a fundamental cog in the LSS machine, requiring a high-level of organisation and administrative management, as well as the ability to support all portfolios at any given moment.

I know this - not having been in the LSS before - but because prior to starting at MLS this year, I spent a few years as a Production Secretary on loads of TV productions around Melbourne, coordinating hundreds of cast, crew and schedules. I would be stoked to bring my experience to the Secretary role and to the LSS more generally.

BEN HENRY

Although the core role of the Secretary is to manage the administration of the LSS, it provides so much more. The Secretary has the responsibility to provide representation and advocacy for all student concerns. This facilitative element complements the function of year level representatives in maintaining a dialogue between the LSS, the cohort, and faculty.

So why me? I pride myself on my organisation and sociability; two vital parts of a good Secretary. I also have a ton of experience from my involvement in a number of student societies including the LSS, GLSA,

and OSS. Above all else I have a real love for the work of the LSS.

ALLI BERRY

The Secretary plays a pivotal role in the LSS. They're the administrative backbone of the organisation, and are responsible for keeping everything running smoothly. As part of the leadership team, they also work alongside the likes of the President, and are thus capable of having an influence on the decisions made at the highest level of the LSS.

As to suitability, I'm the administration manager of a boutique law firm, where I manage the entire administrative workload. I'm therefore extremely familiar with the type of work the Secretary undertakes, as well as its magnitude. Most importantly, I'm extremely passionate about everything I do, and would be sure to give the role my absolute all.

If successful, what do you most hope to achieve and do differently?

ANNA TUPICOFF

I'm the first to admit that I have some amazing and hugely competent shoes to fill by the outgoing Secretary, Ruveena - since first arriving at MLS, I've really admired her passion and dedication to the role, and I want to continue this legacy.

Central to the Secretary position is to organise and promote the Co-Op appointments and the General Elections, but I want to see a more diverse range of candidates run for positions, and not just those who have previously been on the LSS or those who were born to shine!

This can be done by making the roles of LSS Directors more accessible and understood by fellow students, like

snapshots of the role of each portfolio in a 'week-in-the-life' video, and removing any stigma of a cliquish-LSS. MLS comprises such diverse perspectives, so it's my aim to get these perspectives represented!

BEN HENRY

My experience at MLS has been overwhelmingly positive largely because of the support and engagement of the LSS. That said, I believe the LSS still has so much room for growth. Key to this is making the LSS more transparent, communicative and inclusive. I believe students feel their voice isn't being fully heard by the LSS and I am determined to end that. I have a great vision for the future of the LSS and I believe that as Secretary we could see this become a reality.

Building on the amazing work of my predecessor Ruveena, my greatest hope would be to evolve the role of Secretary to become more engaged with giving students a voice on the LSS. Secretary has so much potential to improve student experiences and bring our cohort together. I want to be a Secretary for change.

ALLI BERRY

Anyone aware of my campaign will know I stand for diversity and inclusion, not just in terms of race and gender, but also class and background. Melbourne Law School and its LSS are world-class legal institutions, and as such carry a certain stigma which I hope to break through. Coming from a humble background, I know how difficult the law school environment can be for those who don't fit the stereotype. I hope to demonstrate that all MLS students can have an impact, regardless of where they have come from. I would also like to put forth suggestions as to how the experience can be improved for those who live far from campus or need to work throughout their degree. These are issues I have personally experienced during first year.

TREASURER

RUSSELL HUGHES

What does the Treasurer bring to the character and functioning of the LSS? What makes you suitable for this role?

The Treasurer works with the leadership team to ensure the ongoing financial health of the LSS. This is through managing the society's sponsorship, together with the Director of Sponsorship and the rest of the leadership team, and also through traditional financial supervision. The Treasurer is responsible for the cash flows, budget, banking, and accounts of the LSS. I believe I would be perfectly suited to the role of Treasurer, as from 2012-2017 I was managing a cocktail bar in Flinders Lane with a very similar job description - I maintained all the accounts, did reconciliations, business activity statements, negotiating with banks, tax, payroll and so on, giving me

a detailed understanding of what is required to ensure the financial health of a small business (~20 staff).

If successful, what do you most hope to achieve and do differently?

If I am successful, my main goal is to use my time and skills to give back to the LSS. It might not be a groundbreaking motivation, but the Treasurer's role involves some stability. Aside from the cliché 'doing the job well', I would like the role to be a bit more open, with more transparency about the financing situation of the LSS and its sponsors - I feel that the more students understand about the backing given to the different initiatives, the more potential sponsors will view it as valuable, and the more initiatives the LSS can run. At the end of the day, the real goal is enriching the experience of the students in the law school.

LACHLAN JOHNSON

What does the Treasurer bring to the character and functioning of the LSS? What makes you suitable for this role?

The LSS Treasurer performs one of the most important functions on the Society. The Treasurer is responsible for the management and execution of payments that allow the LSS to conduct all of the events and initiatives that students get so much benefit from.

Another one of the Treasurer's responsibilities is to ensure that the financial records of the Society are well managed, ensuring that funds are available when appropriated by the different LSS portfolios. Having been a Co-op in the Careers portfolio this year, I have had exposure to how the appropriation/payment process operates and am aware of the structure and events of the different LSS portfolios. I believe that this knowledge is very important to the role of Treasurer.

In regards to my personal financial expertise, I am suitable for this role given my prior undergraduate studies (Melbourne BCom, Accounting/Finance) and my prior work history interning in audit at PwC and in corporate tax at GE. I

believe that the skills I have developed from my study and work are essential for the position of Treasurer.

I think of particular relevance is an understanding of the audit process given that at the recent MULSS SGM, the Society will now be required to conduct audits annually, compared to the prior standard of once every two years.

If successful, what do you most hope to achieve and do differently?

Following on from the end of the last question, I hope to continue on from the hard work of the prior Treasurers in preparing the LSS for its annual audit (as well as continue the other responsibilities such as budgeting, tax compliance and financial reporting).

I am aware of the work that is required to get prior financial records into shape so I hope to ensure that the books are kept in a complete, detailed and accurate basis moving forward. Finally, I believe there is room to increase the level of financial transparency so that there is more information available to the entire cohort about how LSS funds are spent, especially given the role of the LSS as the official representative body of the students of MLS.

DIRECTOR OF SPONSORSHIP

What does the Director of Sponsorship bring to the character and functioning of the LSS? Why are you suitable for this role?

MARIAH CARTSIDIMAS

As Careers Director I have:

- Worked closely with a variety of sponsors
- Attended sponsorship meetings
- Developed relationships with new firms
- Gained an appreciation of the benefits and obligations Sponsorship brings

These responsibilities have provided me with an in depth understanding of the Director of Sponsorship role and its processes, including the Sponsorship Drive and how each portfolio can be supported to meet their obligations.

I believe that my experience, knowledge and passion will allow me to best support the LSS and Student Body in maintaining and establishing relationships that enhance student experience, across Careers and more!

MICHAEL BOTHA

The Director of Sponsorship breathes financial passion and enthusiasm into the LSS. It is a relatively new Leadership Team position having only been created in 2014. The role requires clear communication skills and a zest for networking to secure the best funding for our diverse LSS portfolios.

I am the ideal candidate for this position. I have a natural style of leadership stemming from being a treasurer of a residential college students' club to involving myself as a LSS Director of Environments. I know sponsorship. Whilst volunteering in Madagascar I secured agreements with multinational companies to fund health access in remote communities. More recently I raised money for the Batyr Youth Mental Health foundation through facilitating ongoing business donations. As an LSS portfolio Director, I have not only built professional relationships with our ongoing corporate sponsors but have involved additional firms to the benefit of students.

ALEXANDER MEREDITH

The Director of Sponsorship must be a relationship builder within and outside of the law school. They must establish and maintain partnerships with varied stakeholders - from major law firms through to NGOs and government. The financial and non-financial support these partnerships provide underpins almost all LSS initiatives.

They must also have leadership experience, and the capacity to project the values of the MLS community. After all, they represent the LSS when working with sponsors.

I suit this role because I have professional experience from beyond MLS, establishing sponsorship relationships for a Melbourne-based Health Tech start-up, and through fundraising too.

I run an organisation that raises money for cutting-edge medical research. In this role, I oversee a committee of 20, which provides services to a community of 500 members in Melbourne's CBD and regional Victoria. In July we successfully raised almost \$10,000 through corporate partnerships and private donations.

Most importantly, I suit this role because I am committed to achieving the best deal possible for the MLS community.

If successful, what do you most hope to achieve and do differently?

MARIAH CARTSIDIMAS

If elected, I would like to achieve the following things:

1. Continue the amazing work and relationships Daniel Conti has established this year, while exploring opportunities for new growth
2. Implement a non-financial sponsorship program. This will allow the LSS to increase the variety of organisations that students are exposed to and interact with. It will provide a platform for Government Departments, Regulatory Bodies, CLCs and a range of smaller legal and corporate firms to become involved

in the LSS program.

3. As a member of the LT I would like to promote increased collaboration across LSS portfolios, with MLS and other Student Bodies (E.g. LLSN and GLSA) so that we are able to collectively advocate for and support student needs and interests. I would like to increase awareness of Sponsorship drive process, while providing students with the opportunity to suggest organisations that they believe would benefit the student experience.

MICHAEL BOTHA

Diversity and transparency are my two aims. If elected, I will engage with non-law specific companies, government departments and not-for-profit organisations to provide each student with the opportunities that they deserve. Not all students seek corporate legal careers, and this should be reflected in our sponsorship arrangements. Organisations unable to provide financial support may instead provide pro bono and public interest student possibilities or other services in kind. Secondly, I would like for students to be able to know how their money is both sourced and spent. Greater transparency will allow the LSS to build better relationships with our sponsors and secure the best value for our student cohort. I hope to provide better sponsorship for all.

ALEXANDER MEREDITH

I will further develop existing sponsorship arrangements, while establishing new LSS partnerships with start-up incubators and accelerators so that as the working world evolves, MLS is not left behind.

I will also increase transparency, by introducing a Sponsorship Report, because I believe these partnerships should reflect the values of the community.

Ultimately, I am committed to ensuring the richest possible educational, social and professional development experience for all MLS students, and I will roll up my sleeves to get this done.