A Guide to Election Campaigning!

Congratulations on standing in the elections; running a campaign can seem daunting, but we hope that the advice in this booklet will be helpful and reassuring. These tips should help you plan a campaign with impact, but bear in mind that they're only guidelines based on what candidates in previous years have found useful; there's no 'magic formula' for a winning campaign! Remember to make your campaign unique; be brave and try new things! Think about it like a project; plan carefully and play to your strengths.

Don't worry if you feel at the moment like you haven't got anything prepared, but make the most of the next week and try to get as much done as early as possible so that once voting opens you can focus on getting out there and talking to students.

Remember to play by the rules, it's not worth the risk of being disqualified, and if you see someone else breaking the rules make sure you let the Deputy Returning Officer know as soon as possible, it's all about a free and fair election.

Good luck!

University & Deadlines

We strongly suggest you try and finish all your urgent University work BEFORE voting opens so that you can prioritise your campaign. Try to plan this carefully, as trying to finish important work while campaigning might cause you undue stress.

Compulsory University - If you have lab or other compulsory time, decide whether you'll attend these during the election. Standing in a Students' Union election does not qualify for Special Circumstances, so it important that permission is sought should you choose to campaign instead of attend University. We advise you to make your supervisor or tutor aware that you're running in the election. You can copy the Deputy Returning Officer (union.elections@aber.ac.uk) into emails and we'll be able to verify that you are a candidate.

Campaign Team

Firstly, it's important not to worry if you don't have a campaign team, people win and get high numbers of votes without any help if they plan their campaign well. However it's worth trying to find some people to work with if you can.

Get a Facebook group together with some friends who you think might help you. Even if they don't get involved they will still see your posts, spread the word or at least think about voting for you. If you have a close friend who is keen, then perhaps they could manage your campaign for you, but this isn't essential.

There will be times when you feel like quitting and they are the person who will keep you going. If you don't have a friend to campaign with, try and make friends with someone else campaigning and buddy up for the day/week – how about a couple of virtual cake breaks together?

If you manage to get a team together, think about their strengths and what they will be most happy doing – a happy team is a more productive one! Don't try and force your shy friend to message societies they don't know, or if you have a friend who's more of a nightowl they might be able to help promote your page in the evenings. Different roles you could think about are:

- **The Artist** – do you have an artistic or creative friend who could help you design some posters or make a really eye catching Facebook post?

- **The Keen Bean** – do you have a friend who is keen to be involved in the whole campaign? They could be your campaign manager and help you delegate responsibilities and plan.

- **The One who loves TikTok** – do you have a friend who could dance the renegade in their sleep or knows every lyric of Driving Licence ? Why not think of ways to utilise this app in the era of online campaigns?

- **The One who lives on Bridge Street, Portland Road or Fferm Penglais** - if you have friends who live in popular student areas, you could email them copies of posters to put up up in their windows or maybe even organise a virtual banner making session and get them to hang banners on their front gate?

- **The Digital Whizz** – do you have a friend who has the skills to help you make a campaign video or design you some posters or a Facebook banner and profile photo that fits in with your brand?

- **The Social Media Addict** – social media will be more important than ever this year, and you can write and schedule all of your posts in advance; you might want to use some of your budget to boost Facebook posts. This can be a bit tricky, but perhaps you have a friend who could show you how to do it? Check out later.com and Canva.com both free to use.

- **The Parent** – keeping yourself motivated can be difficult; perhaps you have an especially caring friend who can be on hand for when you need a pep talk and to be reminded to get some sleep.

- **The Chef** – see if someone in your household or bubble could cook your tea some evenings during voting? It's important you remember to eat, and knowing you have some time for food and a chat with a friend each day will keep you going! Also consider meal prepping for the week so you've got everything ready to go in the freezer.

Branding and Design

Creating a strong, simple and memorable brand is really important. You want someone to see your posters, videos, campaign team and link them altogether. Try to create your campaign around something fun! People who don't care about the Union will remember the person who has solid, continuous branding.

Slogans and puns can work well but make sure it makes sense; don't worry too much if you can't find one that fits your name, not everyone uses a slogan and still run a really successful campaign. Think about using one simple colour scheme, and make sure your name is what people will see and remember.

When creating designs, you should have a number of key assets. These are:

- **Facebook banner** – make sure you include your full name, the position you're running for and a picture of you. Also make sure the 'Profile Picture' does not cover the key elements. See if you can get some of your friends to change their cover photo to this.

- **Poster** – (A4-A3) make sure your name and the position you're running for is on your poster so people who glance at it will remember the key information about you. Keep the design as simple as possible. Try to make sure this looks good and eye catching. You could think about including up to 3 main manifesto points if they are short.

Social Media

Social media is going to be one of of the most important elements of your 2021 campaign. It's important to have a strong presence, but don't forget 90% of your social media can be planned and scheduled before voting even opens.

- **Facebook page** – You can use the 'invite all' code to invite as many people as possible, including friends that don't attend Aberystwyth; the more likes the better! Try to get as many of your friends to do this as well. You should be regularly posting on this page throughout your campaign, updating on what you're doing, etc. But remember that your total number of likes doesn't necessarily equate to votes. Pages are useful for spreading your brand, so make your posts interactive, interesting and post them at peak times. Posts with images or videos are more likely to have a higher reach, so think about including a simple image of your poster, or perhaps photos of you and your team out and about on campus.

- **Facebook event** – some people create a 'Vote [name]' event and invite all their Aberystwyth University friends to attend. You could make the 'time' of the event to last throughout the whole voting period; this will both remind people to vote and spread your brand a little bit further.

- **Facebook frames** – why not create a frame for people to use on their profile picture to show support "I'm voting for .."

- **Facebook and Instagram Stories** – how about using the Q&A function or creating a quiz about you? Stories often have greater engagement than feedposts, so don't forget to utilise the resource.

- **Memes** – everyone loves a laugh, especially at Aber; how can you make your campaign relatable and engaging?

- **Instagram Page** – try and use the same branding across your social media platforms; lots of clubs and socs have active Instagram pages, don't forget to be proactive and reach out to them

- **Livestream** – You can livestream on a whole range of platforms such as Facebook and Instragram; you could consider doing a Q&A session or hosting a virtual event

- **Twitter** – Don't over-estimate the power of Twitter to swing an election, but it might be worth having some presence. You could create a hashtag or post tweets using popular hashtags that are trending in Aberystwyth. We usually find postgraduates and departments use Twitter the most.

- **Trends** – Think about ways you can tag friends to your page, as this will make your page trend and increase your reach. Photo albums are a good way of doing this – you could get lots of friends to hold your poster on a Zoom call saying, "I'm voting for…", or a more creative

sign (examples include cardboard moustaches/saxophones/speech bubbles) and tag them in an album on your page with voting instructions in the album description.

- **Boosted posts** – if you do a video or other big posts it might be worth allocating a proportion of money from your campaigns budget to boost this to people who like your page and friends on Facebook. There's more detailed instructions on how to do this at the end of this guide.

- **Like & Share competitions** – this is a more creative and interactive idea; you could spend some of your budget on some small prizes and use them as incentives for people to like and share your content.

- ***Video*** – There isn't much of a culture of making videos at Aberystwyth University like there is at others, but it's something you could do if you feel confident you have the time and resources to make one. When they're done well they can be effective! As with everything, make sure it fits in with the rest of your campaign branding. Have a look at what people have done at other Students' Unions for ideas, but don't expect to make a masterpiece either!

- **Individual Facebook messages** – if you want to, you could message people individually on Facebook; it might be worth getting a friend to do this if you don't have time. Send out a pre-written message about your campaign and how to vote to all your Facebook friends in Aberystwyth individually, asking them to share a post & vote for you.

- **Broadcasting on Whatsapp** - The personalised approach is often the most memorable! You can also use the broadcast function on Whatsapp which sends a text to a large group of people; when they receive the text it will appear to be sent to them as individuals.

- **Posts in groups and mailing lists** – you can post in any Facebook group you're a member of; you can also ask to join new groups and post there, but it might be a good idea to ask permission from an admin first otherwise your post may be deleted. You can't use an email list you have access to because of a privileged position (e.g. As an academic rep or group committee member), but you could always ask a fellow rep/another committee member to send something out on your behalf, as this is an opportunity everyone has access to.

Publicity

"I read their manifesto" is the biggest reason voters give for choosing to vote for a candidate, so it's important to take the time to write and answer the publicity questions carefully.

The deadline to have the final version of your manifesto uploaded onto our website is 12pm the Friday after the close of Standing. There are a variety of questions covering the top issues that affect students, the personal qualities you will bring to the role and how you will contribute to the wider officer team. Full-time Officers also answer a question based on policy that they must work towards. Remember it's about getting your message across in a clear and concise way not using up the word count.

- **Simple, specific and structured** – Remember to include tangible answers which state what you want to do; think about problems students' experience, and how you would solve them. Be specific rather than vague about what you care about and stand for. Remember to present it in a clear, non-cluttered format which fits into the rest of your brand.

- **Feedback** – Get feedback from members of the Full-time Officer Team, friends, and importantly students who don't necessarily know much about the Students' Union. You want to make sure everyone can understand and like your ideas.

- **Learn** – Make sure you know your publicity thoroughly! This will help when talking to students and during shout-outs. If your friends are helping you when you're out talking to students, make sure they know it as well!

Sports Clubs and Societies

Sports Clubs and Societies can support you, although typically among the least likely reasons given by voters for making their choice, but it could still be worth approaching them and getting them to support your campaign. You cannot use a Clubs or Societies money or resource to promote your campaign.

Endorsements must be done in accordance with the Club or Society's usual processes and you must be able to evidence if asked – it is your interest to ensure processes are followed.

- **Contact** – be proactive and contact clubs and societies asking to meet with them/their committees on Teams to discuss your policies and how you can support them if elected.

- **Research** – before meeting a club or society, look them up to find out what is important to them, and how this relates to the position you're going for; always look to bring this back to your manifesto.

- **Key Clubs or Societies** – there are some clubs or societies that are very large so have large committees and therefore lots of people to potentially contact. You can also find some contact information for clubs and societies on the AberSU Website. Look up sports and societies that relate to your position, e.g. Wellbeing to contact welfare or campaigning societies as these students might be more interested in you and your campaign.

- **Interviews/question times** – if you do get invited to an interview or a question time with a society, make sure you go, as it will be worth some votes and it's a good way to start building these relationships. They don't have to be overly formal and can be a great way to spread your brand.

Banners

If you want to make a banner, we suggest you make them the week before voting opens. To avoid your banner being stolen, damaged by the weather (it is Aberystwyth after all!) it might be a good idea to take your banner down at night and put it back up in the morning. This year there will be no banners in campus buildings, but that doesn't stop you putting something up outside your student house!

Equally if you have friends who live in a prominent student area, ask them to hang a banner from their house? Remember make sure you are following all relevant Covid guideines when doing so.

T-shirts

You could order T-shirts online for you and your household – maybe you could wear it attending club/society socials or any on camera teaching hours. T-shirts can be a good way of getting your name out there and showing off the support you have, but make sure they fit in with your brand!

Typical day of a campaigner

- **8/8.30am** – make sure you have some breakfast so you're full of energy for the day ahead. Plan out which key clubs and societies you want to contact that day.

- **9-5pm** - shout outs at the end of any live teaching sessions you have, messaging students, sending emails, creating videos and sharing social media posts.

- **5pm** – take down banner outside your house; this is optional, it's a risk leaving it up, but if you think lots of people will see it during their daily exercise then hang it somewhere visible.

- **5pm-Late** (8/9pm) – make sure you eat properly throughout the day, and especially at some point in the evening. Then maybe head to virtual socials, join Meet the Candidate sessions before zones or boost some social media posts.

- **10pm-8am** SLEEP – make sure you sleep AT LEAST 8 HOURS EVERY NIGHT. Do not stay up late obsessing over social media; try to wind down and rest so that you can get back out there the next day!

Basic Election Comms – Start of Voting

- **Texts** – send out texts to all your friends reminding them to vote and asking them to get 10 people to vote for you. If 10 of them do it that's 100 votes already!

- **Facebook** – make a post on your page giving exact instructions of how to vote, and ask all your friends to like and share this.

- **Remember that elevator pitch** – vote for you #1, if not then #2, top reason you stand out as a candidate, when and where to vote

Basic Election Comms – Middle of Voting

- **Facebook message** – send a big message to a hundred or so people saying, "Hey don't forget to vote and tell your friends" in the middle of the campaign.

- **Check-in** – contact some of those you texted or spoke to earlier in the week to see if they have voted and if you can do anything to convince them further.

Basic Election Comms – Last Day of Voting

- **Final Reminder** – send and post final reminders to all your friends reminding them that it is their last chance to vote; remember a vote is a vote whether its case five minutes after opening or five minutes before the end.

- **Recognise your supporters** – take some time to pay tribute to those who have supported or campaigned for you, but don't let it detract from campaigning, use it to encourage others.

Self-care

We can't stress this enough; looking after your health and wellbeing is KEY!

Make sure you get 8 hours sleep a night, don't stay up late on Facebook – if you've scheduled in your posts this shouldn't be necessary. Try and switch off from the election and wind down. Try to make this a routine for the week and eat properly – you could pre-make meals and freeze them,

make your packed lunches for voting week the weekend before. Make sure you have things for breakfast, even if it's just things you can grab and eat on your way to campus. If you're lucky you might have a friend or housemate who could cook for you, so it's worth asking!

We'll be providing wellbeing packs for each candidate, so make sure you use them!

Plan to win the election, but also be prepared to lose. Standing is an amazing experience in which you'll learn and develop skills which you can take with you to the next step, whether that's being an officer or going into the world of work.

That all said have an amazing time and good luck!

Appendix 1: How to Boost Facebook posts

1. Click Advert Manage or Create Advert in the left of your profile.
2. Choose Brand Awareness or Reach as your marketing objective and create advert account
3. Choose your audience:
   - Location: Aberystwyth (most potential voters will be in Aberystwyth)
   - Age and Gender: Completely up to you!
   - Detailed targeting: People who are interested in the Students' Union or Aberystwyth etc.
4. Choose your Budget: Daily will charge you every 24 hours and lifetime is the whole campaign.
5. Choose your Schedule: It's probably best to have a start and end date to save your money!
6. Choose your Optimisation for Advert Delivery:
   - Post Engagement: Deliver it to people you think are most likely to post and share.
   - Impressions: As many people's newsfeeds as possible
   - Daily Unique Reach: As many DIFFERENT newsfeeds as possible
7. Choose your Optimisation for Advert Delivery: Keep as automatic.
8. Choose your Advert Scheduling: You can schedule posts at the times you think will have the most impact. Look at the Union plan to see when we'll be sending emails and when people were most likely to vote last year.
9. Select the post that you want to boost and add your card details and that's it done!!
10. Remember: Facebook doesn't let you boost images that contain more that 20% text. Go to

https://www.facebook.com/ads/tools/text_overlay to check if your post is okay!