

“One President good, Two Presidents better”

In a first for the AHS, we are standing to be Co-Presidents, that is, two strong individuals taking on the role of President in order to better serve the AHS and its membership. Together, we will have the ability to:

•Commit more time

The role of AHS President is a large one, and as we have seen, it is arguably too large for a single individual to dedicate sufficient time to while still in education, or in full-time employment. Together, however, we would be able to commit the time that the role deserves, allowing the AHS to consolidate and develop.

•Bring different views to the table

Two individuals allow a greater range of views to be considered, preventing tangents being taken where personal opinions take precedence over the wider interest. While we are both strong-minded, we have worked together in the AHS with no issues arising. We are in agreement as to the broad outlook of our year, and both feel that discussion and debate aids decision making, allowing the membership to be confident that the direction taken is the right one. In order to ensure that 'stalemates' do not occur, where disagreement delays or prevents action, we plan to take ownership over particular parts of the role, with each having overall say in those areas (sharing between us the President's vote), though we will place an emphasis on agreement being attained as a rule.

•Be able to head different areas, with a combined skill-set

We plan to split the role into areas according to our particular skill-sets and interests, which, as well as being a safeguard, will allow the AHS to move forward on many different fronts, with a far wider remit. Two individuals will be able to particularly focus on the areas they are strong in, giving a far greater amount of time skill to a wider range of particular areas than a single President could, for instance, Nicola being particularly strong on developing societies, campaigning and interfaith, and Emma being experienced in publicity, graphic design and starting up societies.

•Be always available

The AHS is run remotely (this Cabinet has never met in person!), through Skype and email. Having two co-Presidents will mean that there is always someone available to deal with issues quickly and effectively, whether from the Caucus, press, or anyone else. The Presidency has never been a 'figure-head' role, with the rest of the executive and cabinet being highly visible. In our roles, we are both in contact with most societies, and would continue this as Presidents.

•Give varying perspectives on the AHS

A graduate may lack that 'on the ground' view that is vital when supporting and developing societies. On the other hand, a current student could be too close to this, lacking the more holistic view that someone less involved in an individual society may have. We would give the best of both worlds, with Nicola being a recent graduate of Leeds after several years in their society, and Emma being still involved in Durham's society after a year as President.

•Bring combined and varied experience to the role

We are both very experienced in the AHS and are familiar with its workings on a day-to-day and longer term basis. Between us, we have held the majority of the roles in the AHS - *Secretary, Press and Publicity Officer, Head of Membership, Head of Education, Regional Development Officer, and Society Representative*. We are also both experienced within societies, having held between us the roles of: *President, Secretary, Publicity, Interfaith Coordinator, and Humanist Chaplain*. We are both strong organisers, Nicola having been on the Leeds committee for a number of years, and the AHS executive for the past year, and Emma having been President at Durham, running the society's first Reason Week, which after BBC publicity was nominated for the Durham's Best Student Event award.

Why us

Emma: I am currently AHS Press Officer, writing the weekly newsletter and doing publicity and design for both the AHS and member societies, as well as being involved more widely in the AHS' running and helping out various societies. As co-President, I would continue our current success by reaching out further to other organisations, empowering members to develop their societies, and seeking to discover and deliver what you want from the AHS.

Nicola: I have been influential in the phenomenal success of the AHS over the last year. I co-ordinated Non-Prophet Week and have headed the arranging of this AGM. Building on this success, I would continue to help the AHS grow and get the publicity deserved. I have continually put in the time and hard work and have acted on my promises in various AHS roles. My approach has always been inclusive, respectful and welcoming to contributions from members.

Our plans for the AHS

Reaching out

Working with other groups: The AHS is stronger when working with other organisations. While we value our present strong relationship with the BHA, we feel that the AHS has a lot to gain by affiliating and working closely with other organisations that share our aims in all three sides of A / H / S, they potentially being able to offer us support, contacts, advice, and input into shared projects. We will also encourage local groups to get involved in setting up societies at universities where none exists, as well as helping and working with with more established societies.

Campaigns: We want the AHS to be a household name in the national news, and to facilitate societies in getting into local and national news. To this end we will begin national campaigns on the issues you care about coordinated by the Campaigns officer and AHS Team, with societies can get involved in. As well as this, we will encourage societies to begin local campaigns on the issues that affect and interest them, and support them in gaining their own publicity.

Democracy: Democracy will be key to all we do. As well as increasing the opportunity for involvement in, and contribution to, the AHS' activities (see below), we will endeavour to canvas the views of the membership, both in terms of overall direction, and regarding big decisions, and deliver what you want from us. In terms of internal management, we plan to create a culture of discussion and involvement, overseeing rather than micromanaging, and giving officers more independence, increasing enthusiasm and allowing them to be proactive and innovative.

Support and development

Wiki system: We will set up a Wiki system to better present the experience and knowledge of the AHS and Societies. It will be a more accessible way to access the vast array of information already written in In Depths and Guides, which is often hard to find and counter-intuitively placed. This would be a more accessible of accessing specific pieces of information rather than having to look through long guides. Especially exciting is that unlike presently, the system would be collaborative, anyone being able to share their own tips and experiences with everyone (whether writing a short guide to Think and Drinks, or sharing a few tips on an event that worked particularly well), creating a web of knowledge that we can all use – we don't claim that the AHS team knows everything! This will be supplemented by a more informal forum system for societies to chat and share ideas.

Mentoring scheme: In order to help societies to be the best they can be, we plan to put committee members that wish to be part of the scheme into small groups (around 3) to help support each other and share advice. This could, for instance be an ex-president, a president with experience, and a president of a new society, the group not being 'top-down', each being able to learn from the others, and give back to other societies.

Directory of people: This scheme would be supplemented by a directory, compiled of people with relevant experience and skills, who societies could get in touch with for specific advice and support. This may include those that could help with publicity, interfaith, reason weeks, inter-society events, design, setting up societies, and so on.

Regional events: We plan to get RDOs really involved, planning Regional Conventions in the same vein as the national one, with speakers and other events in order to allow societies to meet each other for both fun and development, as well as Regional socials to give societies much closer links in a similar way to the London groups.

Alumni: There are now many AHS alumni that are still involved, and we feel an alumni group would greatly benefit the AHS, providing financial support, as well as help at events and the benefit of their experience.

Events

Non-Prophet week: The week was coordinated by Nicola this year, and we want this year to be bigger, better and have more publicity! Participation will be encouraged by having the date set early to fit in with your plans, and we aim to get national publicity, with T-shirts and promotional materials supplied, funded by sponsors.

Convention: We were both involved this year, and would start planning immediately to ensure the best possible speakers, as well as providing the best possible training in the areas that you request.

Trips to other events: In response to your feedback at the EGM, we will organise more AHS trips to outside events, such as the Ancestors Trail, comedy shows and irreligious events, allowing you to attend interesting events across the country, whether as an individual or as a society trip, and get to know people from wider societies.