

Edward Snowden
Rector
c/o Rector's Office
Gilbert Scott Building
University of Glasgow
G12 8QQ

24th August 2014

Dear Mr Snowden

A welcome from the GUSRC Executive

Firstly, please allow us to extend our congratulations to you on your election as Rector of the University of Glasgow.

Secondly, please excuse us if we mention anything you know already. It has been difficult for us to judge what you know and do not know about Glasgow.

Allow us to introduce ourselves: we are writing as the Executive Officers of the University of Glasgow Students' Representative Council (GUSRC). We have been, like you, nominated and elected to represent students at the highest levels of the University's governance structure. There are four Executive Officers: President, Vice President (Education), Vice President (Student Support), and Vice President (Student Activities). Respectively: Breffni O'Connor, Caelum Davies, Liam King and Gintare Masiulyte.

GUSRC is the statutory body charged with representing and lobbying for the interests of Glasgow University students locally and nationally. We work closely with the University (as a critic or a friend) as well as with our counterpart student representative organisations across Scotland and the United Kingdom.

We are in a unique position at Glasgow; student life is shared amongst four organisations on campus: Glasgow University Union, Queen Margaret Union, Glasgow University Sports Association and ourselves GUSRC. Together we foster an active student community.

This same student community has a proud history in activism and protest. It was Glasgow students who recovered the Stone of Destiny on Christmas Day in 1950, returning it to Scotland for the first

time in over 600 years. Glasgow Students elected Albert Lutuli and Winnie Mandela as Rectors to recognise their contribution to the struggle against Apartheid. Glasgow students also elected Jimmy Reid, the famous trade unionist, as Rector. In his Installation Address to students he called on them to reject the centralisation of democratic power in the hands of a few; to reject bureaucracy over democracy and to take power back into the hands of the people. Glasgow students elected Mordechai Vanunu; a man who was hunted down and forcibly returned to Israel for committing the 'crime' of exposing government secrecy.

When students voted for Mordechai Vanunu, they did so knowing he would never visit campus. Similarly when students voted for you, they did so knowing you too would likely never visit. But they voted regardless – voting to show they share your values and reject state intrusion, spying and secrecy.

Despite being unable to come here in person, you have expressed an interest in becoming an active and engaged Rector. We are thrilled to hear so.

The role of Rector has been described in various ways. In essence this variety reflects the fact that the role can be as big or as small as the Rector desires. Technically speaking the Rector is the Chair of the University Court. However, your predecessor Charles Kennedy MP carved out the role of Rector as active, engaging and influential far beyond simply attending Court. He met regularly with GUSRC and attended many University events. In an age where you do not need to be on campus to learn, you now no longer need to be on campus to engage. As such we are keen to facilitate anything which would allow you to carry out your role as Rector.

In the spirit of building a relationship with students, we would like to invite you to speak to the new students who will be joining us in September. On the first day of the new academic year, Monday 15th September, the University officially welcomes new students at the Freshers' Address. Traditionally the Rector, the Principal, the University Chaplain and the Presidents of the four student bodies address the freshers and welcome them to the University of Glasgow. If you are willing, addressing students via web link or pre-recorded message would be an excellent way to begin engaging with students just beginning their university journey. The Freshers' Address has a unique and boisterous atmosphere and we will help facilitate whatever means you would like to use to address our new students.

In the meantime, please allow us to again extend our congratulations. We look forward to your reply and we hope that this marks the beginning of what will be a long and fruitful relationship for us both.

Yours sincerely,



Breffni O'Connor
President



Liam King
Vice-President (Student Support)



Caelum Davies
Vice-President (Education)



Gintare Masiulyte
Vice-President (Student Activities)