

## Academic Staff Member Election 2020

### Darrick Evensen

I am a lecturer in Politics and International Relations, in the School of Social and Political Science. I have multiple experiences in university governance previously, including:

- Trustee of Cornell University (United States) for four years – a ‘trustee’ in the United States is the equivalent of an assessor of the University Court at Edinburgh;
- Chairperson of the Cardiff University Research Staff Association for two years (this is the governance body representing the approximately 1,000 staff on research-only contracts at Cardiff University, Wales);
- President of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly at Cornell University (United States) – this role leads the governance body representing the 7,000+ masters, PhD, and professional degree (business, law, and veterinary medicine) students at the university.

These leadership roles have given me an understanding of a range of issues affecting university governance and particular communities within the university. I am now the exams convener in Politics and International Relations, co-director of a politics MSc programme in ‘Global Environment, Politics and Society’, and a member of Edinburgh’s Senatus Academicus.

Whilst in my position as trustee of Cornell University, I played an active role for four years in several committees, including: academic affairs committee, university-community relations committee, student life committee, and the student and staff diversity and inclusion task force. In addition to efforts in these content-specific areas, I worked with all other trustees to: manage risk and reputation issues for the university, help orchestrate a major expansion of the university to include a new campus of Cornell for technology innovation in New York City, and to exercise ultimate authority over the stewardship and responsible investment of the university’s \$7 billion endowment.

I have lengthy experience being a member of a particular constituency within a university, but needing to represent all communities of that university whilst in the fiduciary role of a member of its highest governing body. In effect, as an academic member of the University Court, I would see it as my responsibility to understand as well as possible the views and concerns of academic staff, and the structural factors affecting their situations. I would then relay this information to the whole Court to combine with other evidence to decide upon the best approaches to governing the university as a complex whole. Having led representative governance bodies for fixed-term contract staff and students previously, I would build off these experiences to connect with these communities as well to ensure I have a holistic understanding of interests and concerns across the university community that are relevant to the decision making capacities within the remit of the University Court.

I appreciate your consideration in this election. I believe I have not only relevant prior experience, but also a manifest desire to contribute to my university community that will help me to dutifully fulfil the considerable responsibilities of this role.