

Stephenson College JCR 2023 Presidential Election – Candidate Interviews

The race is on for 2023/4 academic year's JCR president. We chatted to the three nominees Georgia Malkin, Emily Longman and Sam Angus to learn more about them and their motivations for becoming president. Remember that voting is open until Friday 17th March!

1. What is your vision for the JCR in the long term?

Georgia- I want Stevo to be a figurehead for inclusivity – as a newer college we don't have traditions to uphold and can afford to be cutting edge in our ideals and principles. I want to put this at the forefront of our JCR as well as carrying forward our other successes, like our sport and our talks.

Emily- With my administration, the JCR will continue to be a group that keeps student's priorities at the forefront of everything it does. I advocate for a JCR that is inclusive, accessible, and fosters a strong sense of community among its members. In order to do this, I will work in close connection with each member of the valuable exec and non- exec, the hard- working college staff, and the wider University. In terms of more material changes, my manifesto outlines the three main goals I would strive to achieve as President. These being: a consistent schedule of engaging and affordable events, re- establishing an exciting creative-arts scene, and ensuring the JCR and each student is striving to fulfil Stephenson's value- led legacy by prioritising inclusivity and accessibility in all that we do.

Sam- I believe that Charles and the rest of the exec have done an amazing job the past couple years at making Stevo the place to be and creating a welcoming and enriching environment. This movement and upward trajectory has really put Stevo on the map. However, I have a few ideas that I would implement in Stephenson College to make it that bit better! Firstly, I believe the continuation of key Stevo nights throughout the year such as Sunday quiz, the masquerade ball and our many great bar nights will continue to draw people to Stevo. Next, I believe the introduction of more in-house sporting events/leagues such as a weekly 5-a-side league on the MUGA, rounders tournaments throughout the summer, and charity fun-runs will create more interest around the events happening at Stevo. Alongside increasing interaction with Stevo, my main vision for the future of the JCR is sustainability. The move towards net-zero carbon emissions is one I believe to be of utmost importance. Therefore, the first steps must start now. This movement, and the idea of Stevo hosting the beginning of green-initiatives within Durham colleges is bound to attract future cohorts to Stevo.

2. What is something new that you would introduce to Stevo?

Georgia- I want to introduce a JCR phone number in case of emergencies, so that Rangers have a well-known, friendly, and non-judgemental voice to talk to, whenever something goes wrong (any time of day) but they don't feel comfortable talking to a member of staff or they are worried about confidentiality. This serves to make the JCR (and President) more accessible and helpful! I would also like to introduce more collaborations with other colleges to foster a better community, especially on the hill (without losing sight of our Stevo sparkle – bleed red)!

Emily- I am very excited about bringing our creative reputation up to the standard we have set for our sports and other societies. Stevo has a plethora of spaces and facilities that enable students to practice music, but a schedule of evening events that prioritise music, spoken word, poetry and other arts would help put Stevo on the map.

Sam- As previously mentioned, new sustainability initiatives are top of my priority list for Stevo. Therefore, introduction of a new sustainability executive officer position within the JCR, Stephenson-branded reusable plastic cups behind the bar, and a secure bike shelter to encourage bike travel would be key to take a small step towards a sustainable Stephenson future.

3. What is your best memory at Stevo?

Georgia- Last year, after a long night of frepping, a couple of my friends and I faced the prospect of around 3 hours of sleep; instead of having a rest, we drove to Newcastle in the middle of the night, got a takeaway, took photos in front of the George Stephenson statue, and I later slept through the matriculation pots and pans!

Emily- Jeezzzzz how do I choose? I think it has to be Stevo Day 2022. Just a great celebration of a non-covid year at college, surrounded by friends and live music all day (dreamy); an awesome example of how amazing events at Stevo can be.

Sam- Great question! After almost 3 years in Durham, picking a single 'best memory' is probably beyond me. So instead, I'm going to give my top 3. Firstly, captaining the Stevo men's football C team the past 2 years has been a blast. Playing week in week out with some great people, leading to relative success has been brilliant. Next, the charity fashion show last year, provided a great opportunity for Stevo to come together to celebrate their modelling friends while raising money for charity. Finally, the Stevo quiz, has provided lots of entertainment, laughs, and a definite competitive edge to my Sunday evenings.

4. What experience do you have that would be useful for the role?

Georgia- I believe my experience is more than sufficient, having been on the JCR exec (for 3 years), and thus having a very good idea of what is achievable and how things are run. I also have experience of other societies and committees across the university, so can understand a wide range of the experiences of Durham and Stephenson students.

Emily- I've had part-time jobs all the way through University to help support myself with my studies, so this gives me some understanding of the wider student experience, and some of the issues with Durham's financial accessibility. Alongside being heavily involved in journalism, radio and sports groups, I've been on the exec for multiple music groups, including an acapella group that I helped take to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last summer. I've also been pretty involved in different charity initiatives, and I'm excited to continue with more philanthropy as part of the JCR. I also 'frepped' for Stevo in my second year, which was definitely an experience that gave me some insight into the vastness of this job's responsibilities.

Sam- Throughout High-school and University I have participated in many clubs and activities, and have held many part-time job positions, all which have helped me gain valuable skills I would use as JCR president. I have firstly gained organisational, interpersonal, and communication skills through my part-time jobs as a tutor, retail worker, and data analyst. Through my captaincy of the Stevo C men's football team I have experience in team-work, delegating tasks and roles to the rest of the exec, and leadership where I lead my team to an undefeated league win in the 2021/22 season. I believe my past experience has perfectly set me up for the role of JCR president, and will not only enable me to utilise my skillset, but help me further these and shape me into a more well-rounded person.

Afterword

That concludes our interview with the candidates. After Friday 17th March, either Georgia, Emily, or Sam will be our JCR President-Elect. Which one is up to you and your vote. Maybe their answers here helped you decide, maybe not, but either way the important thing is that your voice and your vote make Stevo a better place, so use them and remember to vote before Friday 17th March.