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LINK

*The newsletter for families
of undergraduate students*

SEMESTER 1 ISSUE
Winter 2023

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of *LINK* magazine in 2023-2024.

We have had a wonderful start to the academic year: in September, St Andrews made history by becoming the first university apart from Oxford and Cambridge to top the two major UK higher education league tables – the *Guardian University Guide 2024* and *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024*.

It was fantastic to meet so many of you at the Parents' Receptions at the beginning of Orientation Week. I hope that these events and the Student Ambassadors' tours have given you some understanding of why our University has been endorsed by these league tables.

In this issue we have a new section featuring Family Programme members' experiences of their students' journeys from Freshers' Week to graduation. There is an update from our Kaleidoscope Alumni Network – one year on from its launch – along with the latest news from Annual Giving. We are delighted to introduce you to this year's Sabbatical Officers, who are elected to represent the student body. You'll also find information about our in-person and online events.

Let us know when you're in town – we would be delighted to catch up with you!

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this latest issue and, as always, welcome your feedback.

Best wishes,



Robert Fleming, Director of Development



A historic double first for St Andrews



The icing on the cake: a historic double first for the University of St Andrews

We were delighted to hear at the beginning of September that we had been ranked top University in the *Guardian University Guide 2024* for the second time in two years. But the icing on the cake came just over a week later when we learned that we had also been ranked the leading university in the UK in *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024*.

This is the first time that any UK university – apart from Oxford or Cambridge – has led both major UK higher education league tables in the same year. It's also the fourth time in the last three years that St Andrews has overturned the traditional Oxbridge duopoly.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Sally Mapstone FRSE said:

“This achievement belongs completely to our fantastic staff and hard-working students. It reflects a deep institutional commitment to a critical balance of world-leading research and teaching, and the ways in which St Andrews students respond to that.”

Barry Will, Students' Association President said:

“I think we're number one because, as a community, we all, each and every day, try to take care of one another and make St Andrews the best place in the world. If we're top of the league tables because of that, it's an added bonus, the icing on the cake.”

[Read more about our historic double first](#)

Family Programme – your stories

Welcome to this new feature of LINK.

As Family Programme members you are a key part of our global University community. As such, we would love to hear about your experience of your student's journey from Freshers' Week through to graduation. In this issue, Gregor and Birgit Mittersinker and Eri Kimura share their different experiences of dropping their students off at St Andrews.



Gregor, Birgit and Felix Mittersinker

Dropping Felix off – take two ...

When Gregor and Birgit Mittersinker dropped Felix (Class of 2026) off for Freshers' Week they enjoyed it so much that they came back to drop him off for his second year!

Dropping our son off for his second year at St Andrews generated a whirlwind of emotions.

We started our journey with a once-in-a-lifetime trip through distant regions of the Highlands and Outer Hebrides, while pinching ourselves that the adopted home of Felix – now also becoming familiar to us – was such an endless fount of beauty and grandeur.

Returning to St Andrews afterwards and helping him settle in was like revisiting an old chapter with fresh eyes. The mandatory trip to IKEA reminded me of my first days at uni, moving into a small apartment, picking pots and plates, moving furniture. There was a mixed bag of discovery and familiarity as we navigated the cobbled streets of this medieval Scottish town. The anxieties of freshman year had given way to an exciting familiarity. New places were found, and new friends were made.

Yet, the bittersweet sting of parting remained, reminding us of the distance he has already travelled as he strides further into adulthood. But amidst that twinge of sadness was also gratitude that he's found a place that motivates him academically, nurtures his passions, and is sculpting him into a global citizen, ready to take on the challenges of his generation.

What a difference three years make!

Eri Kimura has two daughters currently studying at St Andrews: Sofia (Class of 2024) and Maya (Class of 2027). Here she shares two very different 'dropping off' experiences in two very different Freshers' Weeks!

What a difference three years make! In 2020 – due to the Covid quarantine rules – my daughter Sofia and I travelled around the world from Washington DC to Tokyo, then to London and up to Edinburgh, and finally to St Andrews for the Freshers' Week drop-off.

This year, my younger daughter Maya and I arrived in Edinburgh on a direct flight, so I got the chance to experience the drop off all over again – as it normally would be.

We did the requisite shopping at IKEA before heading to St Andrews. Moving-in day to McIntosh Hall was chaotic, with cars coming from three different directions and students and families unloading their luggage as frustrated drivers honked their horns.

Yet, somehow, it felt more 'normal' compared to the empty Hall we arrived at in 2020. For Sofia, Freshers' Week and the Pier Walk were cancelled. Students were grouped into a 'bubble' and restricted to the number they could be with at any one time.



Meeting other parents! Eri is on the far right.

Maya, on the other hand, jumped straight into Freshers' Week activities and met students not just in her Hall but all around town.

The next day, under the clear blue sky, I sat in front of the Cathedral ruins with other parents as students wearing their red gowns marched down to the Pier. What an amazing sight it was to see the line of red stretching along its length. It made me think of all the students who had walked there before them and had also felt the excitement of their first year as they, too, began their university journey.

My fondest memories from each drop-off week are of meeting other parents. Even with the restrictions placed on us during Covid, I was still able to meet some moms for an outdoor lunch and a stroll in Crail – a nearby fishing village. I also hosted some parents for tapas in the garden of the house where I was staying.

This year, I was able to attend the reception for international parents hosted by the University. The Younger Hall was packed with parents eager to hear from Principal Sally Mapstone. After the reception, a group of us headed to Rusacks Hotel to meet up with our students for dinner and after-drinks. While our paths to St Andrews may have been different, it was reassuring to meet other parents who were both excited and anxious for their students.

At the time of writing six weeks have passed since I left my daughters at St Andrews. Maya has survived Freshers' Flu and is getting ready for Raisin Weekend (another tradition postponed for Sofia). Sofia is finishing her first set of exams and papers. They study together in the library and call us while having poke lunch from ComбиниCo.

My drop-off mission is complete. Next mission, GRADUATION 2024!

Email the editor at sem28@st-andrews.ac.uk if you would like to share a story about your experience of your student's key milestones at St Andrews.

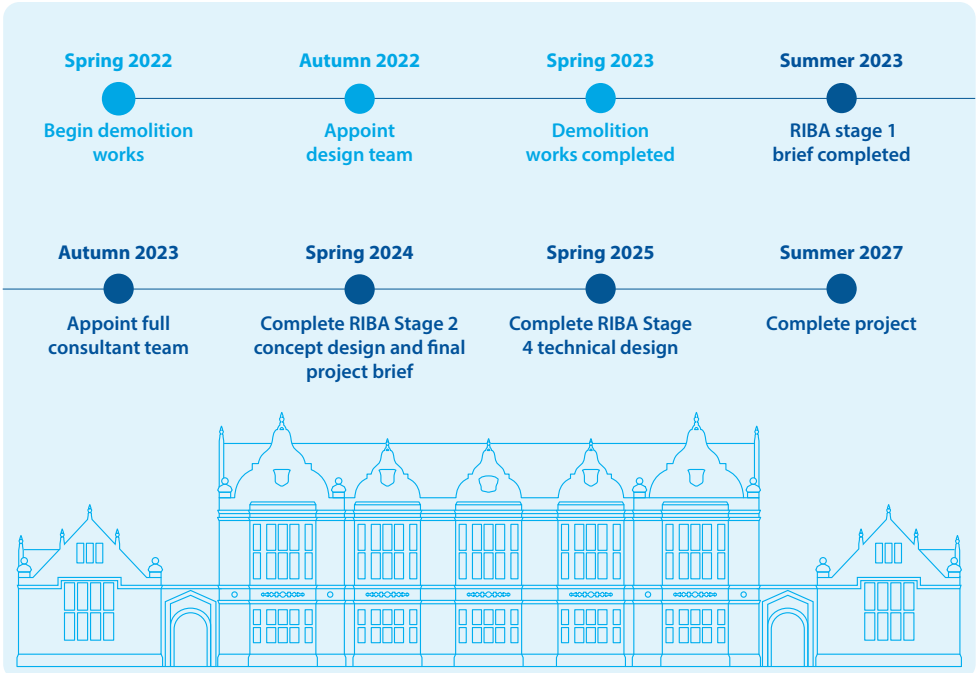
'New College' update

We are continuing to forge ahead with this visionary project to create the first new college in St Andrews in over 300 years.

Take a look at the 'New College' development progress

Architects WilkinsonEyre are developing and refining their **first 'New College' design concepts**.

Below is the most recent timeline of key construction milestones.



On 1 August 2023 we marked another key milestone by merging the former School of Management and School of Economics and Finance to create the **University of St Andrews Business School**. This begins a year-long transition process to its official launch in August 2024.

The Business School will ultimately be located in 'New College' with the School of International Relations to provide a unique opportunity to cultivate, research and educate within the context of global challenges.

The critical role of family philanthropy at St Andrews – a message from Annual Giving

We know that many of you joined us in celebrating the news that the University was ranked Number 1 in the UK by both *The Guardian University Guide* and *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide*. This historic double is an endorsement of the excellence we deliver in teaching, student experience and opportunities post-graduation.

Family philanthropy has played a critical role in helping the University to achieve this excellence by enabling us to continually develop and adapt. This in turn has allowed us to provide the best possible environment and experience for all our students, and to help them achieve their full potential and realise their dreams. We simply would not have achieved these number one rankings without the exceptional support of our global St Andrews community.

Most recently, family philanthropy has helped us to increase the support available for students impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and high energy costs – both through our Student Support Fund and through the creation of a number of initiatives such as subsidised local travel and meal deals in campus cafes; shopping vouchers for students who couldn't afford to travel home for the festive period last year; communal heated spaces during colder months; and the development of a student food larder.

All of these developments and initiatives have been absolutely vital for our students during the past year and will continue to be so for some time to come. They have been supported in part by donations to the University's Areas of Greatest Need. These flexible funds enable the University to allocate resources where they are needed most so we can continue to maintain our world-leading reputation.

Our double first ranking is the result of a concerted effort by the University's global community. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the families who have supported us through philanthropy: you have made a key contribution to this historic achievement.

Please visit our family appeal website if you are interested in making a gift to the University, so we can continue to provide the very best experience for all St Andrews students.

Thank you.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Dr Jackie Whalen, Annual Giving Manager, at jsw39@st-andrews.ac.uk or Magdalena Croy, Annual Giving Officer, at ms214@st-andrews.ac.uk



Interdisciplinary research excellence



The University has announced plans for two new global research centres (GRCs): the Global Centre for Diverse Intelligences (GRCDI) and the St Andrews Centre for Critical Sustainabilities (StACCS). The centres will harness the power of interdisciplinary research excellence to strengthen our world-leading scholarship, leverage international partnerships and accelerate our progress in addressing global challenges.

The GRCDI will be established as a hub of international expertise to advance and disseminate the understanding of Diverse Intelligences (DI).

The StACCS will build on existing research with the aim of becoming a world-leading platform for informed and engaged research on sustainability.

Together, these centres will work across the School of Psychology and Neuroscience and the School of Geography and Sustainable Development to create meaningful action.

Professor Tom Brown, Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) said the global research centres “will enable our world-leading academics to build deep and meaningful international and interdisciplinary research connections allowing their research to address some of the most important and challenging questions facing the world today.”

[Read more about the new global research centres at St Andrews](#)

Meet the Sabbs!

Here are this year's Sabbatical Officers – students who have been elected by their peers to represent them until June 2024. They are responsible for helping with all manner of student queries and activities.

Find out more about our Sabbatical Officers



President

Barry Will leads the Association as the main spokesperson for students.

[Read more about Barry Will](#)



Director of Education

Cam Brown represents students on matters relating to learning, teaching and research.

[Read more about Cam Brown](#)



Director of Events & Services

Now in her second year in post, Lucy Brook designs and implements events for students by students.

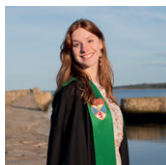
[Read more about Lucy Brook](#)



Director of Student Development & Activities

Sam Gorman has also been elected for a second year to support co-curricular development opportunities for students.

[Read more about Sam Gorman](#)



Director of Wellbeing & Equality

Caitlin Ridgway champions student health, diversity and inclusion.

[Read more about Caitlin Ridgway](#)



Athletic Union President

Fiona Waddell represents and manages student sport.

[Read more about Fiona Waddell](#)

Celebrating one year of the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network

The Kaleidoscope Alumni Network (KAN) was launched in November 2022 to provide a means of representation, to engender a greater sense of belonging and to create an extended St Andrews community that is fairer and more inclusive.

One year on, we are continuing to work with alumni, students, and staff to encourage engagement and ensure that every voice is heard – and listened to.

We are also using KAN's first anniversary to take stock, reflect and celebrate the growth that has come from its creation.

To this end, we have published the first issue of the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network newsletter. As well as the latest news, this includes a feature from Kiki Aggarwal – a representative of the University's LGBTQ+ Network – and an insight into the importance of Black History Month by Isaac Pickrum – President of the African Caribbean Society. You can read the inaugural issue by clicking on the link below.

Online, KAN continues to champion festivals, traditions, and religious and cultural celebrations throughout the year. Special features are published on everything from Durga Puja to Diwali, Inter-Faith Week and Arabic calligraphy. It has been a pleasure to work with students and University societies to learn about and acknowledge events and beliefs from around the world.

We have also released the first KAN podcasts, featuring conversations with students, staff and alumni.

There are more than 130 countries represented at the University, and an extensive global alumni network. Through conversations, communications and events, KAN aims to create a more inclusive, diverse and connected community through the kaleidoscopic lens of our rich ethnic and cultural lived experiences.

We are always delighted to hear from students, staff, alumni, families and friends of St Andrews, who are interested in sharing their experiences.

Contact Dr Catherine Dunford, Alumni Relations and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Engagement Coordinator for further information at stakan@st-andrews.ac.uk

[Visit the KAN website](#)

[Read the first issue of the KAN Newsletter](#)

[KAN on LinkedIn](#)



Kaleidoscope 
Alumni Network

Alumni stories

Each month we publish stories about the many and varied paths that our graduates have gone on to follow and the impact that studying at St Andrews has had on their lives. We feature these in our e-newsletter **St Andrews in the News**.

In one of our most recent stories, Cordula Schnuer (MA 2011), explains the 'crooked path' she took from undergraduate to trainee teacher and then to the newsroom, where she was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Luxembourg Times* earlier this year. We share an extract from this here.



From student reporter to editor-in-chief

St Andrews was my start in journalism. I chose to make the student radio station Star my home. As news editor in my third year, I led a team of around 20 student reporters who gathered news, created podcasts and hosted shows. To this day my claim to fame is that I interviewed Hugh Grant on the green at the Dunhill Links tournament.

St Andrews gave me the space to find my passion and to try and test different subjects and hobbies that turned into a career. It taught me about teamwork and leadership but also that a crooked path can get you just where you were supposed to be.

From being a teacher in training, St Andrews student, junior reporter and doing a stint at the University of Luxembourg's communications office to finally returning to journalism and now leading a newsroom... there was no grand plan, or what plans there were more often than not fell through.

[Read the whole of Cordula's story](#)

St Andrews in the News

Read about what's been happening this semester in and around the University

No place like foam

Almost 1,000 students gathered on Lower College Lawn to take part in the annual Raisin Monday foam fight on Monday 16 October. The tradition took a sustainable twist this year, with many first year students replacing the gifts typically bought for their **academic parents** with a donation to the Storehouse St Andrews food bank.

[Read more about Raisin Monday and watch the video highlights](#)



Handover of affordable homes marks milestone in unique partnership

The University of St Andrews and Kingdom Initiatives celebrated the handover of 22 new affordable homes in the town as the first phase of a new 'university village' marks completion. The pioneering project at The Grange in St Andrews will offer much-needed affordable housing for postgraduate students and University staff and help reduce accommodation pressures in St Andrews.

[Read more about phase one of the 'university village'](#)



Alianza de Ceibo wins 2023 St Andrews Prize for the Environment

Alianza de Ceibo – a non-profit alliance of Indigenous nationalities – has won this year's St Andrews Prize for the Environment for their efforts to conserve rainforests.

[Read more about Alianza de Ceibo and the St Andrews Prize](#)



Winter Graduation ceremonies



On Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 November more than 1000 students from 68 different countries walked across the stage at Younger Hall for the University's winter graduation ceremonies.

Congratulations to parents of all the students who received their academic awards.

If your student graduated in person, we have a bespoke video clip waiting for them that shows their moment crossing the stage. If they haven't received their clip, they can contact us at alumni@st-andrews.ac.uk to find out how to do so.

[Read more about the winter graduation ceremonies](#)

[Read full biographies of the Honorary Graduates](#)

Join us online wherever you are in the world...

We host a number of popular online events throughout the year. Read more about these below.



Saints Talks

We introduced Saints Talks early in 2020 to give alumni, parents and friends a flavour of some of the exciting research projects taking place in St Andrews. Topics have ranged from 'From genes to brains: multidisciplinary approaches to understand dyslexia and specific learning difficulties' by Dr Silvia Paracchini to 'Russia's invasion of Ukraine: A Strategic Overview', by Professor Phillips O'Brien.

If you haven't watched any Saints Talks yet, you can watch them again here

Look out for forthcoming Saints Talks in St Andrews in the News



Laidlaw Live

Laidlaw Live enables us to showcase the breadth and talent in our musical community and to give alumni, parents and friends all over the world access to performances by world-class visiting musicians.

Enjoy livestreamed Music from St Andrews



Global Burns Night 2024

Join us to celebrate the life and works of Scotland's National Bard Robert Burns through song, poetry ... and lots more.

This online salute to the ploughman poet's birthday is in its fourth year, and has become a popular addition to the annual events calendar.

Save the date for Thursday 25 January 2024 at 7pm. Details to follow.

... or join us in person



Alumni Carol Service – London

This year's candlelit London Alumni Carol Service will be held at **7pm on Wednesday 13 December 2023** at St Columba's Church, Pont Street. Alumni and friends are invited to stay for a complimentary glass of wine after the event. This is a ticketed event – [please register for the London Alumni Carol Service here](#).



Sands International Film Festival

Please save the date for the Sands International Film Festival of St Andrews, which will be held from **Friday 19 to Sunday 21 April 2024**. This three-day event will present an exciting and diverse international showcase of contemporary and classic cinema, alongside a range of supporting events.



Graduation

Summer graduation will take place from **Monday 10 June to Friday 14 June 2024** in the Younger Hall, St Andrews. The ceremony at which your student will graduate depends on the degree subjects studied. Students will be informed of their graduation date and ticketing procedure.



The Arnold Palmer Invitational

The Arnold Palmer Invitational 2024 will be played on the Kitting Course, St Andrews, on **Saturday 15 June 2024**. This one-day tournament brings together alumni, parents, students and friends of the University in support of [Saints Golf](#) – our performance golf programme. Please save the date!



AIG Women's Open

The famous Old Course will play host to the AIG Women's Open for the third time from **Wednesday 21 to Sunday 25 August 2024**. The Development Office is looking forward to catching up with any alumni, parents and friends who are visiting town for this prestigious golf championship. More information will follow.

Goodbye 2023!

With all best wishes for the festive season from Development!



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Here is a copy of our **Gift Acceptance Policy**.

If you would like to support our community you can find more information on how to **donate to St Andrews here**, or contact: develop@st-andrews.ac.uk

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