



## Candidates for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect

Please see below for the details of **Candidate 4: David Stanley** standing for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect. Please use the [Voting Form](#) in order to cast your vote. You are only able to vote in this election if you are a student member of Humanists UK. Each member has one vote only.

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## Candidate 4: David Stanley

### Biography:

Final year Mechanical Engineering student at Southampton, originally from Exeter. Now serving my third year on Humanist Students Southampton committee, having taken year out to work for an engineering company last year, in Essex. Served as Internal Communications Officer for previous incarnation of Humanist Students, and again as general Officer during transition period.

Attended two CofE schools growing up, but was an atheist from my early teens, and never a Christian. The social and psychological reasons for people's continued belief in religions has always fascinated me and, perhaps in part due to my schooling, I am stridently passionate about secularism.

### Supporting statement

I would love to become President-Elect of Humanist Students, to help grow our national community, help others grow local communities, and forge strong working links between the two.

I've experienced the struggles of the previous incarnation of Humanist Students, during my time as an Officer, and have directly experienced the struggles of running a university society, somewhat exacerbated by my year away in industry. The recent restructuring of Humanist Students allows us to achieve the success we've been working so hard for over the years, but never quite attaining. At Southampton, as in the past, we've been able to maintain regular, weekly events - excellent ones at that - but numbers have always been low. We hope to change that.

For both, learning lessons from the past; applying them; and ensuring that knowledge is shared and passed down, is absolutely essential. Despite having been involved with the national movement for a few years now, I've always felt that the lessons learned by other students and other societies, their routes to specific successes, have always been rather hidden - when they should be out in the open, championed, and taken on board by all. We are all striving for the same goals, putting on similar events, and have similar interests. We all want to provide support for apostates, champion human rights, prompt national change. That we should learn from one another to achieve these things is just common sense.

My hometown is fortunate to enjoy both a university and local group, who have good links and enjoy shared success. Success comes about through a combination of factors. Inescapably, though, it requires the skill and effort of fantastic individuals. But we are dooming ourselves to brief successes



and inevitable failures if that's all we rely upon. Fantastic individuals come and fantastic individuals go. It's vitally important we look to keep them involved and invested in our movement, but they are small in number and their impact is lessened without connections between groups.

What we need are systems in place to support those with less time, those who are less skilled, those who don't have the connections. We have a wealth of individual knowledge across our membership and there are incredible numbers of people who share our interests. We have student members of Humanists UK, we have young members, we have LGBT members, and much more besides. We need to connect them together. What comes naturally to our fantastic individuals needs to be distilled down and shared. As a national body, Humanist Students needs to coordinate and empower people for this to happen.

The Humanist Students that I want to see is one with a recognized public voice on issues important to us. A body that is able to support students who are leaving oppressive religions. A body that can develop the skills of our members so that they can contribute more and more to our communities and movement, and bring about local and national change. I hope to make this happen.

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