

## **Academic Staff Member Election 2022**

### **Michael Barany**

I am standing for the role of Academic Staff Member on the University Court with the goal of supporting responsible academic-led governance of our university. My interest in the role comes from my recent experience in the University Senate, where I have worked with academic staff colleagues to help Senate better assert and fulfil its responsibilities under the Universities Scotland Act as the body ultimately responsible for the university's teaching mission. Court has its own place in this scheme of governance, as trustees of the university's resources and operations. The Academic Staff Member of Court has the vital purpose of representing the fundamental prerogative of academic staff to shape our historic institution in the context of urgent challenges in the sector and the world.

As a historian of science, I have the extraordinary privilege of working with students and colleagues from every corner of the university, including pre-honours students from over 100 degree programmes. I think this, combined with my scholarship on the history of scientific institutions and disciplines, gives me a valuable perspective on the university and its contexts and challenges. I have academic expertise on algorithms and metrics, globalization, and other topics of timely concern for our institution. I have worked with organizations like the American Mathematical Society to understand and respond to legacies of racism in the mathematics profession, and have studied and written about sexism and global inequality in science and its institutions, among other subjects that matter to our university and its place in the world.

In Senate, my efforts both in and out of formal meetings have helped to empower rank-and-file academic staff to work together and shape how the university operates, including in situations where we have disagreed with management. I have written briefings and organised meetings to help Senate members prepare for the pace and procedure of formal sessions, building on my behind-the-scenes attempts to understand and propose improvements to how Senate operates. This experience prepares me especially well for the Academic Staff Member's role on Court of facilitating robust partnership between Senate and Court for the mutual effectiveness of each. I think the standing to advocate, raise questions, and voice dissent on the main stage is best earned through careful, cooperative, and constructive work backstage, and that is the approach I would bring to Court.

From 15 years' service on the board of directors of an American educational nonprofit (public charity), I have extensive experience in the kind of corporate governance relevant here, including many of Court's planning, oversight, and fiduciary functions. I would enter the role with the confidence to operate constructively from the start and with a firm foundation for learning the considerable amount a new member must learn to discharge Court responsibilities well. I know I join colleagues across the university in believing the trust and promise of universities like ours demands continual engagement and renewal; I would be honoured to represent that perspective on Court as elected Academic Staff Member.