

Nominee

Name	Job Title	Department/Section
Dr Sarah Demelo	Curator (ESCALA, Art and Special Collections)	Library and Cultural Services

Nominee Personal Statement

I have worked at the University of Essex for over 15 years. I first came from Canada in 2007 as an international student to complete a PhD in History of Art, and I stayed because I came to value the people and the sense of purpose here. Since then, I have built my career across Library and Cultural Services and Communications and External Relations, with responsibility for the University's art collections and Special Collections. As Curator, I focus on connecting collections with research and teaching, broadening public engagement, and developing partnerships across Essex and beyond. I have especially valued work that brings our collections into classrooms and community spaces, where people often make connections they did not expect.

My time at Essex has given me a clear understanding of the institution, its history, and the pressures facing both higher education and the cultural sector. I work closely with academic colleagues, professional services teams, and external partners, including museums, archives, charities, and community groups. I also bring governance experience from outside the University, which has shaped how I approach accountability and long-term planning. I am used to weighing complex information and making steady, thoughtful decisions in situations where there is no perfect answer.

I am standing for Council because I care about the University's future and the contribution it makes across Essex and the wider region. I understand that Council members serve as trustees and share responsibility for the University's governance and long-term direction. My external governance roles have strengthened my judgement and my ability to work constructively with others.

This is a period of significant change for the sector and for Essex. I would welcome the opportunity to help the University strengthen its position, support its communities, and build a confident and outward-looking future that reflects the values that first made me want to stay.