

New rector of University of Edinburgh named

Former Davidson's Mains Primary School pupil, Simon Fanshawe, OBE, has been named the Rector of the University of Edinburgh following an uncontested election.

One of the original founders of Stonewall which "stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere" Mr Fanshawe was more recently critical of the organisation. He will take up office on 4 March 2024.

He is a consultant and practitioner in the field of diversity, author, broadcaster and activist.

He was formerly Chair of the Governing Council of the University of Sussex from 2007 – 2013, and will replace Debora Kayembe, who has served as Rector since 2021.

Simon said: "Being named Rector of the University of Edinburgh is a great honour. It is a university with a great legacy and current practice of stellar research and wonderful teaching. The role of Rector offers great opportunity to convene discussions on the most effective ways of advancing the University, its staff and students and to promote mutual understanding in the exchange of ideas."

The Rector is a member of the University's governing body, University Court, championing the views of students and staff. In recent times, Rectors have served as a point of contact for the University community, seeking to assist with difficulties

or issues where they arise.

The Rector is nominated and elected by students and staff and is not an appointment of the executive or governing body of the University. Only one valid nomination was received, and Simon has been named as Rector uncontested.

The position of Rector has a long and prestigious lineage and was originally created in the 19th century by the Universities Scotland Act 1858.

Ms Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal and Secretary of the University of Edinburgh said: "We look forward to working with Simon as the next Rector of the University of Edinburgh and we thank Debora for her service.

Simon was one of the six original co-founders of Stonewall in 1989. In 2011, he co-founded the international charity Kaleidoscope, which campaigns for the human rights of LGBTI+ people around the world.

In 1989 Simon won the Perrier Award for Comedy at the Edinburgh Fringe and he served on the Board of the Fringe Society from 1986 – 2012.

Simon spent much of his early childhood living in Edinburgh and Stirling. His father was a career soldier in The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He went to Davidson's Mains Primary School and still has family connections to Edinburgh.

