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Oxford

Platform Statement for the Vice President for Academic Affairs Candidacy
from Melis Kirtilli

Dear members of the International Association for Political Science Students,

My name is Melis Kirtilli. I am a Master of Science in Political Theory at the University at Oxford. I would like to express my keen interest in re-running for the Vice President for Academic Affairs to you. I am hoping that you have been happy with the changes and improvements that my team introduced during the 2020-2021 mandate. I highly appreciate your support and input at the General Assembly if you have any recommendations for the next mandate. In what follows, I will share a brief summary of my involvement in IAPSS, my relevant experiences, and plans for next year.

My IAPSS Journey started 3 years ago when I participated in the World Congress in May 2018. Back then, as a first-year bachelor student in political science, I was fascinated by how much potential IAPSS had, and my fascination lives up to this day after volunteering in the Academic Department since June 2018. IAPSS introduced me to the world of enthusiastic students of political science and having the opportunity to academically cooperate with scholars from all around the globe has been a unique experience so far. The positions that I held in the Association are Student Research Committees Coordinator, Student Research Committees Director, and Vice President for Academic Affairs, respectively. Firstly, being the Student Research Committees Coordinator did not only allow me to gain insights from the Academic Department and its renowned branches such as the Politikon Journal, Encuentro Latinoamericano Journal, A Different View Blog, and the Academic Committee, but also I had the chance to work closely with many IAPSS members in the research committees and learn about their brilliant research. Along with many other committees, I supported the foundation of the regional research committees, and I founded the Political Theory Student Research Committee since it is my area of specialisation.

In March 2020, I was elected to be the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs by the Executive Committee, and I was re-elected by IAPSS members in May 2020. During my involvement in this position, we were able to accomplish many tasks as the Academic

Department. Secondly, my previous role as the Student Research Committees Director, which was a position that I proposed to enlarge the SRC Team because of its promising capacity, made me aware of the problems within the Department. I should acknowledge that during the 2020-2021 mandate, we could not reach our full potential and resolve all the problems I addressed in my previous statement. There are tasks that I still hope to accomplish next year. This year, as the Head of Academic Department, I aimed at being as accommodating as possible given the various problems that my colleagues and myself experienced due to the pandemic. There were times that we did not receive any applications, or had delays with the opening of certain branches. However, despite these challenges, I think the Academic Department was tremendously successful with introducing many practices to IAPSS such as SRC subcommittees, producing high-quality content for the IAPSS Youtube channel, re-establishing its Blog and Journal focusing on Latin America.

Thirdly, during the 2020-2021 mandate, I was able to identify three areas in which the Academic Department needs to pay closer attention. There are many opportunities for Politikon, ELA, A Different View, and the SRCs, but in this statement, I prefer to mention the most urgent issues that the Academic Department should improve. First, IAPSS is moving forward with establishing a promising channel on YouTube. Our Academic Department has been already contributing to this project with the support of the Politikon Journal, Student Research Committees, and IAPSS Regions. Yet, I envision the branches of the Academic Department offering new outputs and helping with reaching out to new subscribers. We can provide more interviews, especially with non-Western academics, insights into key debates and concepts in political science with our SRCs, and information about IAPSS publications.

Second, there is a need for improving our academic partnerships portfolio. I was able to design a new branch, Academic Outreach Committee, and recruit its members. However, just like IAPSS, our partners were working remotely and organising meetings has become harder than usual. We are currently working on a database for event speakers, potential academic partners from different regions and fields, and university departments, whereas communicating and setting meetings for signing partnership agreements should be the next step that we focus on after the transition period.

Third, I would like to believe that our regional academic events are attracting a lot of new students from different parts of the world. The Academic Department and IAPSS Asia Region cooperation for an academic conference in Mongolia has created a new avenue for us to pursue: organising regional conferences with universities from all around the world. As far as my involvement in IAPSS goes, I cannot recall the establishment of such a collaboration with a university in Africa. With the joint forces of the Academic Committee and the IAPSS Africa Region, we should focus on expanding our academic network in Africa to organise an academic conference next mandate.

Finally, in light of my previous experience in IAPSS and other academic institutions, I am confident that together with my colleagues in the Academic Department and fellow Executive Committee members, I will be able to continue working on the advancement of all the academic branches. As the Vice President for Academic Affairs, my priority will be listening to the interests, suggestions, and demands of the IAPSS members as always.

I am looking forward to witnessing the opportunities the next mandate will bring to the Academic Department and IAPSS.

Yours sincerely,

Melis Kirtilli