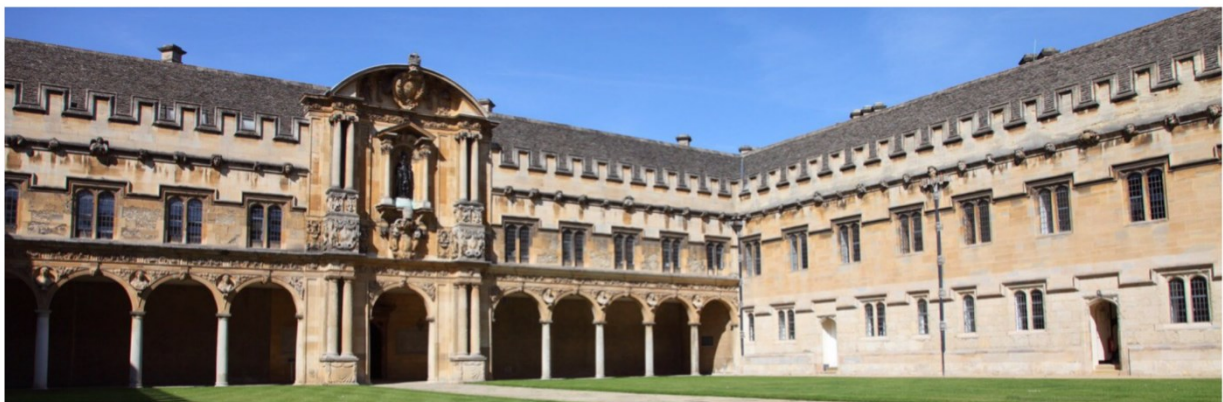




# St John's College

## Strategic Plan

2019–2022





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## Introduction



St John's College was founded in 1555 at a time of great political and religious upheaval and during a period when intellectual life flourished, stimulated by the wider dissemination of print and the development of new scientific and artistic ideas.

Today we face social and technological change that seems just as challenging and far-reaching. St John's core purpose to support excellence in teaching and research remains at its heart; yet we need to reach beyond this to ensure we meet the changing needs of a global society and continue to grow and develop as one of the world's leading academic institutions, increasingly in competition with European, North American and Asian universities.

This document sets out our vision for the next three years. Colleagues and alumni have offered their advice and robust feedback on the College's current position. They have encouraged us to be ambitious in our intellectual aims and, underpinned by our financial independence, to build on our track record of enabling achievement and move forward in improving opportunities for access to an Oxford education for all with the potential to benefit.

Sir Thomas White would be amazed at how St John's has developed over the past 464 years, but his original values and purposes are just as relevant to the College – and to contemporary society today.

I look forward to taking this agenda forward with you.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Margaret Snowling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a trailing flourish at the end.

Professor Margaret Snowling CBE FBA FMedSci

June 2019

## A Our Purpose

The College's Objects as a charity are to be 'a perpetual college of learning sciences, sacred theology, philosophy and good arts', from the Latin: *collegium perpetuum eruditionis scientiarum sacre theologie et philosophie ac bonarum artium*. St John's College provides and conducts itself as a College of the University of Oxford for the benefit of the general public, in particular by carrying out teaching in the higher education sector and by supporting advanced study or research by its members and others. The College aims to foster excellence in education and research.

## B Our Vision

We will build on St John's reputation as a leader within the Collegiate University to foster excellent academic performance, to enable research and scholarship to flourish, and to ensure the well-being of a diverse, equal and inclusive community. The College will ensure it admits undergraduate and graduate students with the highest academic potential regardless of background; it will support and enable the research of its Fellows, including those at early stages of their career; and build strong strategic partnerships within the local community, nationally and internationally, engaging at all stages with its alumni.

## C Strategic Plan 2019–2022

St John's purpose is clear: to educate, to research, to enable and to foster collegial relationships internally and externally to the College. As the College continues to move forward, there will be specific focus on four main areas in order to build even stronger foundations for success and to accelerate progress.



### 1 Education

***The College admits students of the highest academic potential and provides teaching and facilities to enable them to fulfil that potential.***

We will do all we can to ensure we admit the very best students and enable them to reach their potential through academic support, the encouragement of well-being and welfare support.

As one of the University of Oxford's leading colleges, St John's expects excellent performance in the Final Honours School. The College is committed to ensuring teaching excellence at all levels alongside the pastoral care of its students. This, in turn, depends upon recruiting and retaining distinguished scholars at the cutting edge of their fields.

The College will:

- elect leading scholars to its tutorial fellowships;
- keep under review the quality of teaching and empower the Senior Tutor to act purposively to safeguard its excellence and to ensure an inclusive teaching environment;



- improve the induction of new academic staff and create a more formalised mentoring programme with regular and consistent cycles of feedback, especially at the start of teaching careers and paying particular attention to the support of single-tutor subjects;
- take steps to close the collegiate University's attainment gap by offering bridging programmes that ease the transition to Oxford for those from less advantaged educational backgrounds;
- develop an ambitious plan to enhance the academic experience of the College's graduate community, including its early career researchers;
- use President's Collections as a time to reflect not only on academic attainment but also on extra-curricular achievements and personal objective setting.

***The College seeks to retain its rich history of success while keeping abreast of changes in higher education in a global context.***

The College is increasingly competing in a global market. In order to maintain its pre-eminent position, it needs to keep under review its 'offer' to students – financially, intellectually and pastorally, in order to ensure that the St John's experience is distinctive and adds value.

The College will:

- review the size and structure of the College regularly;
- ensure the academic services and facilities are sufficient to support academic achievement, particularly in the light of technological change;
- ensure that the welfare and pastoral support of students is excellent and fit for purpose;
- supplement the College's educational programme with extras to enhance the educational experience and employability of its members, for example, coding skills, foreign-language classes, communication skills and entrepreneurship;
- offer scholarships to national and international undergraduates and graduates of the highest potential;
- provide funds to alleviate hardship which may otherwise prevent access to opportunities while on course.



***The College admits people to read for undergraduate degrees, using no criteria other than being applicants of the highest academic potential.***

The collegiate University recognises that to maintain the intellectual strength and standing of Oxford it needs to ensure it admits students with outstanding potential. It is bound by targets agreed by the Office for Students to increase the admission of students from backgrounds of relative disadvantage, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and to aim to increase attainment in schools.

The College will:

- enhance and expand its innovative programme, *Inspire*, to provide a sustained approach to outreach, beginning in Year 9 and supporting pupils' progression through to University applications;
- debunk myths surrounding Oxbridge and other 'elite' universities and encourage applications by increasing the involvement of teachers and parents in supporting the College's mission to broaden access;
- keep under review and build on the programme of school visits, open days and subject-specific days as well as supporting UNIQ and schemes such as , Opportunity Oxford and Pathways to Oxford;
- work together with other colleges to establish outreach consortia;
- undertake robust evaluation of its outreach schemes.

***The College monitors technological developments to ensure that learning, research and communication with the wider College community are supported with the best available tools and learning environments.***

The College will:

- continue to develop *Digital Inspire* to support outreach more broadly;
- monitor developments in lifelong learning and blended learning techniques;
- ensure that a range of assistive technology is available in the Study Centre to support learning for all and in particular, those with disabilities;
- use technology effectively to extend, reach out to and utilise the College's wider network.



## **2 Research**

***The College seeks to enable the excellent research and scholarship of Fellows of the College and to facilitate interdisciplinary research.***

The College seeks to support a positive research culture and to be responsive to Fellows' needs in relation to the continuation of their research with a generous Research and Teaching Allowance, entitlement to sabbatical leave and periods of teaching buy-out during a Fellow's career to enable them to undertake research for which they have secured a major external award.

The College will:

- provide competitive funding for high-quality, innovative research of 'higher risk' than that which would normally be considered by external organisations;
- encourage new interdisciplinary collaborations between its fellows with pump priming and large grants;
- develop strategies to support innovation, technology and knowledge transfer to increase the impact of the College's work;
- ensure its funding support programme is inclusive
- build on the Distinguished Visitors scheme to introduce new perspectives and ideas;
- expand the events and training opportunities for the Early Career Researchers and encourage greater engagement with the postgraduate community in College.

***The College seeks to support the research and scholarship of graduate students bearing in mind that many will pursue an academic career.***

The College will:

- increase funding for graduate scholarships ensuring this is a major plank of the College's Development (Fundraising) Strategy;
- create a graduate success fund;
- encourage collaboration among and between graduate students by launching a scheme for funding graduate research projects of an interdisciplinary nature;
- celebrate the successes and discoveries of graduate students and provide publicity for their research;
- review its provision to support the welfare and well-being of its graduate students including support in planning career paths, whether with or outside of academia.



### 3 People

***The College recognises that its staff are its most valuable asset and is committed to ensuring the welfare and well-being of a diverse college community.***

The College will:

- ensure equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination;
- set ambitious equality objectives annually;
- appoint a Human Relations Manager and task them with keeping the well-being of staff at the forefront of changing systems and practices;
- provide a staff room for use during breaks;
- improve consultation with staff and keep them informed of Governing Body decisions;
- introduce a system for recognizing staff achievement;
- increase the diversity of the staff profile and establish a College Diversity Fund for projects to enable non-academic staff to pursue new initiatives in this area.



***The College values its alumni and wishes to maintain warm long-term relationships with them.***

The College has more than 3,000 alumni and aims to enjoy regular contact with them through events, print communications, the website and social media. Survey data suggests a need to segment the College's alumni according to career stage. Broadly, younger alumni request networking events, mid-career alumni welcome academic events and older alumni primarily enjoy conversations with the President and meetings with their former tutors.

The College will:

- design and evaluate a programme of events which appeals to varied audiences;
- pilot themed 'showcase' events involving Fellows and alumni in cognate fields;
- develop a communication strategy which increases the visibility of St John's as an international centre of excellence highlighting the achievements of alumni as well as current college members;
- develop the online alumni community to facilitate alumni-to-alumni as well as College-to-alumni relations;
- support the continuation of the Women's Network which aims to empower, celebrate and inspire the wider College community.

***The College is committed to its civic duty and to supporting the local community in all areas.***

The College aims to be one of the leading Oxford colleges known for its contributions to widening participation, access and outreach. It works in partnership with colleagues in Oxford's cultural institutions including the Ashmolean Museum, Natural History Museum, Story Museum and Oxford Playhouse, and with local education professionals, to meet this aim.

The College will:

- contribute to the educational mission of the local community through schemes to encourage people in the deprived areas of the city to feel full 'citizens of Oxford';
- establish a student volunteering scheme to support the current challenges experienced by teachers in disadvantaged catchment areas;
- share the heritage of St John's through exhibitions and events open to the public;
- create a St John's music series to engage with musicians early in their career and with music-making in College;
- increase collaboration with cultural activities in Oxford, such as the Oxford Lieder Festival, and Oxford Artweeks, by making the College's facilities more accessible and open.

#### **4 Resources**

***The College will work together in partnerships to maintain and, when appropriate, increase its standing, its resources and its alliances.***

The College will:

- continue to invest in the College's estate to provide a unique means of servicing the educational needs of future generations, for example through an ambitious refurbishment programme;
- through the major investment in Oxford North, offer excellent facilities for business and industry and in particular for new start-ups, and support housing provision in Oxford;
- appoint an alumni advisory group to advise on the College's investments;
- develop a policy on the sustainability and ethical impact of College investments;
- ensure that its resources (such as the College Library) contribute to achieving the College's strategic goals.

***The College recognises the expertise of its alumni and appreciates their contributions to its work.***

Many alumni are keen to assist the College in its endeavours, especially in the *Inspire* programme, and the willingness of alumni to host and sponsor events is greatly appreciated:

The College will:

- actively seek advice from its alumni in their area of expertise and encourage them to serve on subcommittees of its Governing Body;
- co-opt teachers and educational professionals who can advise and support the College's outreach strategy in regions of the UK;
- continue to involve alumni in mentoring current students including via face-to-face contact and the online network.

***The College recognises the generosity of its alumni and seeks to ensure that their philanthropic donations are used wisely in support of the College's charitable aims.***

The Strategic Plan offers the opportunity to develop a new strategy for fundraising, building on the College's vision. A future Development Campaign will be led by Governing Body with the ultimate aim of increasing the College's endowment so that it can serve future generations as it has for the past four hundred years.

The College will:

- agree fundraising targets which may include, but will not be restricted to:
  - graduate studentships in designated fields;
  - Visiting Fellowships to enable international exchange;
- seek funding for Fellowships in the Humanities and Social Sciences;
- seek matching funds for undergraduate scholarships and for outreach initiatives;
- recognise the philanthropy of its alumni and their gifts in kind by appropriate stewardship.



## **5 Equality Impact Assessment**

The goals outlined in this Strategic Plan have the potential to impact equality by widening access to the benefits of St John's College to young people from diverse backgrounds and to external audiences. Within College these goals aim also to contribute to the welfare and well-being of staff and students by increasing inclusivity.

### **D Conclusion**

This Strategic Plan builds on the vision of Sir Thomas White for St John's College by renewing its commitment to education and research and embracing its position as a leading 21<sup>st</sup>-century College in the University of Oxford. Working within the framework of the collegiate University, the College aims to maintain its position at the forefront of global developments in science, technology and the arts and to educate the next generation of leaders nationally and internationally, whilst respecting its staff, students and alumni and sharing its resources equitably in line with its charitable aims.