

2021 / 2026

Strategic Plan

Summary

2021-2026 Strategic Plan



Primary Objective

To maintain and enhance Girton's inclusive community and research-infused learning environment, consolidate the College's outstanding scholarly reputation and raise its profile on the world stage.

Overall Aim

To achieve success through 'inclusive excellence', recognising that no institution can be excellent if it fails to be open to, and inclusive of, all.

Strategic Priorities 1 & 2

01

Outstanding Education

Girton's signature achievement is to extend a world-class Higher Education to constituencies that are traditionally excluded or under-represented despite their potential for excellence. Historically, the emphasis was on inclusion for women.

Today, and for the future, we aim to address the myriad intersecting dimensions of equality and diversity through: ambitious outreach and admissions targets; bold teaching and learning initiatives; careful attention to the quality of college life; and close engagement with alumni, who generally leave Girton ready for the world of work, aware of the challenges to come, and eager to give back.



02

A World-class Fellowship

Girton's success as a centre of education and scholarship depends on the qualities of a diverse Fellowship that is known for excellence in teaching and research, and for the unparalleled pastoral support they provide via the tutorial system.

Securing, sustaining and retaining a Fellowship with the skills and enthusiasm to fulfil these roles, realise their own potential, and contribute to the College community more widely, is key to our success.

We therefore aim to maximise the extent to which the College recognises teaching excellence, energises research and promotes interdisciplinarity.

Strategic Priorities 3 & 4



03

Green Girton

Situated in 50 acres of bio-diverse green belt on the edge of the city, Girton has several world-leading sustainability specialists among its Fellows as well as an environmentally engaged student body. We therefore have an unmatched opportunity to become the greenest College in Cambridge, both practically and in terms of scholarship.

By introducing sound sustainable practices across all College operations – catering, energy use, buildings and estate management, travel, and more – we aim to create a low-carbon community, underpinned by ethical investments, and on course for Net Zero by 2048.

As well as helping to address the global climate emergency, 'Green Girton' is about creating an enriching, inspiring environment for living, learning and research.

04

Enrichment and Opportunity

Girton aims to provide a fulfilling all-round living, learning and work experience for the whole College community – students, Fellows and staff – that is rooted in an ethic of care.

We want to offer a distinctive residential educational experience, in which music, poetry, and literature, together with the visual and performing arts, creatively enlarge the more traditional knowledge-base of subjects and disciplines. We also want to encourage our members to live a good life, enriched by sports, volunteering, society memberships, service roles, and more.

At the same time, we are aware that mental health difficulties and emotional concerns loom large for many individuals. To address this, we not only aim to introduce a new suite of integrated mental health support services across the College, but commit to strengthen our culture of inclusion and belonging, standing firmly against racism, homophobia and gender-based violence.

Strategic Enablers 5 & 6



05

Estate Development

A degree based at Girton is a complete residential experience. Girton's magnificent estate, currently spanning two spacious sites, is an important part of our distinctive educational offer; it is also a valuable resource that is integral to revenue-raising.

A key strategic challenge is to develop and manage the estate to perform this dual function. The estate - the buildings, gardens and grounds – not only enables everything we do, but should itself be enabling, that is, as accessible, available and enriching as possible. It should also be sustainable and bio-diverse, in line with Girton's commitment to a green, low-carbon future.

06

Financial Sustainability

Girton College is a registered charity whose primary purpose is the furtherance of teaching, learning and research. Despite good financial governance, and a streamlined operation, the costs of delivering the bespoke residential education that is a Cambridge USP routinely exceeds income from fees, charges and a well-managed investment portfolio.

This places a premium on the work of Girton Summer Programmes, the Conference Office, the Development Office, and the generosity of benefactors, for the realization of Girton's ambitious plans.

Financial sustainability is a key strategic enabler. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our priorities are to grow the endowment, balance the budget, and raise funds to develop the estate.

Strategic Enablers 7 & 8

A sound, imaginative, information and communications strategy is required to support our strategic plan. To that end, our vision, mission, values, and strategic aims should be turned into messages that profile, engage with and offer updates on Strategic Priorities 1-4. To make these messages effective internally and externally, we anticipate a step change in information technology and information management.

Internally the aims are to: better support learning, teaching and research; improve efficiency in administrative functions; meet our legal and compliance obligations; and provide a platform on which to deliver messages to a worldwide digital audience.

Externally we aim to harness these technologies to raise the public profile of the College, attract applicants from all walks of life, 'sell' Girton to prospective Fellows and staff, engage alumni, and promote commercial operations to potential customers.

07

Information and Communications



08

Governance

Governance refers to way an organisation is structured, managed, and directed; how it defines and achieves its goals, how priorities are set, decisions taken, responsibilities agreed, and accountability and transparency exercised. Sound, effective governance appropriate to Girton's charitable status, educational ambitions, and wider role in a changing world, is a key enabler in the successful implementation of any strategic plan.

Girton College aims to be a model of good of governance when measured against benchmarks within the charitable and higher education sectors, and to be open to best practice in other sectors, including the corporate sector, as appropriate.

Strategic Enablers 9

09

Our People

We aim to build on our heritage by actively using our employment practice to promote inclusive excellence among fellows and staff. We want to be an attractive employer, offering competitive rewards and benefits.

We expect to develop and implement effective HR and training strategies aligned with Girton's vision and values enabling us to recruit, select, support and manage a diverse, productive, effective workforce.

We will maintain clear, consistent and fair employment practices across all College operations, and provide a safe, enabling working environment, that prioritises wellbeing, makes the most of the beautiful and inspiring environment in which the College is set and encourages high levels of retention and job satisfaction.

