Message from the Development Director

Dear friends,

From its foundation in 1869 as the UK’s first residential institution for the higher education of women, Girton has been at the forefront of widening access to the Collegiate University for those who are academically excellent.

Our Visitor, Lady Hale, writes “It’s a wonderful place to learn to think independently, to develop lifelong values and ethics and to prepare for the world of work. I know it was my time at Girton which brought me to where I am today.”

This report details the significant difference that your gifts this year have made to the lives of our students today, in line with the key priorities in our current strategic plan. These are:

Outstanding inclusive education – read about how Girton is one of a few Cambridge colleges involved in pilot projects to widen access to Cambridge for students facing high indices of deprivation including low family University attendance. Two projects featured in this report are the Foundation Year focused on Arts and Humanities applicants, and STEM SMART for students wishing to study Physical or Biological Sciences or Engineering courses.

Financial hardship in the light of rising living and studying costs can be a major deterrent for students from low income families so the endowment of undergraduate bursaries, student support grants for those facing hardships, and postgraduate scholarships continue to be a funding priority.

World-class Fellowship – read about two new Fellowships funded by donations from generous alumni. Dr Michael Degani is the newly appointed Juliet Campbell Fellow in International Relations, and his inspiring anthropological research looks into infrastructure and energy in Africa and beyond.

Artist, composer and DJ Ain Bailey is the 2023 Cavendish Arts Science Fellow at Girton College, thanks to the generous support of Dr Una Ryan (PhD Zoology). This Fellowship enables exploratory encounters between art and science, and a partnership between Girton College and the Cavendish laboratory for physics.

Enrichment and opportunity – read about how your donations have funded the splendid new Women’s VIII, aiding the resurgence of sport amongst students, who have never rowed before. This year, Girton has also launched the Susan J Smith Music Performance Fund to encourage all forms of music to flourish. To add to our students’ study and career skills programme, we are looking to launch a prize to encourage entrepreneurial talent.

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Finally I would like to thank all our alumni and supporters for your wonderful gifts that have enabled Girton to become financially sustainable, and to let you know that retirement beckons for me. I would like to thank so many of you for the warmth, sense of fun and commitment that have made my 7 years as Girton’s Development Director such a pleasure, and to wish everyone well in the future.

Deborah Easlick
Development Director and Fellow

Design: www.cantellday.co.uk
Photography: David Johnson and Ian Olsson
The Year in Numbers

£1,638,684 raised from 1561 donors

15% of contactable alumni made a gift

103 donors gave to Girton for the first time

50 non-alumni supporters made a gift

163 Girtonians under 35 made a gift to the College

Girton reached over 10,000 contactable alumni this year from 110 countries

1043 donors made regular gifts to Girton donating an average installment of £36.66

63% of new funds raised went towards student support

6 full Undergraduate Bursaries have been permanently endowed

20 student support grants have been permanently endowed

Over £92,000 has been raised for postgraduate scholarships

Alumni and supporters from 35 countries donated
Our annual Telethon ran from 21st March to 6th April 2023. A team of 15 student callers spoke to 520 Girtonians across 30 countries to reconnect, network and raise funds for our student support initiatives. Over £180,000 was raised! Gifts made as a part of the Telethon have funded 4 student support grants and an Emily Davies Bursary in perpetuity allowing Girton to help more students in need. We are grateful to everyone who took part in this year’s campaign.

Appeals

Giving Day 2022

On 10 and 11 October 2022 we ran our third Giving Day looking to raise funds for our student support and wellbeing initiatives. During these 36 hours our Girton community came together not only to celebrate what makes the College special but also to improve the opportunities offered to our current and future students. Over £95,000 was donated by more than 300 alumni and supporters. By making a gift you helped support our students by widening access, offering bursaries and funding to alleviate emergencies and hardship. Some gifts went to support our wellbeing initiatives which allow our students to thrive whilst they are here by taking part in activities like music, sport and poetry as well as offering advice and counselling as needed. Thank you so much to everyone who got involved online and in the College.
“Thank you so much for your support! Financial stress is a major barrier to academic and career success, and your contributions have gone far in helping alleviate that for me. I really appreciate your support.”

Zahari Nikolaev (2020, Law)

“Many thanks to those incredibly generous donors who have made my receipt of the Cambridge bursary possible, without whom I would not feel the financial security and freedom I do today. It is through means of the bursary that I am able to engage in my curricular extracurricular activities, but also maintain a healthy social life, making my time at Girton (and Cambridge as a whole) more enjoyable.”

Anon (2020)

“Thanks for the Cambridge experience.”

Anon (2020)

“Girton College Boat Club

Following a successful ergathon and Boat Club appeal in 2022, the Girton College Boat Club (GCBC) were able to purchase a new Women’s VIII. Girton celebrated the naming of its new boat on Saturday 17 June 2023, ahead of the final day of racing at the May Bumps. With speeches from the Mistress, Dr Elisabeth Kendall, and the principal supporter, Peter Rutland, the boat was launched from the Girton boathouse onto the Cam to the delight of an audience of alumni and students. It is named for Jim Rutland, the holder of the Girton Singapore Scholarship Award 2022-23.”

Michael Hsu (2021, Physics)
Access Initiatives

Dr Stuart Davis, Fellow and Admissions Tutor, reports on these Access Initiatives which started this year.

The Cambridge Foundation Year Programme is a one-year, fully-funded residential programme for students who have faced educational disadvantage or disadvantage at secondary school level. Girton is one of the programme’s first colleges. Students complete an intensive year designed to prepare them for the academic challenges of Cambridge. As well as the academic focus, students are given a chance to develop their wider skills through sports, being active in national competitions, participating in College competitive societies and attending University events. It has been delightful to watch the students develop and flourish over the last few months. Girton has been a key supporter of the scheme since its inception, including being one of only two colleges represented on the Management Committee.

Girton is also one of the first colleges to participate in STEM SMART, a pilot Widening Participation initiative from the University of Cambridge, run in association with Isaac Physics. STEM SMART provides free complementary teaching and support to UK students at non-fee-paying schools who have either experienced educational disadvantage or belong to a group that is statistically less likely to progress to higher education. It was launched in autumn 2021 and was targeted at students who have faced educational disruption or disadvantage. Once on the programme, students complete a series of assessed coursework essays and a short dissertation, in addition to an end-of-year exam.

Many of the students on the programme this year have been very active in their Colleges and beyond. Activities from our four Girton students include: becoming a member of the JCI committee, competing in College competitive sports, being active in national politics, and much more besides.

It has been delightful to watch the students develop and flourish over the last few months. Girton has been a very active College on the programme, with students participating in most events.

As a student in the Foundation Year, I have found the programme to have improved my academic skills, including writing essays but also feel more confident in navigating university and beyond. The Foundation Year has also allowed me to not only develop my academic skills in regard to writing essays but also feel more confident in navigating university as a whole. I would like to thank those who have helped fund this foundation year as well as the incredible teaching staff.”

Saranka Maheswaran (2022, Foundation Year)

Our STEM SMART students

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In January 2022 the first cohort of 848 students with widening participation backgrounds started the course, with 515 students progressing to Phase 2 and then 372 to Phase 3. Several Girton fellows, misconceptioned and the London Borough of Camden. We want to be able to do more initiatives involving working closely with schools in the West Midlands and the London Borough of Camden. The programme starts in January in Year 12 and runs until exams begin in Year 13. Throughout this time students are set work each week via the Isaac Physics online platform which complements and supports their school studies. Students who have demonstrated active engagement in earlier phases can participate in small group tutorials and attend a 4-day residential in Cambridge. In its first phase the focus is on helping them to secure the best possible grades in their public examinations and to meet their university offer.

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Ain Bailey is an artist, composer and DJ based in London. Her practice involves creating multi-channel and mixed media installations and soundtracks for moving images, live performance and dance. It was a privilege to spend seven years as Mistress of Girton. When I first found myself in this position, I wanted to contribute to its teaching and research, and in particular to its international dimension. It has been a thrill to meet the first Juliet Campbell Fellow and learn from her. It has been an absolute delight to have worked with those from other supporters, and to switch as comfortably between traditions. I may never wear a gown again!

Juliet Campbell Fellow in International Relations, Dr Una Ryan

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Michael Degen is an environmental anthropologist, focusing on architecture and energy in Africa and beyond. He received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University and is currently a research fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. He is an ethnographer of the country’s multi-ethnicity, its transformation from colonialism to multinationals, and its ongoing political criticality, particularly of urban spaces. He has developed numerous collaborations with performance, sonic and visual artists, creating multi-channel and mixed media installations and soundtracks for moving images, live performance and dance.

Fellowships

Girton’s Fellowship is at the heart of the College. These teaching and research Fellowships bring a breadth of world-class experience and expertise to Girton’s multi-disciplinary阵容 and strengthen our research-focused teaching. By investing in Fellowships, Girton’s ability to deliver on its educational purpose, ensure academic excellence and continue to provide a challenging, transformative educational experience for every student. Thanks to the tremendous generosity of our alumni we have been able to welcome Dr Michael Degani as the first holder of the Juliet Campbell Fellowship in International Relations, and Air Bailey as the second Cavendish Arts Science Fellow at Girton.

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Air Bailey is an artist, composer and DJ based in London. Her practice explores the conceptual and visual landscapes of individual and community identities. Her compositions encompass field recordings and found sounds and are often inspired by reflections on silence and absence, feminist activism and industrial decay, particularly of urban spaces. She has developed numerous collaborations with performance, sonic and visual artists, creating multi-channel and mixed media installations and soundtracks for moving images, live performance and dance.

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