



Annual report

Selwyn College Cambridge, 2008 – 2009



Master's reflections



I suspect that no one will be that surprised to read in this *Annual report* that things are not as rosy as they might be. We have until recently been fairly optimistic about the future and full of confidence about the present.

The latter is fully justified because when any of you visit Selwyn I am sure you get a sense of people going about their work with enthusiasm and the College forever ranks high in terms of the general satisfaction of its students and staff. This year, however, the former is not justified and the Bursar has taken the opportunity that this Report provides to lay it out in black and white. The new buildings that we have erected have added immeasurably to the beauty of the College, added to the well-being of students and helped produce an improved income stream from conferences and the like, but the hard truth is that if we cannot substantially increase our endowment over the next ten years, the future looks bleak indeed. So it is that we must now change tack. It is time to build in different sense.

It is true that the current account is not yet in the red, but count in depreciation as we must to secure the future and we are losing in the region of £1 million a year. One can survive reasonably well like this for a few years but, as I am sure most of you realise, such a state of affairs cannot last for long. Something like a major Cripps refurbishment or a further drop in student fee income comes along to bite you where it hurts. The truth is that our present situation is simply not sustainable. As you will see from the Bursar's last chart, the contrast between our student numbers set against endowment and that of other colleges is stark. As the Bursar often comments, we fight far beyond our weight. We have achieved tremendous success and the reputation of the College within the University has never been higher, but sooner or later the imbalance will have to be corrected. There are two alternatives. Either we set out to raise funds to put into the endowment (which is by its very nature a more difficult, and indeed awkward,

undertaking than funding a building) or we retrench. And how would this be achieved? By selling some of the houses along Grange Road and reduce student numbers by anything up to sixty per year. This latter alternative goes so much against the grain of what we do, of course, it is a step we would only ever take as a last resort. It would affect our standing in the University and betray those future students who would have benefited from a Cambridge education. And yet it is important for you all to know that the Governing Body is now seriously looking at this as one of the options.

It is time to look to our foundations again and make sure that in four years' time I do not end up handing to my successor an attractive but fatally poisoned chalice. Colleges in a better financial position than us are beginning to think of the possibility of making themselves financially independent of the Government, in the sense that they will not have to depend on the college fee to survive. Since fees account for over a quarter of our income at present that prospect is probably some way off for Selwyn, and yet that is the direction in which we must travel. It will take many years (if ever) for the University itself to become independent of Government funding, but there is no reason why the colleges should not show the way.

I am sorry not to be able to send you a more upbeat message, but we wish to be honest with you and honesty is now more than ever of the greatest importance.

Richard Bowring | Master

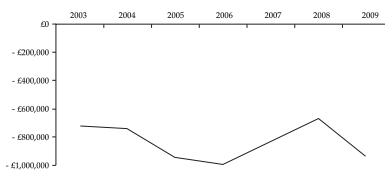


Financial report

Overview

In last year's report, I expressed the fear that the coming year would prove challenging for the College and this has indeed been the case. After several years of steady progress in reducing the deficit, the College is back to the worst levels of 2005–06 and has just announced an underlying loss of £938,144. This represents a 40% deterioration compared with last year and essentially resulted from a 14% fall in investment income from £1.33 million to £1.15 million, as dividends were cut and interest rates declined. Although the conference business held up quite well in the circumstances, an inexorable rise in utility and other costs put pressure on margins across the College.

Underlying deficit 2003–09



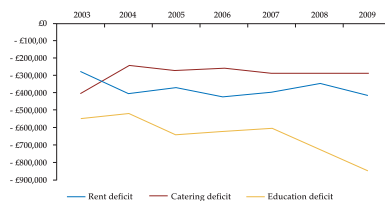
The College loses money in all of its core businesses of educating, feeding and housing young people. The rising cost of supervisions contributed to an education deficit of £855,865, or £1,537 per student for the year. Whilst somewhat simplistic, in that the figure covers both undergraduate and postgraduate students, it should be borne in mind that the University is losing a similar if not higher figure. Tuition fees therefore need to rise by around £4,000 per year if breakeven is to be achieved. Whilst fee increases are to be expected irrespective of the outcome of the election, Government is placing more pressure on the University sector, seeking £180 million of efficiency savings in 2010–11 and the likely abolition of the historic buildings premium, which is worth over £4 million per year to Cambridge. The external climate is far from benign.

Whilst we have more control over rent and food pricing than we do over fees, we remain constrained

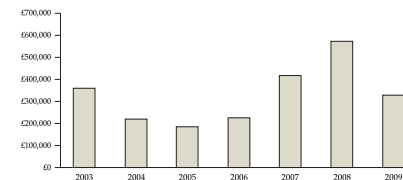
by welfare issues. High rent increases in recent years have barely offset utility and maintenance costs. In the kitchens, a number of initiatives mean that student spending in Hall has risen on average by over 11% per year for the last six years, allowing the College to hold the deficit at reasonably constant levels in the face of rising costs.

Given the fall in investment income in particular, the College's cash generation has also declined from last year's peak level of almost £600,000. This year's level remained positive at £332,000, which is good news in the circumstances, and would have been worse but for the cost saving efforts of recent years. Most of the surplus cash is, however, absorbed in routine maintenance and capital expenditure around the College. More than ever, the College is unable to make meaningful additions to the endowment from internal resources.

Operating deficit 2003–09



Cash generation 2003–09



Investments

The news on the investment side is more positive. At 30 June 2009, the portfolio amounted to £18,778,077. This represents a fall in the capital value of 10.7% over the year. However this excludes income from interest and dividends of 5.4%, resulting in a total negative return of 5.3%. This compares well against wider benchmarks. Charity benchmarks such as the WM Charities (Unconstrained) Universe fell by 12.5% over the year, and the Oxford Investment Fund by 23.1%. Since the end of June, a £2.5 million donation from the Ann D Foundation has been received which, with a rise in markets following the year-end, means the portfolio now stands at £23.8 million.

Donations

As regards donations, the College received £263,552 in unrestricted donations for income purposes, versus £232,668 last year. In addition, we received £1,041,376 in donations for capital purposes, compared with £1,042,358 last year. Each year included a single gift of £641,000. We recognise that a worsening economic climate will also put pressure on our donors and the continuing response of alumni and friends in supporting the College is very much appreciated.

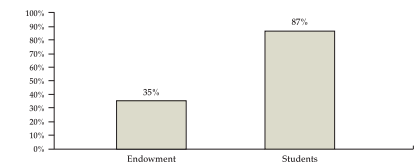
Balance sheet

Liquid resources declined from £1,657,952 to £819,875 at the year-end. The College maintained high levels of cash as payments were due on Phase 2 of Ann's Court, which has now completed. Other than a loan of £2.5 million from the Ann D Foundation, the College is debt-free. Land and buildings of £51.7 million and the investment portfolio of £19.0 million form the other main components of a balance sheet of £70.3 million.

Outlook

A difficult year was to be expected. Cash flow has declined, the deficit has increased and the core businesses of educating, feeding and housing students still lose money. The College must focus on building the endowment if it is to face the future with any confidence and protect the scale and quality of teaching and research. I make no apologies for reproducing the following chart:

Selwyn versus colleges' average 2008



Other colleges can look to their endowment to offset the losses in their core businesses. With only 35% of the average endowment of Cambridge colleges, we cannot. Simply put, losses of £1 million per year are not sustainable over the medium term. The implications of our continued failure to set aside money to maintain our buildings are becoming clear in the shape of an estimated £14 million cost to refurbish Cripps Court.

More fundamentally, however, we cannot continue in this vein. We must either grow our endowment to a size where we can support our current operations, or reduce those operations to a scale that can be supported by our current endowment.

Nick Downer | Bursar

Selwyn admissions

In this question and answer session, Dr James Keeler, Selwyn College's Senior Tutor, one of the two Admissions Tutors and Fellow in Chemistry since 1984, answers some of the most commonly asked questions on the subject of admissions.



James Keeler (pictured centre) with Mike Sewell (Tutor for Admissions in Arts & Social Sciences) and Stephanie Pym (Admissions Secretary)

How many applicants are there per place available?

Across the University and averaged over all subjects there are around three applicants per place, but this hides a great deal of variation between subjects. As you might expect, subjects like Law and Medicine attract the greatest number (up to eight or nine per place). Many other universities receive significantly more applicants per place than we do, but the distinction is that our applicants are almost all predicted to achieve the highest grades and all have excellent track records.

With so many students getting A grades, how do you choose?

Selecting the best students, meaning those most likely to thrive in the Cambridge system, is a very difficult task and one which the Admissions Tutors, with the help of the Fellowship, take very seriously. There are two key parts of this selection process. First, each candidate is treated as an individual whose application is carefully assessed – indeed, we estimate that around two to three person hours are devoted to each applicant. Secondly, there is the concept of the 'gathered field' in which all applicants in a particular subject are compared across the University so as to ensure, as far as we can, that the best candidates are all offered places.

When it comes to assessing an individual candidate, we look at their academic record, the reference provided by their school or college, how they perform in any written tests we use, and finally how well they come across in interview. We then try to put all of these indicators together to make our final decision. This is not an exact science, as we are comparing people with very different backgrounds and educational experiences. I am sure that we do not always make the right decisions, but equally I am confident that we do the best we can to identify talent and potential.

Is the College only interested in admitting students who can help keep Selwyn at the top of the academic league tables, and if so is the College turning into an academic hothouse?

Cambridge clearly presents itself as academically elite, offering the most challenging courses designed to stretch the ablest students. Significant public resources, as well as generous benefaction, have made it possible for Cambridge and its colleges to offer a unique education. It therefore behoves us to make sure that this is offered to those who are best able to take advantage of it. Of course, life as a student in Cambridge is about more than study, but study at the highest level must be the key purpose of a Cambridge education. The selection process therefore focuses primarily on the academic – and for this I make no apology.

As to Selwyn becoming an 'academic hothouse', the answer is emphatically not. We aim to provide an exacting but supportive academic environment, combined with excellent pastoral care. Within this framework students can thrive academically and develop personally, so that they can make the very best of their time in Cambridge.

What is the ratio of admissions, male to female?

Over recent years, we have usually admitted close to equal numbers of men and women, but from year to year there are fluctuations of a percentage point or so. The admissions process really is 'gender blind' in as far as we can make it so.

What is the ratio of admissions for private and maintained schools?

The University has a binding agreement with the Government (represented by OFFA – the Office for Fair Access) that the proportion of students from maintained (that is, state funded) schools will rise to 63% within the next couple of years. Selwyn, like all other colleges, needs to do its part to make sure the University achieves this target, otherwise we will all be penalised. In recent years the proportion of admissions from the maintained sector has risen from around 52% to 60%, with significant year-on-year fluctuations.

Is there a form of 'social experimentation' occurring, when it comes to offering places to pupils from certain areas and/or types of schools?

It is pretty clear that this is what the Government wants us to do. However, it is equally clear that we want to admit the best students, regardless of their educational background. Squaring this circle is by no means easy, but we are trying as best we can. One key point is that increasing the number of talented applicants from the maintained sector helps us to increase the proportion of such students admitted without diluting the quality. This has been the aim of a lot of our outreach work.

What is the Cambridge Special Access Scheme and is it helpful/successful?

The CSAS is designed to provide admissions tutors with extra information about a candidate who has experienced some disadvantage e.g. problems in teaching, the school being in 'special measures', family or health difficulties. Those whose families

have no tradition of higher education can also make an application under the CSAS. The aim of the scheme is to give teachers the opportunity to write about a pupil in a way they probably would be reluctant to do in a more formal reference. This information is very helpful when assessing a particular applicant, but applying under the CSAS does not guarantee a place or an easy offer.

Has the scheme been successful? It is hard to say. However, it is an important part of the process of giving Cambridge admissions a more human and welcoming face.

What is the 'widening participation' scheme, and what part does Selwyn play within it?

The widening participation agenda is based on the idea that there are many young people who have the ability and intelligence to benefit from a Cambridge education but who, for one reason or another, simply do not apply. There are a lot of reasons why able pupils do not apply to us. Some believe they are not the 'right type', some believe study at Cambridge is expensive and, sad to say, some are actively dissuaded by ill-informed or prejudiced teachers. The widening participation agenda aims to provide accurate information about Cambridge and to encourage suitably qualified students to apply.

There are many strands to the widening participation strategy, and Selwyn participates enthusiastically in all of these. They range from visits to schools, hosting visits to Cambridge, open days, summer schools and the ever-popular Oxbridge conferences.

Have the College's activities in the 'widening participation' scheme led to more students from the Leeds area applying to and being offered places at Selwyn?

Our partners in Leeds tell us that as a result of their 'Aim Higher' strategy more students are gaining admission to Russell Group universities, and Oxbridge in particular. We have certainly seen an increase in applicants to Cambridge and not surprisingly this has led to more being admitted. It is important to realise that those students have gained admission on their own merits – not because they are being given any special treatment. All we did was to encourage them to be ambitious: they did the rest.

Profile

Joshua Jowitt

Schools Liaison Officer



The remit of a Schools Liaison Officer is to encourage widening participation in Higher Education by urging school children to 'Aim Higher' (as one of the current Government campaigns is called). At Cambridge, the University and colleges are involved in a project to encourage applicants from areas and from schools which have historically sent relatively few applicants to the older universities, or even any universities outside their region. The aim is to demolish myths, give accurate information, encourage ambition and make Higher Education attractive; secondarily, it is to promote Oxbridge methods of teaching and learning for those who wish to stretch themselves academically and explain that we are only interested in academic potential in prospective students, not social class or kind of school attended.

The colleges run a scheme by which each local authority has a link with a specific college. Within this scheme Selwyn already had well established links with Leeds, and has recently been allocated Calderdale, Wakefield, Huddersfield & Kirklees. Selwyn also

works jointly with Homerton in Barnsley. In 2009, the College took on its first Schools Liaison Officer. In this article, Joshua talks about his background and its relevance to his new post, and about his work with schools in the West Yorkshire area.

"I grew up in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, and went to St Michael's Comprehensive and then to Barnsley College for sixth form study. I gained a place at Homerton to read Law, and was the first person in my family to have done A levels, and go to university. By no means all of those at Barnsley College went on to university, and in my year only two applied to Oxbridge and I was the first person in a long time to gain an Oxbridge place.

Access seemed an obvious choice as a job on graduating, as I had done outreach work at school, encouraging people into further education. (Barnsley has no schools with their own sixth forms.) Then, I volunteered during my three years at Homerton to assist with their outreach work, which by happy coincidence involved working in South Yorkshire, my own stomping ground.

There is no typical 'day in the life of a Schools Liaison Officer', particularly as I am the first person to hold the post at Selwyn. One of the main tasks in my first few weeks has been to begin making the vital contacts with schools in the College's outreach area necessary to do my work. In the main, I work with those in Years 10 to 13 (those aged 14 – 17 years) talking to them in their own schools about what



university can be like as a general experience, and then talking about Cambridge in particular. I usually plan an interactive task which helps them apply what they have learnt at school in a practical way. For example, for those who say they enjoy mathematics and physics I have devised an engineering-based activity to help them understand how those subjects can be applied practically in an area for which there is no GCSE or A level.

Another key objective is to persuade teachers to encourage their students to 'Aim High'. Some schools I have contacted are crying out for help, whilst others can be reluctant to get involved as they fear a 'brain drain' out of the north of England where there are undoubtedly some very good universities. My role is not to discourage those schools, but to encourage their students not to discount university altogether, and to consider Cambridge if the course is right for them.

There is also sometimes a fear, and one I had myself, that Cambridge would not be right for someone from South Yorkshire and that it may be too 'posh' or 'elitist'. My argument is quite simple: 'What's holding you back? I did it, so why couldn't you?

The feedback from schools so far has been very encouraging. Two pupils have already told me they are applying to Selwyn, and would not have considered doing so without my visit. In the long term, I hope to build relationships with a good number of schools and establish a programme of visits to Selwyn, as photographs and a verbal description cannot compare with the real experience."

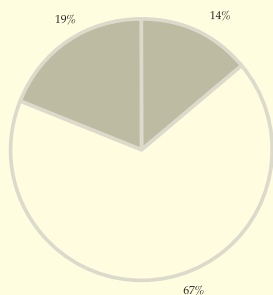
For more information about the Cambridge Access scheme visit the University's admissions website at www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/arealinks/

Development and alumni relations

Focus on the *Fund for the Future*

The College launched the *Fund for the Future* in November 2005. It has been created in order to provide alumni and friends with an opportunity to make regular donations which will support the College's key activities and needs. These gifts are directed specifically towards teaching and student support, helping with maintenance of the College buildings and facilities and to the general purposes of the College. It was hoped that pledges of £1 million could be secured within five years. The response of alumni and friends has far exceeded these expectations, and £1.4 million had been raised by the year end.

The amount raised is divided between the three funds as follows:



College fabric	14%
General purposes	67%
Teaching & student support	19%

How is the money being used?

College fabric – in order to offer affordable, up-to-date, on-site facilities to as many students as possible, the College spends money on modernising student rooms, maintaining public spaces such as the Hall, Chapel and Library, and on the upkeep of the College's gardens and grounds.

Teaching and student support – the College spends £2.2 million per year on education. This includes the salaries of those teaching officers employed by the College, as well as paying for supervisions for which Government support in the form of the 'College fee' no longer provides sufficient cover. The reduction in this support by 20% over the past ten years means that there is currently a shortfall of more than £1,500 per student per year in the cost of their education.

The College also spends £100,000 per year on a variety of forms of student support, from bursaries

to travel grants. The availability of such funds is vital if the College is to offer places regardless of the financial background of applicants.

General purposes – in addition to the specific areas already outlined, there are many other aspects of College life which require expenditure. Resourcing the Library, providing computer facilities and supporting extra curricular activities are just three examples. Gifts made for general purposes have been especially welcome, since this allows the College to channel such funds directly to the areas of greatest need.

How can your gift make a difference?

The amount raised by 30 June 2009 was £1.4 million. This has been achieved by around 19% of our contactable alumni giving an average of £20 per month. This is proof that 'a little and often' from a good number of supporters can make a real difference. Examples of how a modest monthly gift translates to a measurable contribution to the College are:

£10 per month for one year will provide £150 towards the upkeep of the College gardens

£20 per month for one year will provide a student support grant of £300

£20 per month for one year will buy ten books for the Library

£30 per month for one year will provide an arts student with supervisions for one year

(these figures include tax reclaimed through Gift Aid)

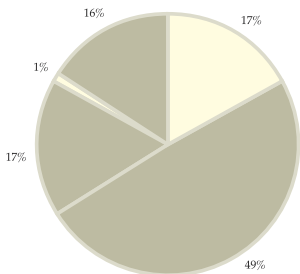
Heather Kilpatrick | Development Director

For further information about donating, events, publications, merchandise, keeping in touch with your contemporaries and a range of other information, please visit our website (www.sel.cam.ac.uk/alumni)

Selwyn's development and alumni relations programmes are designed to strengthen the College's relationship with members and friends through a range of communications and events, and to provide financial support for the educational aims of the College through fundraising activities.

Gifts received 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009

A total of £1,304,928 was received during the financial year.



Gifts received

College fabric and grounds	17%
General purposes	17%
Dickinson fund†	49%
Student extra-curricular pursuits	1%
Teaching and student support	16%

Source of donation

Members	89%
Friends	2%
Trusts and foundations	3%
Legacies	6%

† The Dickinson Fund is an endowed fund, donated by an alumnus, the income from which will be used towards costs associated with the life of the Chapel



Ways to give

All the following gifts are welcome and subject to tax relief when given by a UK tax payer:

- Single gifts (by cheque, credit or debit card, or on-line)
- Regular gifts (by Standing Order, Direct Debit or on-line)
- Gifts of stocks or shares (your broker can advise on how this is done)
- Payroll giving
- Making provision for the College in a Will

US tax payers can make tax-deductible donations to the College through Cambridge in America (details may be found on www.cantab.org or www.sel.cam.ac.uk/alumni/giving/details.html#us).

Selwyn College acknowledges donors by naming those who give in the *Annual report* and by issuing an invitation to the Donors' Garden Party. Gifts of a total value of £5,000 or more are acknowledged on a plaque displayed in the College. Larger gifts are acknowledged on an individual basis in conjunction with donors' wishes.

Those who make gifts of between £250,000 and £1 million to a college, the University or a combination of the two during the University's 800 campaign, are eligible for membership of the University's Vice-Chancellor's Circle, and for gifts of £1 million or more donors qualify as Companions of the University's Guild of Benefactors.

You may also wish to remember the College in your Will. Membership of the 1882 Society is offered exclusively to those who have notified the College of their intention to benefit Selwyn this way. All members will be given a personalised solid silver gift and invited to attend a meal in College.

More details regarding all forms of giving can also be found on our website – www.sel.cam.ac.uk/alumni/giving/

The Cambridge 800 Anniversary Campaign



In 2008–09 the University celebrated its 800 anniversary. A major fundraising campaign is helping to secure Cambridge's excellence in teaching and research for future generations.

Your gift to the College will not only be of direct benefit to Selwyn, but will also count towards the total funds raised for the 800 Campaign, which is stressing the importance of 'collegiate Cambridge'.

