My fellow Antonians (that's what we call ourselves),

First things first, I want to say congratulations on your acceptance to Oxford and to the community of St Antony’s College. If you selected the College, I think you made a wise decision; if you have been assigned here, luck was definitely with you. My name is Claire and I am the Graduate Common Room President and an MPhil student in St Antony’s College. My hope this year is that with the administration and academic staff that we at St Antony’s can make Oxford feel like a home for you. In this email I hope to make some things more clear about how this College community can best welcome you and how the GCR will fit into College life.

The GCR is essentially the student council of the College: we work as a liaison between the students and the College and we try to enrich the lives of the students of St Antony's College by coordinating a variety of social, academic, and welfare events. We have an Executive that consists of the President, Secretary, Treasurer and 6 Vice Presidency roles covering Welfare, Academic and Social life in College. We have various other roles in the GCR ranging from Environmental Officer, Charity Officer, BME Officer and our Formal Dinners representative. Continually the GCR wants to be the place where you have your voice heard so we have meetings three Wednesdays every term for everyone to attend and weekly newsletters. Perhaps one of the most important ways of keeping in touch is our Facebook group which I encourage you all to join. This year we have some roles on the GCR open, so if you want to meet new people and get involved in College life consider putting yourself forward in our first meeting of the year or becoming a Peer Supporter, who help with student welfare in College.

I remember being in your shoes this time last year and feeling all the nerves, excitement and sometimes confusion that comes with starting off in Oxford. There will be new terminology, emails coming from your Departments, College and the University, and for many of you, coming to Oxford will mean moving great distances. St Antony’s is famous for its diversity, its often politically interested students and its sense of community. On this point, being an Antonian does not mean one specific thing and in our community we celebrate people from all backgrounds. We continuously try to develop ways to best work on welfare as a community by having weekly Tea and Cake together, setting up Mindfulness classes, having BME, LGBTQ and Womens’ Officers. I also encourage you to join one of the many sports clubs or societies, ranging from yoga to gardening or brewing beer. One of the best things about St Antony’s is our Antonian Fund, which means that if you have an idea for an activity or club in College, you can even try to make your own. While you probably came to Oxford for the academia and your studies, I highly encourage you to make time for these social and self-care activities.

To give you an idea of what to expect when you arrive you will soon receive your timetable for “Welcome Week or 0th Week (pronounced at Oxford, for some reason, as "Noughth Week"). This first week may seem a little overwhelming as you will receive a lot of information at once. But our goal is to make is as manageable and fun as possible. We will try to give you the best possible introduction to college, the town, to meet new people, and to find ways to destress during the year. Whether you live in or outside College, study International Relations or Film, we will do our best to make St Antony’s a home and community for you.

If you have any questions or concerns about student life, please do not hesitate to email me at gcr-president@sant.ox.ac.uk. If I can't answer your question, I can certainly point you to the person who can.
For administrative questions, you may want to email registry.administrator@sant.ox.ac.uk (keeping in mind that response time will be slower than usual in July and August).

Enjoy your summer, spend time with your family and prepare yourself mentally as you embark on this new phase of your life. I look forward to meeting and getting to know all of you.

Sincerely,

Claire Dowling

St Antony's College GCR President

MPhil Candidate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies

University of Oxford