

Michaelmas term 2016 – New student survey feedback

Summary

We have disseminated the New Student Survey since 2012 to ensure that you have the opportunity to tell us about your first term in College. Your feedback is important to us, and the survey results are discussed by relevant College departments and the GCR Executive to help us to plan for the next academic year.

The response rate was 49% (120/245). The winner of the prize draw, a pair of tickets to attend High Table as guests of the Warden, was Iris Lo.

We asked questions about your pre-arrival and Welcome Week experience, focusing on areas in which feedback had been less positive in past years, or where the College / GCR Executive had run new events / arrangements.

Where feedback was mixed, the GCR Executive and the College's Senior Administrative Officers have discussed how improvements could be made.

Pre-arrival communications

- 88% of respondents assessed pre-arrival communication as good or excellent.
- The Registry team and GCR sent out a regular newsletter during the summer covering a range of issues such as accommodation, arrival arrangements, health and welfare, and finance and funding. These newsletters were revised based on feedback from the 2015 questionnaire in which respondents asked for additional information about making battels payments, and about student welfare. We placed a particular emphasis on ensuring that new students registered with the College doctor, which was much appreciated by the Summertown Health Centre.
- We will continue to send email newsletters for the 2016/17 cohort, adding and amending content in conjunction with other College departments and the GCR and working to ensure that information is not duplicated.
- Several students commented that they felt they had missed information because they were on Facebook, or had not found information about the GCR's Facebook page. In 2017, we will ensure that i) all new students are sent the Facebook link in good time, and ii) that the GCR newsletters include any important information posted on Facebook.

Arrival in College

'Everyone was very welcoming and eager to help, thank you.'

'The volunteers really impressed me with their welcome. They escorted me to my room. I felt at home.'

'Cannot emphasise this enough! College staff and GCR made sure I was feeling welcomed from the second I arrived here.'

- 92% of you said you were made to feel welcome on your arrival at College. As in previous years, current students volunteered to be in hand during Arrival Weekend to help new students move in and feel welcome. The new Junior Deans and GCR Executive members were also on hand during this term. The student volunteers were once again a big part of helping newcomers settle in, and this is an arrangement we will repeat in 2017.
'I think that more needs to be done to welcome and include people living away from College.'
- Feedback from students living off-site was less positive than that of students in College accommodation. In 2017 the GCR have proposed to organise a special 'meet and greet' session for students living off-site.
- Students have expressed a wish for more College tours. Running these is dependent on current students volunteering, and we hope to be able to incorporate these in 2017.

Compulsory College sessions (New Student Registration, College Inductions, Medical Registration, College Advisors' drinks reception, Welcome dinner)

- 94% of respondents were satisfied with these sessions.
- In 2016 we redesigned the College induction programme to include a compulsory formal induction session preceding the formal Welcome dinner. This session included talks from relevant speakers in the College and wider University and was followed by a College Advisors' drinks reception. This was partly in response to requests in 2015 for a talk from the College doctor and nurse, including an explanation of how to access the NHS. We also introduced a separate Welfare induction session as an informal opportunity to meet the peer supporters and Junior Deans. Following requests in 2015, we included a College tour with current students as part of this session.
- We will review the format of medical registration sessions to try to reduce queues.
- We continue to work with departments to ensure that designed College slots are kept available for our activities. We will review the format of induction sessions to make them as useful as possible for students.

GCR activities

'I really enjoyed the activities which I participated in. I think enhancing social interaction amongst students is a very difficult but very important part of having a better learning experience.'

'I thought the tea / coffee in the Buttery was excellent – a really good idea and an easy way to meet people and talk.'

'Great opportunities for those who aren't into alcohol / clubbing.'

'Really good range of activities!'

- 94% of respondents were satisfied with the optional activities run by the Registry and GCR. The GCR Executive worked hard to put together a timetable of events to suit a range of interests and your feedback suggests that this format was largely successful.
- The GCR put particular effort into ensuring a balance between alcoholic and non-alcoholic events; this will be maintained in 2017.
- There was a particularly positive response to the morning tea and coffee in the Buttery, which we will repeat in 2017. The GCR will ensure that the Buttery is signposted as the space where students feel comfortable meeting each other, organising more 'meet and greet' events if necessary.
- Although satisfied, students mention an overwhelming number of events. The GCR will bear this in mind when structuring their 2017 programme.
- Respondents suggest that they would have appreciated Oxford tours focusing on day-to-day life (cafes, libraries, hidden places), and the GCR plans to organise two 'hidden Oxford' tours accordingly.
- *'I missed the College gym induction and it is inconvenient to have to go to the University's facilities to do so.'*
- Gym inductions will be maintained in 2017 and the GCR will increase advertising of these. It is proposed to hold an additional induction session in Week 6 for late joiners. A Hilary term induction is already in place.'

College Advisors

It remains the College's procedure to allocate students to Advisors who are in different departments to their own, as explained during College Induction. Students whose Advisor is on sabbatical for one term of the year are looked after by the Senior Tutor. A termly email is sent to students to notify or remind them who their Advisor is, and termly details are also issued to Advisors.

- We review the information and guidance issued to Advisors and Advisees each year and work to improve this provision where possible. All parties are encouraged to contact the Registry if they are unable to make contact with an Advisor or Advisee. The Registry can arrange meetings for Advisors and Advisees and is happy to do so.

Junior Deans and welfare provision

In 2016 we appointed two Junior Deans, a new role at the College. The Junior Deans represent the Dean and have a key role in the College's welfare provision.

'The Junior Deans are extremely friendly, kind and helpful. They are doing a great job.'
'I hope these roles will continue to exist in the future.'

- The Junior Deans' roles have been advertised via the College website, email, and posters around College. 86% of respondents confirmed that they are aware of the roles of the Junior Deans and how to contact them.
- In 2016 we produced a guide to accessing medical care in Oxford, which is available on the College website and in College accommodation. We are in the process of producing a corresponding guide about welfare support which will be circulated to College members in due course.
- *'Sunday welfare tea and cake is a fantastic thing to look forward to after a long day of work in the College library.'*
- *'All events are expertly handled and well organised.'*

College accommodation and laundry facilities

- It is not always possible to offer accommodation to all students who request it. Where there is a shortfall, accommodation is allocated according to the following priorities:
- Students who live too far from Oxford to visit and seek accommodation before the beginning of Michaelmas term will be given priority should we have a shortfall of accommodation in future. We will carefully review the number of rooms allocated to continuing students to ensure that new students are not disadvantaged.
The College website includes detailed information about accommodation provision: <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/current-members/accommodation>. We regularly review the information and guidance issued to students about accommodation and have taken all comments into account.

Feedback compiled by Helen ETTY, College Registrar (registrar@sant.ox.ac.uk), February 2017