

OXFORD UNIVERSITY GAZETTE



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Oration by the Vice-Chancellor

*All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn
Led yellow Autumn, wreath'd with nodding corn*

So wrote Robbie Burns in *The Brigs of Ayr*. And his words ring true for the University of Oxford in the autumn of 2007; there is *Plenty* of all kinds, a rich harvest to draw to your attention. The theme I adopted for last year's Oration was continuity and change: our history, collegiate structure and institutional values provide an enduring framework that enable our scholarly enterprise, rooted in academic freedom, to flourish in an ever-changing world. A year on there is plenty of change and plenty of continuity.

First, just a taste of change: two of our graduate colleges, Green and Templeton, have agreed to merge, while preserving the disciplinary themes of medical sciences and management that have respectively characterised them. Following Council's acceptance of the Budd Report, the University has appointed a new Investment Committee chaired by an old member, Mr Oldfield. Council, advised by the Committee, has established an Investment Office to manage its endowments, and welcomed its first Chief Investment Officer, Ms Robertson.

Research revenues, which grew by over 16 per cent a year ago, grew by a further 16 per cent in the past year and now stand at around £250 million. Perhaps even more striking, new research contracts valued at £387 million were signed in the same period, an increase of 45 per cent on the prior year—a rich harvest to inspire even the most seasoned of poets. In part, this growth reflects a pleasing increase in the funding of the indirect costs associated with many of the contracts. In part, it also reflects larger and longer contracts, including some that involve scholars from institutions other than Oxford. But beyond that, it also signifies a continuing, real increase in future research activity here at Oxford. Throughout the year new research centres have been regularly established. Twenty-three new master's and doctoral programmes, spanning all areas, were approved by EPSC for the next academic year. Carefully considered institutional changes often result from these vibrant and creative examples of our academic endeavour, examples which reinforce and strengthen the fabric and integrity of the University and emphasise its ability to adapt to current demands and opportunities.

Celebrating recent and current achievements in the University is a pleasant and important aspect of this annual address. Another aspect is an attempt to identify possible major challenges and priorities for the period

ahead. The combination of tasks is interesting. It can leave one feeling like a cross between a cheerleader and the chief economist of a central bank. Horizon scanning almost inevitably results in the identification of two categories: recurrent or perennial issues of concern to the University community and new and unprecedented matters that demand our attention.

While reflecting on what I might say to you today, it struck me that there is a third relevant category of issues. They are the ones that in significant, and, I shall argue, in potentially dangerous ways we tend not to address either regularly or uniquely, the ones we tend to take for granted. It is a common enough experience that things can become so much part of our daily environment that we cease to notice them. So at the outset of this address I want to spend a little time dwelling on a topic that for us at Oxford, with our intense scholarly activity and priorities, must always be noticed, discussed, and valued.

The importance of **academic freedom** as an immutable value of our University is hard to exaggerate. And yet it is so familiar a concept, so much part of our working assumptions and our natural defences, that we may not often explore its meaning. A colloquium of university leaders that I attended at Columbia University a couple of years ago asserted that: 'At its simplest academic freedom may be defined as freedom to conduct research, teach, speak and publish subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead.'

While you may well want to tinker with that brief formulation, it seems to me a useful point of departure, embracing as it does the freedom to do certain things, subject to specific responsibilities and standards, and the freedom from coercion. Taking a broad international perspective of the exercise of academic freedom, it is clear that we at Oxford are in a highly favoured position compared to scholars and students in some other parts of the world. The avenues of intellectual enquiry they are at liberty to pursue, and their vulnerability to punitive sanctions of varying shades should they stray from externally imposed orthodoxy, are far removed from our standards and expectations. The ethos and praxis of our academy is so completely different that it may only be when we are exposed to other realities that we begin to see clearly again those vital foundations on which so much of our endeavour and achievement rest. We may gain exposure in different ways, but Oxford's magnetic pull on academic talent from

throughout the world, including from nations in which academic freedom is shallowly rooted, is one way it can and does happen, as I for one am regularly reminded. It is perhaps one of the less remarked benefits of our increasingly global reach.

Such exposure can make us more appreciative of our own circumstances; it could also make us more complacent about them. To illustrate why we need to remain alert I want to examine briefly several different examples. The first of these is the issue of academic boycotts. We have seen that spectre raised most publicly, in recent months, in relation to the University and College Union and Israel. There has been talk of a boycott by British academics of Israeli universities and scholars in protest at Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. I must make it clear that I am not well qualified to pronounce on the complexities of Middle Eastern politics. But I am deeply uneasy about the implications of such a boycott for the principles of academic freedom we profess and defend. One particularly disturbing aspect is that it is academics themselves who would be seeking to impose constraints on academic discourse; a threat not from some outside agency, but from within the broader academy. I am gratified that this University's Council has pronounced in the clearest terms its opposition to such a boycott. I am also relieved to see recent indications that the spectre of pursuing such a boycott seems to be receding.

The second example I want to expose is one that we in Oxford have been living with, painfully at times, for several years now. It concerns animal research and the construction of the Biomedical Research Building in South Parks Road. It is fundamental to the practice of academic freedom that contentious issues such as animal research should be freely and rigorously debated. Such discourse is vital to our understanding and to our ever-evolving societal consensus. Freedom of speech, as the working definition that I cited earlier makes plain, is an essential ingredient of our academic freedom. And, without doubt, freedom of speech clearly embraces the right of lawful protest. However, when the forms of protest not only seek to assert a point of view, but also to intimidate and coerce those who differ, then the freedom we cherish is abused and undermined. Faced with tactics of intimidation, we have had no alternative other than to seek redress through the courts to protect the normal academic activity of the University, its members and their daily activities of teaching and learning, scholarship and research. For those are the very strands from which the precious garments of academic freedom are woven.

The third example does not relate especially to Oxford. Rather, it represents a challenge to the wider higher education sector in which Oxford has always played a prominent part. The exposure of young people to powerful ideas of all sorts is a fundamental and important part of the educational process. Today this exposure in some quarters also appears to display an ominous aspect. I am referring here to the increasing drumbeat in our public life about university campuses as potential breeding and recruitment grounds for the political extremism that has its twisted roots in a distorted form of Islam. Well-founded or not, this perception may prove to have profound and challenging implications for academic freedom and for the way it is exercised in the years ahead. There has already been talk, not all of it well thought through it seems to me, about the 'policing' of campuses. It is a subject requir-

ing the most careful debate, a debate for which Oxford is, I believe, well qualified. The debate may be difficult, but it is also urgent, as politicians and educators alike have begun to acknowledge. I want today to make only one further observation about this matter: a full and informed understanding of Islam is a major priority for us in the West. Universities like Oxford have an important role to play in the development of that understanding. It is vital, therefore, that public policy, designed to address the undeniably real security worries about terrorism, does not undermine that very scholarly endeavour which can help to build and propagate knowledge and understanding in society.

It would be curious, and perhaps even noteworthy, if in reflecting on academic freedom I made no mention of our recent debates about the governance of the University. I do not intend here to rehearse or even to revisit the arguments that so recently consumed us, although I shall return briefly to the general subject later in this address. Instead, I want to make a couple of points in relation to my theme of academic freedom. I think we would risk deluding ourselves if we were to claim that the debate was always conducted at a level consistent with the highest expression of that freedom, including its associated responsibilities. Views of all kinds were expressed very freely in all sorts of ways and places, and decisions taken. Academic freedom, like democracy itself, can be a messy and painful business. It is worth reminding ourselves of that reality, especially at times when we may be prone to taking it for granted. It rarely provides neatly bundled solutions to problems, nor should it. That is as true of this subject as any other.

The funding of the University may, at first blush, seem a remote matter in the context of a discussion about academic freedom. But if we look more broadly at the potential constraints on that freedom, on our capacity to pursue to maximum effect our academic aspirations, it is clear that funding plays a very major part. In the recent past our potential has been too often frustrated because of inadequate funding. At the same time we cannot allow funding to dictate the terms of what we do, or how we do it. An academic agenda shaped by dollar, pound or euro signs would be an appalling betrayal of all we hold so precious. That is why, as we prepare to move forward and launch a major development campaign in the coming months, it will be firmly and securely founded on the academic properties of the collegiate University: its history, its values and its academic priorities as determined by its members and their various constituencies.

Achievements and Related Developments

As is the case each year, many distinguished colleagues were honoured for their academic prowess and other contributions, by Her Majesty the Queen, by scholarly societies, and by other bodies and institutions throughout the world. While their successes are too numerous to list, I should draw to your attention in particular Professor Kim Nasmyth's receipt of the prestigious Gairdner Foundation International Award made annually for outstanding contributions to medical research and discovery. Professor Nasmyth, who is Whitley Professor of Biochemistry and Head of the Department of Biochemistry, is the co-discoverer of cohesin, a protein complex that is crucial for faithful chromosome segregation during cell division. I should also note that an impressive total of nine col-

leagues became Fellows of the British Academy, while three colleagues became Fellows of the Royal Society. To all who attained awards and formal recognition, I offer congratulations on Congregation's behalf.

In the course of the selection process for the inaugural Weidenfeld Scholars I was strongly reminded of my earlier point about academic freedom, when a candidate from Eastern Europe expressed incredulity at the tradition in this country that universities appoint their own staff, select their own students, design their own curricula, and set their own standards. She found this difficult to conceptualise because her own frame of reference was so very different. Her experiences contrasted painfully with the joy one experiences daily by observing Oxford students flourishing in this unique environment. Just a few examples illustrate the nature of their achievements. Oxford Pro Bono Publico, a group formed by postgraduate students and academic staff from the Law Faculty, won the Attorney General's Pro Bono Award. They work on high profile human rights and public interest cases. Bryony Palmer (Queen's) was awarded top prize by the Society for the Study of French History, in its annual competition, for her dissertation examining the polemic of the French wars of religion. Daniel Goodman (Worcester), a D.Phil student in Computer Science, won the best paper award at the e-Science All Hands Meeting for designing a workflow language, *Martlet*. And Yahia Baiza (St Cross), a D.Phil student in Educational Studies, has been appointed by UNESCO and the IIEP as their representative in the Afghanistan Ministry of Education with responsibility to coordinate the formulation of a five-year Strategic Plan for Education in that country. Others, whose deeds are too numerous to recount here, are also to be commended for their outstanding achievements in their academic, cultural, professional and sporting pursuits.

While our students' example is inspiration enough, the depth and range of research and scholarship being pursued here at Oxford remains truly impressive. Nowhere has it been more evident in the past year than in the momentum of research grant success that I noted earlier. There is a tendency to longer, larger grants, yet perhaps an even more distinct trend is for private and public sponsors to support the establishment of interdisciplinary centres with the aspiration that by supporting rigorous research, over extended periods, novel applications and solutions to real-world challenges will emerge. As the James Martin benefaction for the eponymous Twenty-first Century School demonstrated, this University, with its internationally eminent faculty, disciplinary breadth, and impeccable standards, not to mention free spirit of enquiry, is well positioned to benefit. The divisions, and some colleges too, have been investing in the organisational design and administrative processes to facilitate these opportunities. I shall expand a little on some of our recent successes, for they illustrate the evolution of the adaptive character of the academy as it accommodates the aspirations of its members, and also their supporters, to whom we remain especially grateful.

The Oxford-Man Institute of Quantitative Finance, directed by Professor Shephard, involves members of the Social Sciences and MPLS Divisions as well as representatives from Man Group plc, the world's largest hedge fund group. Specifically, the centre brings together colleagues from Mathematics, Economics and Finance to explore the systematic and quantitative methodologies, analysis tech-

niques and theory applicable to the allocation of economic and financial resources within the professional management of capital. Man Group's initial commitment to the Institute is £13.75m, which includes a substantial endowment for the chair.

The MRC has funded a new Centre for Genomics and Global Health directed by Professor Kwiatkowski. Its purpose is to apply advances in genome research to understand natural mechanisms of protective immunity to infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. In addition, colleagues at the new centre will seek to identify 'molecular tricks' employed by parasites and microbes to evade the human immune system and to resist current drugs. This centre brings research programmes in epidemiology, infectious diseases, genomics, statistics and computational biology at Oxford, together with Oxford's Global Health network in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Kenya, with the Wellcome Trust's Sanger Institute, and with the MRC's laboratories in The Gambia.

Two new centres have been created at the Saïd Business School. BT has supported the establishment of the world's first research centre for major programme management. It will draw on the expertise of colleagues from the Business School, Engineering, Computer Science and Law, among others, to help rethink approaches to major, high-value, long-term and complex transformational programmes such as the Olympics. Sponsorship is being finalised for a Centre for Reputation Management that will draw extensively on the expertise within the School as well as from Economics, Law, Politics and International Relations, and Sociology. The research from both centres will inform teaching on the MBA and other programmes at the Business School.

The Department of Education has established the Oxford Centre for Educational Assessment in long-term collaboration with Pearson plc. Recent advances in learning and assessment technologies, and the increasing demand for global qualifications and standards, depend for their efficacy on better understanding of learning processes and outcomes. The Centre's research programme will be designed to enhance that understanding so that better assessment methodologies can be designed and promoted.

Dr Spence, Head of the Social Sciences Division, has been leading the planning for a potential new School of Environment and Enterprise. The inspiration for such a School came from Mr Martin and Mrs Elise Smith, the former an old member of St Edmund Hall. Their thesis is straightforward: successful responses to global climate change and environmental problems require enlightened action from the private sector, in addition to the intensive and diverse research and policy agendas that are being pursued in national and international arenas. They identified Oxford as having the requisite core-disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise that could be drawn upon to establish a research-based school. Such a school would provide a forum for dialogue among scholars and representatives of public, private and charitable organisations. Its research programmes would seek private solutions to the very public challenge posed by climate change. And the School would be responsible for a number of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Existing degree programmes could incorporate such courses to the benefit of the next generation of graduates from a range of existing disciplines. We are extremely grateful to Mr and Mrs

Smith for their energetic support, and for the substantial seed funding they have already advanced to sustain the project.

My final example is Begbroke. For those whose academic activities centre on Oxford itself, Begbroke can seem somewhat remote, sitting as it does just beyond the Ring Road. Begbroke Science Park hosts University research laboratories alongside space for new high technology start-up companies, of which there are now twenty on site. Last year two new buildings were opened, adding approximately 50,000 square feet of laboratory and office space. In the Institute for Advanced Technology University scholars now work beside their industrial partners in materials science and nanotechnology, energy and environmental research. The Centre for Innovation and Enterprise offers spin-out companies from the University and other high technology ventures access to advanced laboratories and office space that are configured to encourage interdisciplinary research. The University's new supercomputer is also located there. Many colleagues have contributed to the development of Begbroke and it is appropriate at this time that I should thank them for their commitment and their success. We are grateful too to the many sponsors who have supported Begbroke, among them the South East England Development Agency and HEFCE's SRIF scheme.

I realise that by focusing on centres and institutes I am at risk of failing to recognise many other research and scholarship successes that may or may not have involved external funding. That is not my intention at all. Therefore, allow me symbolically to mention one additional project. Dr Rana Mitter of the History Faculty was awarded £800,000 under the Leverhulme Trust's Research Leadership Scheme. He proposes to develop a research group to study China's conflicts with Japan in the mid-twentieth century, in the context of China's path to modernity. The project group would use the insights from its study to develop a more widespread understanding of China's modern-day motivations and behaviour. There were only twelve of these awards made, and each university was constrained to one submission, making Dr Mitter's success the more meritorious.

We have two organisations responsible for conveying the results of our research and scholarship to society more broadly. They are Oxford University Press (OUP) and Isis Innovation, our technology transfer company. Isis has enjoyed a close involvement with the establishment and growth of activity at Begbroke, and has played no small part to date in the successes there. In the past year Isis has again grown steadily, setting the platform for a review of its strategies. One option being considered is an increase in its organisational scale to align it better with the sizeable increases in research income the University is receiving. Such an increase would help to ensure opportunities are not missed, and that the expertise of Isis is being suitably leveraged to match the market opportunities it is identifying for Oxford's intellectual property. Last year the company returned £1.6m to the University, its researchers and departments. It executed fifty technology licence deals, spun-out seven new companies, wrote eighty-nine new consulting contracts and submitted forty-nine new priority patent applications.

OUP too has completed another very strong year, winning numerous awards, and with normalised sales growth up by 6.5 per cent year on year, well above its 4.9

per cent average for the previous five years. Among many highlights, I note that the Press is the largest publisher in the world of British ELT materials. Twenty-year sales of the flagship programme for adult learners *Headway* exceeded 55 million units during the year. The digitisation of 165 years of back archives of OUP's journals, completed in 2006, has received extremely positive responses from libraries around the world. And the UK Schools business and the International Division both delivered especially encouraging results.

Without in any way compromising the reinvestment that is essential to its future scholarly and educational services' plans, the Press is a major benefactor of the rest of the University. Over ten years, the Press has transferred a total amount of £338 million to the rest of the University, almost two thirds of it in the last five years. This has provided critical investment that has enhanced the life and infrastructure of the academy of which OUP itself is such an important part. The annual subvention following last year's results will be £26 million, in addition to which special transfers in support of the Libraries redevelopment, the Clarendon Scholarships and the John Fell OUP Research Fund will also be made. It is worth noting that the Clarendon scheme has supported over 500 graduate students during the last six years, while in two years the John Fell Fund has made over 160 grants. Among the more significant of those grants has been its support for new research facilitators across the divisions. They are beginning to prove their worth in the preparation of research proposals, as the pleasing results of more recent funding rounds attest.

Following careful consideration, OUP's Finance Committee has approved additional funding to enable an increase in the Clarendon Scholarships pool from £5 million per annum to £7.5 million per annum, and to enable match funding for donors' gifts to priority capital projects over the next period. The first of these supports one of the University's primary forthcoming Campaign priorities—postgraduate scholarships—while the second will provide important support for those capital projects that will be another of the Campaign's priorities. I should add that the annual amount going to the Clarendon Scholarships will then be the equivalent of having an endowment of almost £200m in their cause.

It is possible to regard the extent of building activity as a modern proxy for the level of ambition and energy in an academic institution. Here at Oxford the Estates Directorate and the Land Agent's Office have been unusually busy in recent times. The Pitt Rivers Museum's new research wing, the e-Science Building, the Warneford Hospital MEG Scanner facility for research and clinical applications relating to autism, the Radiation Oncology Biology Unit's fitout at the Churchill Hospital and the Classics Centre—now known as the Stelios Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies—are the major projects that have been completed in the 2006–7 year. The three large projects (all of them costing over £50m) now under construction—the Ashmolean Museum extension, the new Biochemistry Building, and the Old Road Campus Research Building—are progressing to time and budget. The last of these is notable, as groundbreaking occurred in March 2006 and it is nearing completion now. As such, it represents an encouraging symbol of the professional skill and capacity that Ms Wood and her colleagues have brought to the Estates Directorate.

At Iffley Road the Sir Roger Bannister Running Track, newly and fittingly named, has been resurfaced and reopened, while the proposed new Indoor Tennis Centre is in the early stages of planning consultation and fundraising. A splendid new facility for the Oxford University Boating Club, on the river at Wallingford, was formally opened and named the OUBC Fleming Boat House. Philip Fleming won his blue in the Boat Race in 1910 and followed that with an Olympic gold medal in 1912, when he was a member of the British eight. Mr Robin Fleming, Philip's son, whose generosity we applaud, was the major donor to a project that also found wide support among old blues.

Planning applications have been submitted for the Executive Education Centre at the Saïd Business School and the new Earth Sciences Building. Submission of the planning application for the move of Turbomachinery from the Old Power Station at Osney to the Axis Point Building is now imminent. Once the move has been completed the power station is to be released for sale. Colleagues will by now be aware that the New Bodleian is to become home to the Bodleian's unique and extensive special collections. Refurbishment of the New Bodleian is a major project and the design is now sufficiently developed to begin fundraising. In addition to the larger projects, many smaller projects have also been successfully completed, and the planning of others is under way. As we need to be better informed about the appropriate levels of annual maintenance investment in the University's estate, a detailed condition survey of all major buildings is being undertaken. Once that is available, it will enable the prioritisation of maintenance projects. All of these activities are now more readily controlled, because the Estates Directorate has successfully transferred the detail of its operations to a new, electronic estates management system—further encouraging progress.

Public consultation has progressed throughout the second half of the year on the master plans for South Park's Road and the Radcliffe Infirmary site, newly named the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. This month the Oxford City Council is scheduled to consider formally the outcomes of consultation of both plans. Throughout the year the specification and design for both the Mathematical Institute and the Humanities Centre first stage have progressed steadily. Depending upon the eventual timing of planning approvals and fundraising successes, a start on the construction of the Mathematical Institute could occur before the end of 2008. Perhaps the most pleasing achievement for the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter last year was the settlement reached with the Primary Healthcare Trust. The Trust held options to acquire back from the University approximately one third of the site. Under the agreement the Trust has relinquished those options. In consequence, the University now owns the full site unencumbered. By way of consideration, the University is to build and lease back to the Trust (for a minimum period of twenty-five years) a relatively small healthcare facility that will be located in the northwest corner of the site. Land will always be the critical constraint on the future development of the University. That is why this resolution was so important.

I now wish to turn from University buildings to Private Halls. These bodies have been important constituents of the collegiate University since the nineteenth century. The Vice-Chancellor initially licensed them in 1854, in

order that the University might be opened up to poorer students who were unable to afford colleges. Today there are seven Halls. Council resolved a little over a year ago that a review would be timely, as a considerable period, even when measured in 'Oxford-years', had passed since their place in the University had been examined. The review report was completed towards the end of the academic year and accepted by Council. It has recently been circulated to members with the *Gazette* and is available on the Web. In essence, it confirms the important role played by the Halls while acknowledging their vulnerabilities owing to their small scale. The report then proposes a number of important recommendations that are focused on academic integrity and designed to align the Halls better with the rest of the University. In addition to its recommendations, the report provides a useful record of the history of these societies and the roles they fulfil. On Congregation's behalf, I should like to thank the Chair of the review, the Warden of Rhodes House, Sir Colin Lucas, and those other colleagues who served on and supported the review panel.

Policy and Related Issues

Each year this Oration touches on matters of policy and related issues that may be under review or development and that are important to the evolution of the University. This year is no exception. There are several items that I would wish to bring to Congregation's attention before returning briefly to the forthcoming Development Campaign. The first of these issues, unsurprisingly perhaps, is governance. As I stated earlier, I do not want to rehearse the proposals or debates of 2006. Rather, I wish to place in context the governance component of the recently concluded HEFCE *Evaluation of Risk Control and Governance at Oxford*. That audit was performed early in 2006 and its finalisation held over until Congregation's consideration of the White Paper on University Governance had been completed.

In its final report, issued in July 2007, HEFCE reiterated concerns it had earlier expressed about elements of Oxford's governance that differ from the CUC Guide, most particularly how Oxford meets requirements for 'independent scrutiny of outside investors' interests'. In that context, HEFCE's position is that governing body 'membership should be largely non-executive, external and without potential conflicts of interests.' Arising from its audit work, HEFCE requested that the University conduct a review to evaluate Oxford's governance arrangements in relation to current standards. HEFCE also requested that independent advice be sought for such a review. Council subsequently agreed with HEFCE that Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee would conduct the review. Further, Council agreed that the Committee would be chaired for that purpose by one of its lay members, Mr Nigel Turnbull, who has extensive governance experience. Council preferred this arrangement to the alternative proposal of having an independent outside party undertake the work. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee anticipates reporting within a year.

It is pleasing to note that HEFCE's final report found little fault with the University's control regime. This was a marked change from its condition when the audit was initiated some eighteen months earlier. For that immeasurable improvement, our thanks are due to the Director of Finance and the Registrar, their colleagues, Mr Taylor in

his capacity as Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and that committee's members.

Council itself has been examining its *modus operandi*. Arising from those reflections, it established three working groups to examine respectively: Council operations and delegations to its committees; financial governance processes; and the establishment of a nominations committee for Council. Any recommendations that involve legislation or regulations will, in due course, be brought forward for Congregation's consideration. Other work on governance within the University has been undertaken by a working group of the Conference of Colleges under the chairmanship of the Master of Pembroke, Mr Henderson. Conference has now ratified that group's recommendations. They include a strengthening of the administration of the Conference, streamlining of its committee structure including its Steering Committee, new business processes, and changes in representation that should result in better alignment of Conference and University academic processes. In recognising the work of the Master of Pembroke and his colleagues, I should also welcome him as the new chair of the Conference. Much has been achieved by the Conference under the conscientious and skilful chairmanship of the President of St John's, Sir Michael Scholar.

In last year's Oration I presented statistics about changes in the size and shape of the University. They highlighted the rate at which the student body has been expanding and noted, in particular, the relatively high rate of growth in postgraduate student numbers in recent times. My purpose was not to promote the preparation of any prescriptive policy about size and shape. Rather, I simply thought it was timely for a more deliberate dialogue to take place within the institution about the relevant issues. It seemed to me important that the changes we are experiencing, and their many implications, should be the result of careful consideration, and not simply the consequence of the natural evolution of the numerous devolved constituencies of this complex University.

One of the encouraging outcomes of the developing dialogue is that EPSC has prepared a draft consultation paper on size and shape that has been discussed by Council. That draft paper is now before divisional boards and the Standing Committee of Conference. After those iterations have been completed, the paper will be published for wide consultation. Although its principal focus is the size and shape of the student body, it also raises other related implications, including the size of the academic staff establishment and financial issues.

Increases in research volumes, more narrowly prescribed taught master's programmes, employers' requirements, and changes to the structure of graduate degree progression in many disciplines have all combined to contribute to the growth in graduate numbers that we are observing. That growth has rightly caused a spotlight to be shone on the question of the quality of the graduate experience here at Oxford, a subject on which I want to dwell for a few minutes.

Over the past two years EPSC has been working on a project designed to improve our policies, processes and practices relating to graduate study. I spoke of this briefly last year. The project is called 'embedding graduate studies'. Its progress has been steady. For example, the divisions have designed new codes of supervision. New

templates for research students are now available covering supervision, workspace, induction, and graduate skills training. And a short guide to supervision is available to students and supervisors alike. In the course of the year ahead EPSC anticipates extending the templates to cover graduates studying on taught courses. In addition, the online graduate application process, and the online graduate reporting process, both of which have been successfully piloted, should soon be rolled out. This year EPSC will turn its attention as well to the organisational frameworks in the divisions that support graduate study. I hope you will agree that all of this represents a commendable improvement.

You may feel I am at risk of labouring the detail here, but getting it right is crucial for the University. The recruitment of graduate students is intensely internationally competitive, and increasingly so. The range of options available to the best candidates is extensive. If we are to meet our aspirations at Oxford, we must be confident that the academic and collegiate experience we offer, across the canon, is superior. We must also be confident that the funding support we are able to provide is competitive and alongside that, that our processes for admission are designed to assist our preferred candidates to accept our offer in the face of competing bids. Too often, I am afraid, we have, perhaps unwittingly, left first-choice candidates to survive months of uncertainty as our unrefined processes churn away. That of course is in sharp relief to our more streamlined undergraduate approach. Needless to observe, it does not compare favourably with many of our competitors' approaches either.

By way of illustration, some figures might be helpful. First, though, it is important to understand the breadth of our international constituency. Last year, 29 per cent of full-time taught postgraduates were UK citizens, 15 per cent came from the rest of Europe, and 56 per cent came from the rest of the world. The pattern for full-time research graduates is similar: 41 per cent from the UK, 18 per cent from the rest of Europe, and 41 per cent from the rest of the world. Forty-five per cent of our full-time fee-liable graduate students are fully funded from sources other than their personal funds, although this figure varies depending on the level of the degree being taken, and the discipline of that degree. The figures are 11 per cent for professional master's students, 30 per cent for other master's students, and 59 per cent for D.Phil students. However, in the Humanities and Social Sciences only around 40 per cent of D.Phil students are fully funded. This contrasts with an estimated 70 per cent (or more) in MPLS and Medical Sciences. A recent survey of international applicants who declined their Oxford offer found that almost two thirds of the respondents said they did so because of the uncompetitive financial element.

The two major sources of postgraduate student funding are the Research Councils, where our students are among the top recipients of awards, and the collegiate University. Apart from college and University scholarships, a number of departments and faculties—including Economics, Statistics and now Classics—have developed teaching assistantship schemes that provide both financial support and academic career preparation. We are fortunate to have the benefit of the Rhodes legacy and, as well, Oxford students are the leading recipients of Marshall and Commonwealth Scholarships. More recently, we have been extremely grateful to have secured new scholarship

schemes from the Weidenfeld Foundation, Mr Li Ka Shing, and Man Group plc.

So, although our scholarship offerings in a United Kingdom context are arguably among the very best, if not the best, we seriously lag behind our major US competitors and, in addition, now face increasing competition from leading Swiss and German institutions, as their policies have tilted to support graduate study. It is for these reasons—being clear about the nature and standards of our graduate offerings, having consistent and efficient admissions processes, and proactive recruitment processes, all of which are sympathetic to the aggressive, competitive environment in which we operating—that embedding graduate studies will remain among the highest priorities for EPSC. Those are also the reasons why funding for graduate scholarships will be among the highest priorities in the forthcoming development campaign. We should be heartened by the steady progress we have been making. In that respect, I do want to recognise Professor Fallaize's leadership of the project. In addition, our understanding of our competitive positioning and our internal status has been greatly assisted by the excellent research conducted by our new International Director, Dr Bell, and her colleagues, whom I also thank.

As colleagues are no doubt aware, the Corporate Plan that Congregation approved two years ago has a three-year life, although a considerably longer perspective. The current Plan has been a valuable guide to the development of the institution. Council recently expressed its satisfaction with progress in the implementation of the Plan's many strategies. In order to prepare for the review and updating of the Plan for the following three years, Council in Trinity Term established a steering group chaired by Professor Fallaize. That group has been collating material from Council committees, divisions and colleges with the objective of preparing a revised draft document for consultation in mid to late Hilary Term. They have recommended that the Plan be relabelled the 'Strategic Plan', which does seem to be nomenclature more suitable to the nature of our enterprise. Following receipt of responses to the consultation, a final document will be produced, late in Trinity Term, for consideration by Council and Congregation. It is anticipated that it will then be submitted to HEFCE in the autumn.

Among the most important set of strategies in the current plan is that which encourages improvement in the University's financial position. As I have already observed, Oxford has been consistently fortunate over the past decade in OUP's financial strength and its willingness to transfer surplus funds to benefit the academic activities of the rest of the University. This has allowed the University to sustain levels of activity and infrastructure investment that would otherwise have been unimaginable. The reality is that the institution's finances are severely stretched—so much so that, even with the inclusion of the OUP transfer, we are budgeting for a small financial loss for 2007–8, although, gratifyingly, it is less than the loss budgeted for in 2006–7. In the event, the University effectively broke even in 2006–7, a creditable outcome in the circumstances. Yet, none of this really illustrates just how seriously frustrating inadequate levels of funding are for many colleagues.

On previous occasions I have observed that the policy framework for university funding in this country is now more robust than it has been for a long time. We do now

have an FEC regime for research funding, so we have a framework within which the appropriateness of the levels of indirect cost reimbursement can be addressed. We have recently received a step-up in those levels, which is materially improving the situation in those departments and faculties that receive the funding. The top-up fees regime, along with the concomitant commitment to needs-blind admissions, also sets a structure within which the level of fees can be constructively addressed as we move forward. Under the terms of the 2004 legislation, that level is to be reviewed in 2009, a little over a year hence. Unsurprisingly, some interest groups are already beginning to marshal their arguments and look for public support.

I do not today wish to address the appropriateness for Oxford of the present level of fees, nor do I wish to dwell on the underlying economic theory of fees. But I do think it is important that I restate the University's commitment to several principles. The first is that all students who are assessed to possess the potential to succeed at Oxford must be able to come irrespective of their financial circumstances. This, in turn, requires a regime where payment of the fee is deferred by way of a loan with no repayments due until after graduation; and at that point the repayments must be income contingent. Further, a combination of student loans, bursaries and grants must be available to cover reasonable living costs during attendance at the University. Bursaries and grants are necessary because lack of money presents, for many, a serious impediment to their tertiary study intentions. And, any increases in the cap on fees must be carefully phased through time, with the ultimate objectives of recognising the different institutional costs of quality in a widely differentiated sector, and of sharpening institutional competition. Finally, we are committed as a University to doing all we can to help raise still further student aspiration and awareness about applying to Oxford, in addition to ensuring our selection processes are fair and equitable. So, our responsibility, it seems to me, is to ensure that this University adheres to these principles both in its advocacy and its practice.

On that score the new *Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions* will be in operation for the forthcoming admissions round. We are also working better to coordinate and assess the effectiveness of the numerous schools' outreach programmes that are run by the University and the colleges. One of those, the Sutton Trust Summer Schools, celebrated its tenth anniversary this year. Its success in unlocking more and better educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds has been singularly impressive and is ample justification of the vision and determination of its founder and major benefactor, Sir Peter Lampl, an old member of Corpus Christi. With Sir Peter's generous support, we intend to strengthen and expand our relationship with the Trust over the period ahead.

Within the University, we have invested over the past two years in building our development and fundraising expertise. We have also set in place the *Principles and Protocols for Fundraising*. We have revised the governance of our investments and, as I mentioned at the beginning of this address, established an Investment Office. Our objective has been to position the University for sustainable higher levels of both fundraising and investment returns. Only by mastering our own destiny in these ways can we expect

progressively to be better placed to fund more adequately our colleagues' aspirations and genius.

In that regard, as I have already foreshadowed, we are planning to launch in the spring a major development Campaign for Oxford. In preparation, the divisions, the academic services and the colleges have been settling their academic priorities. While some of these, for example the libraries, will inevitably involve the funding of capital projects, the principal focus of the Campaign will be on the funding of existing and some new academic positions and centres, as well as scholarships and bursaries for postgraduate and undergraduate study. We have a unique, special and eminent University. Our collegiate base and our undergraduate experience are exceptional. Our academic colleagues' research and scholarship are internationally esteemed, as are our graduate programmes. Each of us is a trustee here for but a short interlude in the enduring life of this great institution. The forthcoming campaign will help us to leave it stronger still for the generations who will follow us.

Comings, Goings and Remembrances

Professor Burnett FRS, who had been Head of the MPLS Division for two years, was nominated as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, a position he assumed at the beginning of this new academic year—he thus becomes the third of my colleagues in twelve months to become *VC-afflicted*. A distinguished physicist, he had enjoyed a long period at Oxford, where he had been Chair of Physics prior to becoming Head of Division. His contributions to his college, St John's, to his department, and to the University were substantial and wise. On Congregation's behalf I thank him for those contributions and wish him every success with his new responsibilities. Professor Halliday FRS, Professor of Geochemistry, succeeds him as Divisional Head.

Mr Hay, who had temporarily retreated from his retirement to return to duty as Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources, generously agreed to retain responsibility for the development of the JRAM following the permanent appointment of Professor Monaco as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources. We are indebted to Mr Hay, whose expertise is widely respected. Professor Monaco was most recently Director of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics.

Also within the administration, three new appointees are making their mark. Mr Boning, formerly Finance Director of OUP, was appointed Director of Business Services, while Dr Felicity Cook joined as Director of Equal opportunities from a similar role at the University of Cambridge. Dr Bell took up the new post of International Director early in 2007. She came from McKinsey, where she was a Partner. Our new Chief Investment Officer, Ms Robertson, joined from the Wellcome Trust. Ms Quinn, whose administrative skill guided Research Services through its substantial growth in recent years, accepted a research leadership position at the Wellcome Trust. This University is the largest of that Trust's research providers, so her organisational talents had not passed unnoticed. As we thank Ms Quinn, we welcome as her successor as Director of Research Services Dr Swafford, who has transferred from a similar position at the University of Melbourne.

The past year has seen also the retirement of Dr Carr as Director of Oxford University Library Services and Bodley's Librarian. The University is most grateful to him for his energetic service—over a period of ten years—in reshaping its library system. He is succeeded by Dr Thomas, who is both the first woman and the first non-British national to fill the post. We are delighted to welcome her from Cornell University.

I would be remiss were I not to note the University's appreciation of Dr Tim Cook, who has retired from the leadership of Isis Innovation after ten years' distinguished service. During that period the Isis organisation grew more than ten-fold from a struggling minnow to a national and international model of technology transfer excellence. We are indebted to Dr Cook for his vision, energy and expertise.

The Oxford community was saddened early in 2007 by the premature death of the President of Wolfson College, Sir Gareth Roberts FRS, F.R.Eng. He leaves lasting legacies at Wolfson and at the University of Sheffield where he was Vice-Chancellor before coming to Wolfson. His achievements in engineering research resulted in successful commercialisation, while his contributions to educational and research policy in the UK and abroad, especially relating to research-funding frameworks and quality assurance, are of enduring benefit to the sector.

Dr Geoffrey Thomas has led the University's Department for Continuing Education since 1986 and is the Founding President of Kellogg College. With vision and customary good humour, he has overseen an increase in the department's students from 7,000 to 17,000, with the establishment of part-time master's and doctoral degrees, part-time foundation courses and other undergraduate qualifications. Kellogg College, Oxford's only college for part-time matriculated students, now boasts some eighty fellows and 350 graduate students. His service and selfless commitment to both, and to the University, have been memorable. He retires in December and I should like now to express to him, on behalf of Congregation, gratitude and warm good wishes for his future health and happiness.

Lady English, who led St Hilda's College through the difficult deliberations resulting in the decision in 2006 to become mixed, thereby joining all other colleges in that status, has retired as Principal. Her successor, whom we welcome to the University after a career in the corporate world, most recently as a company director and consultant, is Ms Sheila Forbes, who is an old member of the college. We also welcome Professor Margaret MacMillan, who returns as Warden of St Antony's, the college where she took her D.Phil. Professor MacMillan was most recently Provost of Trinity College at the University of Toronto. We are grateful to Professor Roger Goodman, who served as Acting Warden throughout the last year. He is going back to his scholarly pursuits, as is The Revd Professor Paul Fiddes, who retired as Principal of Regent's Park College. We wish them both well, as we do The Revd Dr Robert Ellis, who is the new Principal of Regent's Park. Father Leo Chamberlain has retired as Master of St Benet's, and returns to Ampleforth Abbey; he has been succeeded by Father Felix Stephens. Dr Nicholas Richardson has retired as Warden of Greyfriars, a position he had filled following his earlier retirement as a fellow of Merton College. In the interim, Brother Mark Elvins has been appointed Acting Warden there.

This year has seen the retirement of many distinguished colleagues who have contributed to the University's intellectual life over the years: Professor P.W. Atkins, Professor of Chemistry; Professor C.J. Bliss, Nuffield Professor of International Economics; Dr S.J. Judge, Reader in Physiology; Professor G.C.K. Peach, Professor of Social Geography; and Professor R. Strohm, Heather Professor of Music.

Other colleagues, whose service to the University deserves recognition, have retired from academic or research posts: Dr J.M. Boyce, Mrs P.J. Cook-Mozaffari, Mrs J.M. Day, Dr W.A. Day, Dr J.W. Hodby, Mr E.L. Hussey, Mr J.N. Jacobs, Ms A.S. Kennedy, Dr B.A. Kennedy, Dr E.A. Linton, Dr G.L. Luke, Dr M. Lunn, Mr B. Matthews, Mr G. Mazzarino, Mr C.H. Roberts, Dr J.M. Tiffany, Dr J.P.G. Urban and Dr A. Waswo.

I should also mention those colleagues who have retired from important administrative, library or service posts in the University: Mr R. Bowler, Mr P.S. Bullock, Mr D.R. Emeny, Mr A.R. Gay, Mr S. Holt, Mr P.J. Hirst, Mr D.I. Manning, Ms H.T. Marks, Ms P. Pinsent, Mr L.R. Rice, Mr E.W. Taylor, Mrs M. Taylor, and Dr S. Withers.

This year, the University community has lost valued colleagues whose early deaths have been a source of great sadness: Dr G.M.F. Cameron, CUF Lecturer in Economics; Dr C.A. Cull, Senior Statistician at the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism; Mr M.P. Davis, Managing Director of Oxford Ltd; Dr P.S. Derow, CUF Lecturer in Ancient History; Dr B.M. Henry, Research Assis-

tant at the Department of Materials; Dr H. La Rue, University Lecturer and Curator of the Bate Collection; and Dr D.R. Lowne, Research Assistant at the Department of Engineering Science.

Finally, we pause to remember the contributions of those colleagues who have died in retirement over the past year: Mr P.G. Adlard, The Revd Professor J. Barr, Professor B. Bleaney, Dr P.T.V.M. Chaplais, Mr E.H. Cordeaux, Mr P.M. Fraser, Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, Miss C.A. Hunter, Mr H. Jefferies, Dr B.E. Juel-Jensen, Mr J.W. Keeping, Miss B. Kemp, Mrs S.F. McCabe, The Revd Professor J. McManners, The Revd Professor J. Macquarrie, Mr R.M.P. Malpas, Dr J.C. Marshall, Professor R.M.P. Needham, Professor J.M. Newsom-Davies, Professor A.D. Nuttall, Dr J. Owen, Sir Philip Randle, Mr P.D. Rogers, Dr H. Sixsmith, Mr K.W. Stone, Mr A. Warne, Miss M. Weedon, Mr D.A. Willett and Professor L. Woods.

Over the past three years much *has* changed in this academy: new academic programmes, significant growth in research and scholarship activity, considerable development of the estate, and major changes in the organisation, processes and culture of the administration of the University. I thank all colleagues for their individual and collective contributions to enhancing the life of this spirited, confident and creative academy. Finally, I take pleasure in wishing all members of the University's community a successful and enjoyable academic year ahead.

JOHN HOOD
2 October 2007