



Murray Edwards  
College  
University of Cambridge

## Strategic Direction 2018 – 2022

[www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk](http://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk)



ALL IMAGES: MARTIN BOND

## Murray Edwards College is a college for women in the University of Cambridge.

From its beginning in 1954, it has always been modern, innovative, open to new ideas and open to outstanding women from all backgrounds and from across the world. Our graduate community, for example, is currently 70% international students. The distinctiveness of the College comes from our special focus on young women's learning and preparation for life and work. Of course, as students of the University, our women also work alongside men in lectures, seminars and practicals in their subject departments.

The College resolved to remain a college for women in 2013. Since then, the College has reinforced its commitment, through the supervision system and through its special Gateway Programme, to work to ensure that students gain the study skills and the confidence to achieve their highest aspirations. We have led the way in exploring in Cambridge how implicit bias in teaching and assessment can impact on women students across the University. In the College, we have also given specific attention to the STEM subjects, where women are significantly under-represented, and, through joint appointments in Maths, Physics and Engineering, we have been able to recruit superb role models.

What is also special about the College is its attention to the life and career aspirations of our young women. We are now offering a range of activities to help them to assess career options and start their careers well – through preparation of CVs and mock interviews to programmes on the transition into the workplace.

We have been developing our approach and our programmes in the years of our previous Strategic Direction. During that time, we have learned a great deal about what works and what does not through student responses and feedback.

The new Strategic Direction for 2018 to 2022 gives the next steps on our journey, which is aimed at making sure our outstanding young women can achieve their very best while at Cambridge and set out on their future lives and work ready for the challenges and opportunities.



**The College is incorporated and shall be conducted with the following objectives (inter alia) to advance education, learning and research in the University.**

COLLEGE CHARTER, JUNE 1972

## Our main aims for the next 5 years are:

# 1

To attract the most academically outstanding young women from all backgrounds to study at Murray Edwards College.

- a)** At undergraduate level in the UK, we will deliver the refreshed outreach and recruitment strategy that makes our uniqueness and appeal clear to prospective students, parents and teachers. We have set a target of direct applicants of 300 per year by 2021.
- b)** We aim to maintain the proportion of undergraduate EU and international students at the current level (about 15%). This requires us to maintain visibility and active contact in a variety of countries.
- c)** We will review and develop our existing initiatives such as *Pathways* and *She Talks Science*, and develop new College programmes aimed particularly at widening participation, e.g. engagement in the proposed University Foundation course, Project Access, etc.
- d)** We will continue to engage and collaborate with the University and other Colleges on recruitment of students and outreach to students from all backgrounds. Our background of having a high number of students from state schools, including some of the more disadvantaged areas, has demonstrated our commitment to investing in these students.

# 2

To be a centre of educational excellence where every student is able to achieve their full potential.

- a)** We will continue to develop and deliver programmes which will enable students to begin and complete their studies at Cambridge with confidence, high aspirations, and good study skills. Programmes will include *Flying Start*, and we will explore how to extend this virtually (for example, pre-term webinars), as well as continuing to develop the study skills sections of *Gateway*, for both graduate and undergraduate students.
- b)** We will continue to ensure that students have excellent research-led teaching that is also geared to their learning through the supervision system. We will continue to enhance the Fellowship, especially through links with Departments, whether specific joint posts, particularly in the STEM subjects, or more broadly, ensuring our teaching officers are well-linked to Departments.
- c)** We will continue to build our understanding of the effects of gender on teaching, learning and assessment. We will continue to disseminate research on implicit bias, stereotype threat and other relevant issues to our own Directors of Studies and supervisors, and promote the material produced by the wider University. Within College, we will share good practice and raise issues proactively within the University.



# 3

To support and encourage undergraduate and graduate students to develop the confidence and tools to achieve their individual aspirations.

- a)** We will maintain and develop the *Gateway Programme* to allow young women to know about and assess their career options, and to support them in preparation (e.g. CVs, mock interviews, etc.)
- b)** We will help students to be ready for the work environment through a new programme for Finalists.

# 4

To continue to build a stimulating intellectual and research environment for Fellows, students and staff as well as a warm, open culture that allows everyone to achieve their best.

- a)** We will encourage staff and Fellows to understand our core values and to work collaboratively to deliver them.
- b)** We will continue to support Fellows in their research and career development, and by continuing to review Fellows' benefits and responsibilities.
- c)** We will continue to review the composition of the Fellowship, bearing in mind not only teaching needs but also the need for diversity in terms of seniority and subject spread.
- d)** We will continue to develop the graduate and postdoctoral groups in themselves, and as part of the whole academic community, e.g. through the graduate seminars, the postdoctoral programme, etc. We will seek to appoint a greater number of Arts and Humanities postdoctoral Fellows.
- e)** We will continue to engage with staff on the issues they raise and support managers in working with their teams (e.g. through management training).

# 5

To continue to develop our alumnae as a mutually supportive community of women with an active and lively connection to the College.

**a)** We will take steps to understand the life journeys of our alumnae and (within resource limits) develop a programme which responds to them at different times in their lives, e.g. the alumnae mentoring programme, professional development events in London and elsewhere.

**b)** We will continue to encourage alumnae to contribute to the development of students, as appropriate, in the College through, for example, taking part in the *Gateway Programme* and work shadowing. We will engage alumnae as volunteers in building the alumnae community and, where willing, in fundraising.

# 6

To make Murray Edwards College better known and understood.

**a)** We will take every opportunity to make Murray Edwards College better known, e.g. from specific initiatives and from Fellows' academic work.

**b)** We will develop a communications strategy specifically geared to prospective students and those who may influence their decision to apply, their parents and teachers (as part of 1a on page 4).

**c)** We will continue to position the College as a place where people have a positive, constructive approach to the position and status of women, including both men and women in the debate. In part, this is through our research programme on *Collaborating with Men*.

**d)** We will maintain the lecture series *Just on the Edge*, following the highly successful series seeking to explore capitalism and its role in society, and develop a range of other events.

**e)** We will continue to develop the New Hall Art Collection, including international programmes and acquisitions. We wish to establish a permanent curator role; a part of whose remit is to make the Collection better known and, where possible, integrated into College life.

# 7

To secure the College's financial ability to deliver these objectives.

**a)** We will work to the College's endowments and corporate capital to support its mission of learning, education and research and to ensure its independent existence in perpetuity.

**b)** We will continue to raise funds for:

- The refurbishment of the two wings of Orchard Court, which provide undergraduate accommodation;
- Funding for graduate students;
- Funding for Fellowships.

**c)** We will also be seeking funds for a number of specific projects, including:

- Programmes to widen participation.
- Developing and delivering the Gateway Programme and the mentoring programme for young alumnae.
- A permanent curator for the New Hall Art Collection.
- Funding for the *Collaborating with Men* research and the consequent active research programme in partner companies and organisations.

**d)** We will maintain and develop our conference activity to generate income that can be used to sustain the purposes of the College.

**e)** In the long term, we will seek to build our endowment, including through legacies.



**For a number of these priorities, specific plans are in place or being developed so that we can assess progress during the life of this Strategic Direction.**



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