



Dear Hertford Community,

I wanted to write to all of you on the first day of my principalship.

As I've said in [this arrival video](#), Hertford is part of my DNA: I care deeply about the college's history, values and potential. Thanks to you all, Hertford is a hub for extraordinary research; a pioneer of accessible, inclusive education and social mobility; a thriving, open, friendly community; and a frontline for a better, fairer society.

Over almost a decade, much of this is thanks to Will Hutton's gusto. As I'm regularly reminded, a Principal is there to serve the college, and Hertford has been admirably served. I know that Will will remain a great source of camaraderie and advice.

This year will see our largest ever intake of students, with our highest ever proportion of state school undergraduates. But their experience will be unlike that of any previous cohort. So I also want to thank everyone at the college who has worked flat out to get Hertford through this most tumultuous year, and to prepare us - against such a challenging backdrop - for the term ahead. We don't yet know how it will feel to come together again after this period of separation and uncertainty: we will need space, trust and time. I will of course be in touch separately with our students, staff and Fellows about how we navigate the immediate challenges of building a learning environment that can prove stronger than the virus.

This will be a collective effort, including our 'fourth common room': the alumni, who will soon number 10,000. So I want to hear ideas and support from across the community as we develop a vision for the college in 2030. There are tough choices ahead: we will need to preserve the best of what we have inherited; while renewing a college that can take the next leaps forward in excellence, access and influence. We also face the greatest capital expenditure since our foundation, including a new library and graduate development. In my next update, I will offer more on how you can contribute your views.

As a former Ambassador, I believe that education is upstream diplomacy: where learning flourishes, we find better ways to live together. Having worked on the future of learning, I also believe that we must do more to develop not just

knowledge, but skills and values. I will be asking our students to be kind, curious and brave.

We are in a fragile moment: for higher education, the UK and the world. That isn't going to change. There isn't a point coming where we can all breathe a sigh of relief and go back to how it was. Polarisation, distrust and inequality are threatening much of what we took for granted. Many around us believe that the answer to the 21st century is to build bigger walls.

But we are about bridges at Hertford. Ours is a symbol of what we stand for as a community.

I am very much looking forward to getting to know you all. Please stay in close touch as we work together to nurture this extraordinary college.

See you soon, and best wishes,

Tom



[Update Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)