

Dear Hertford Community,

I hope you don't mind hearing from me so soon after my last message; my plan is to update you briefly every month or so on what is happening at Hertford.

Short version: we are gearing up for a term like no other. Our largest ever student body will be among thousands arriving in Oxford from next week. Many overseas students are already here, quarantining. We are determined to deliver exceptional teaching, learning and research within the constraints and uncertainties of the pandemic. You can see my latest video message on our plans [here](#). I'm so proud of the agility, patience and professionalism everyone here is showing.



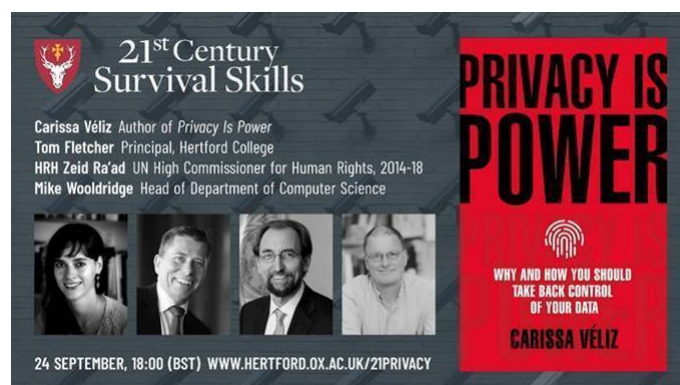
Let's not kid ourselves. Apart from Simpkin bossing the Quad, Hertford won't be the same. But we are also trying to retain as much as possible of the Hertford experience (teaching/learning, essential catering, the library and lodge etc) within inevitably fluid government guidelines. We are being creative about preserving the rituals and rites of passage, the moments of serendipity and spontaneity, that we love: a marquee is going up in OB Quad in an effort to help

this.

Much teaching and outreach is of course moving online, powered by a WiFi upgrade and new kit for students. We reached more than 1,700 potential new students with our [Virtual Open Days](#) over the summer. A Virtual Principal channel on Slack goes live next week: let me know if you'd like to join. I also enjoyed our first ever online gaudy, for the 1989-91 cohort. I was alone in the hall and the only alcohol was in my hand sanitiser, but it was a reminder of the connection we share.



Enough on Covid19. Some other highlights for you. I want to continue Will's excellent tradition of hosting lively discussion, and make Hertford expertise more accessible. Do join us on Thursday for the first of a new series of conversations on [21st Century Survival Skills](#). We are starting with our newest Fellow, philosopher Dr Carissa Véliz, whose new book "Privacy Is Power" is out this week. On [Thursday](#), she'll be helping us understand how to take back control of our data, alongside our AI guru, [Mike Wooldridge](#), and the last UN human rights chief, Zeid Ra'ad. Our new Academic Visitor, alum (and the outgoing head of the National Cyber Security Centre) Ciaran Martin, is a further boost to our growing expertise on technology.



Also coming up, alum Fiona Bruce will be putting your questions to me in our [Meet the Principal](#) event on 30 September at 5pm. I'm sure everyone will be behind Jacqui Smith as she sets out to be the second Hertford College winner of Strictly. We're launching new thematic and regional alumni outreach programmes – more to follow – and a telethon is well underway: I'm not going

to use these bulletins to nag you about donating, but you can help us move up the Oxford table of alumni giving [here](#) or by contacting the excellent team in the [Development Office](#).

Final update: I mentioned in my first bulletin that we are getting a discussion underway on Hertford 2030. I want us to remain in the vanguard of enlightened, inclusive, diverse learning. To do so we must continue with vigour to expand opportunity; liberate the faculty to teach and research to their great potential; and deliver an ambitious overhaul of our estate. 2020 has been a reminder that we will need more than ever to demonstrate a contribution that benefits society more widely. So we're seeking bold and creative ideas. What does Hertford have that is most valuable, rare, inimitable? Which measures of progress matter most to you, and how do we achieve them? Please help us identify the next pioneering leap forward in access and social mobility. The best ideas get an invite to a proper Hertford dinner once we open up again.

I'm struck in so many conversations by the way that people who have been part of this college talk about how "Hertford made me." I certainly feel that. With your help, our current and future students will say that too. We won't let the virus, or the restrictions that protect us from it, define this time. This will be an extraordinary year. But Hertford is an extraordinary community.

Please stay in touch,

Tom

