

Dear New College JCR Freshers of 2021,

As JCR President for this year, I am delighted to welcome you, on behalf of the Junior Common Room, to New College!

Our JCR is among the largest in Oxford, with students coming from a variety of backgrounds to form a vibrant and inclusive community. We pride ourselves on the fact our community fits no one stereotype, rather it is a home for every kind of person. Our College motto is 'Manners Makyth Man', a radical motto at the time it was created (1379) because it symbolised the idea that you are the sum of your actions and not your background, which I've found to be true in my time here. I hope you will find New College to be a welcoming and open-minded place. Whoever you may be, I want you to know that there is a place for you here at New College, and I, alongside the JCR Committee, am very much looking forward to your arrival!

Although my experience at New College has been different than usual because of the pandemic, the community we have has made my time here incredible nonetheless. The 8 weeks of each term always seem to fly by in a blur of events, academic work and time spent with friends. By the time the holiday rolls around you will no doubt feel exhausted, and almost definitely sad to leave Oxford - the beautiful, exciting place that makes all your hard work worth it. To me, this epitomises what it is to be an Oxford student - it's tiring, but it's amazing.

While you are here, it is likely that the JCR will form the basis of your social life. Our Committee works hard to enhance your College experience and put on a social calendar for you to enjoy. As well as maintaining the JCR (the physical common room), we organise a variety of activities throughout the year, from a Christmas Panto and open mic night, to Arts Week and bops. Making sure people are happy in and out of studying is extremely important to us, and the welfare of our students is a top priority in College. We liaise with the University Counselling Service and provide JCR officers who are peer-support trained (both generally and for specific minority groups), so that you always have someone you can turn to in and out of College. In addition, College provides many welfare resources, especially through the Cox and Salvesen Fellows, who live onsite with the remit of being there for our JCR members' welfare.

You will be kept up-to-date on the events and happenings of the JCR through my weekly President's Post and emails from specific JCR Officers. Much of the information about what is going on in the JCR is shared on a more informal basis on the JCR Facebook Page, which you are welcome to join prior to your arrival. Feel free to also join our JCR Welfare Facebook page, where our Welfare Reps will be sharing lots of well-being-related resources. We have put together the JCR Freshers' Guide as a resource to help guide you through your pre-Uni preparation, Freshers' Week, and the first weeks of Uni. You are also more than welcome to contact any member of the JCR (listed in the Freshers' Guide) with questions you may have.

I'm sure that some of you will be feeling slightly apprehensive about how your University experience will be affected by the pandemic. However, I'd like to reassure you that both the College and the JCR Committee are working hard to ensure that next term is as enjoyable as possible. Whilst it is true that we may need to adapt our behaviour depending on Government guidelines, we have tons of exciting things planned to welcome you here. Coming to Uni is not only an opportunity for you to explore your academic interests, but also a chance to develop your own identity, and to meet new people who might change the way you look at the world. In my first week, I felt a strange mix of excitement at my new-found independence, and anxiousness not to 'mess things up'. If there is one thing I would say to my past self, it's that perspective is your best friend when joining. Once I realised everyone else was in the same boat and just trying to figure out University for the first time, everything became a lot easier (and more fun). I found a home and a family in this community, and I am confident that you will too.

Enjoy the rest of your summer, and feel free to get in touch via Facebook or email if you have any questions for the JCR. We can't wait to meet you at the start of term in October!

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JCR President 2021-22
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