

Saxton Bampfylde



St Catherine's
College Oxford



Appointment brief

Appointment of Master

April 2024

Reference: FBNZA

Introduction

St Catherine's College is seeking to elect a new Master, in succession to Professor Kersti Bórfars. The College's Governing Body wishes to make an appointment in the early summer of this year, with the expectation that the successful candidate will take up post as soon as practicable during the academic year 2024-25.

About St Catherine's

Founded in 1962, St Catherine's College is the newest of the University of Oxford's 36 colleges that admit both undergraduate and graduate students. In recent years it has also grown to become its largest, with approximately 500 undergraduates and more than 400 graduate members. St Catherine's prides itself on its record of academic excellence, history of inclusion, as well as its modern, outward-looking atmosphere. The college's motto is 'Nova et Vetera', the new and the old.



History

St Catherine's traces its roots to 1868, when a 'Delegacy for Unattached Students' was formed, in response to the recommendation of a Royal Commission, that the university be made open to a 'larger and poorer' part of the population. The Delegacy enabled students to be members of the University without being a member of a college; this enabled them to avoid the prohibitive costs of an Oxford college.

In 1884 the Delegacy was renamed as the Delegacy for Non-Collegiate Students, but lacked an identifying name for social and sporting purposes. In response to this, the Boat Club and other groups began using the name St Catharine's Club, taking the name from a hall used for club meetings. The spelling later changed to St Catherine's, and in 1931 the Delegacy was officially renamed the St Catherine's Society.

In 1952, historian Professor Alan Bullock became Censor of St Catherine's Society, bringing with him strong leadership and a vision for further development. In 1956, with the University considering plans for expansion, Bullock obtained approval to transform St Catherine's Society into a fully residential college.

In 1960 almost eight acres of Holywell Great Meadow were acquired from Merton College and the College's chosen architect, Arne Jacobsen, began to implement his design for the new college. In 1962 St Catherine's opened its doors with Alan Bullock as its first Master; 1964 saw the ceremonial opening of the College. Ten years later in 1974, staying true to its forward-looking ethos, it became one of the first colleges to admit women; the College remains true to this ethos today.



Architecture

The College is situated at the end of Manor Road, near the city centre, but with the feel of a campus that is removed from the hustle and bustle of more centrally located colleges. Widely considered to be Arne Jacobsen's masterpiece, it was among the first five post-war buildings to be Grade I listed. Jacobsen's designs marry an unflinching modernism with many of the hallmarks of a traditional Oxford college.

The site was extended in the 1980s by Jacobsen's assistant, Knud Holscher, and again in 1995 and 2003 by Stephen Hodder in two distinct phases of work. The College then built further student accommodation and a new Graduate Centre in 2019, completing the development of the Manor Road site.

In September 2023, the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the roof of the Jacobsen buildings led to extensive access restrictions. The College has installed several interim structures to ensure that life continues as normally as possible for students, staff, and academics. The remediation plan is currently getting under way and will be the main focus for the College over the next 12 months, including a major capital campaign in the Autumn to help cover the necessary financial commitments.



College Finances

The College's endowment has been carefully managed over many years, to reach its present value of around £100M. The College has developed investment strategies that are aligned with its position as a recently founded college, to build a well-diversified portfolio of investments.

The College's annual operating budget, excluding investments and development activity, is circa £13.5M, with the College aiming to balance income and expenditure. Academic fees make up about half of this income, including those from a thriving programme of visiting undergraduate students from leading overseas institutions. Student accommodation generates about 30% of this income and the remaining 20% comes from our successful conference business. Set against this income, the costs of operating and maintaining the College's buildings are close to 35% of expenditure, while teaching, accommodation, and catering make up close to 50%; administration accounts for the remaining expenditure. Fundraising and development is an area that the College would like to develop more significantly, to increase the financial resilience of the College, with an aspiration to move towards a sustainable figure of at least £3.5m per annum.

Dealing with RAAC has created major operational and financial pressures; having restored the College's operational activities towards a break-even position following the Covid-19 pandemic, RAAC presents an even greater challenge. Expenditure has increased significantly due to the necessary remediation of student accommodation rooms, the installation of interim facilities to replace key operational buildings that are now inaccessible, alongside the detailed planning and design for the proposed remediation of the roof structures. Income is reduced due to lost conference business. It will be a priority for the new Master to oversee the return of operations to financial sustainability, and most importantly to lead on a major fundraising campaign to raise capital for the proposed roof remediation scheme.



Fellowship

The College's position as a centre of excellence in learning and research is built around the activities of its Fellows. There are currently 65 Fellows at St Catherine's, in addition to 34 Emeritus Fellows and 30 Honorary Fellows. The Fellows cover more than 20 subject areas and include more than 10 current University Chairs. Nine Fellows of the College are Fellows of the Royal Society, Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering or Fellows of the British Academy. The College has a vibrant programme of Visiting Fellows, which brings distinguished scholars from around the world into the College community for periods of up to a year. It also hosts the Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre, for which the current incumbent is Sir Gregory Doran, with other recent holders including Adjoa Andoh, Deborah Warner CBE, and Sir Tom Stoppard.

Students

The College admits students in a wide array of subjects, divided equally between arts and sciences, graduates and undergraduates. St Catherine's engages in a range of outreach activities, hosting school visits, academic taster days and running the Catalyst Programme. It is also an active participant in the University's bridging programme, Opportunity Oxford, designed to support offer-holders from underrepresented backgrounds.

St Catherine's prides itself on academic excellence; it was placed sixth in the most recent Norrington Table results. In addition, the large student body plays a central role in the sporting, artistic and cultural life of the University. The College hosts over 50 clubs and societies, covering everything from football to life drawing, to juggling.

Staff

The College is supported by more than 200 staff who form a much-valued pillar of its community. They work in teams responsible for the day-to-day management of administration, catering, operations, conferences, IT, housekeeping, maintenance, the porters' lodge and the gardens; many of these are widely viewed as centres of excellence: the College is well known for its exceptional food, its outstanding conference provision, and its welcoming staff. High levels of motivation and morale have been particularly evident through recent challenges arising from RAAC.

Alumni

Having first admitted students a little over 60 years ago, St Catherine's is still in the process of building a full demographic across its alumni network. Nevertheless, the College already has the largest alumni database of any Oxford college. There are particularly active alumni groups in North America and the Far East. Alumni include Nobel Prize-winners Sir John Cornforth, Sir John Vane and Sir John E. Walker. Other notable alumni include J. Paul Getty, Benazir Bhutto, Jeanette

Winterson CBE, and Lord Peter Mandelson, in addition to three recent Olympic gold and silver medallists in rowing: Sir Matthew Pinsent, Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE, and Colin Smith.

Governance

The College is a self-governing institution and a registered charity. The Master chairs the Governing Body which consists of the Master and 52 Fellows and is responsible for the government of the College as a place of learning, education, and research. The Master is the Head of the College and works in partnership with the Governing Body to develop and maintain the intellectual ethos of the College and to ensure that its distinctive character and aspirations can flourish. Senior College Officers include: the Finance Bursar who is responsible for the College's finances and investments; the Home Bursar who oversees domestic operations; the Senior Tutor who oversees the academic activities of the College; the Dean who is responsible for matters of non-academic student discipline; and the Development Director whose team coordinates fundraising and alumni relations. The College Officers are supported in the day-to-day decision-making and the management of College affairs by a set of standing committees, which report to Governing Body.



The Role of the Master

St Catherine's College invites applications from individuals with distinguished records of achievement in their fields, including demonstration of energetic and effective leadership.

In making this appointment, the Governing Body wishes to identify a new Master who can take the College forward with both confidence and imagination, harnessing its strengths and aspirations so that Fellows, staff and students continue to flourish in all that they do.

Key Responsibilities

- The Master promotes the best interests of the College at all times, liaising closely with the Vice-Master, Dean, Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates, Tutor for Admissions, Academic Registrar, Finance Bursar, and Home Bursar to ensure the effective management of the College.
- The Master has oversight of the discipline of its student members, in collaboration with the Dean, and has a direct role in maintaining the welfare of the College community.
- In addition to being the Chair of the Governing Body, the Master is also a member of and Chair of the majority of College committees, including the College's standing committees: Nominating; Finance; Academic Policy; Fellowships; Visiting Fellowships; Student Liaison; Dispensations; Computing and AV; Safety; Garden; Library; and Statutes.
- The Master works alongside the Development Office to deliver the fundraising activities of the College, including meeting with current and prospective College donors, hosting alumni events, and securing major philanthropic gifts that are transformative to the College's finances.
- The Master line manages a small number of senior College employees, in addition to the staff in the Master's Office.
- The Master represents the College within the wider University, for example at meetings of the Conference of Colleges. The Master may also serve on other University bodies.
- The Master sets the tone for the core academic mission of the College, by promoting the pursuit of excellence in the work of students and Fellows, including protecting the right to academic freedom of speech.



Person specification

Experience

The successful candidate will have the following experience:

- A distinguished record of achievement in their field, including extensive experience of effective leadership and management of an institution of comparable scale and complexity.
- A track record of being the external or ambassadorial “face” of an organisation, having dealt with nuanced and complex issues.

Qualities

The successful candidate will have the following personal qualities:

- A clear commitment to the College’s core academic missions of teaching, learning, and research, and an understanding of their importance in wider society.
- Significant understanding of academia and Higher Education, as well as of the local, national and international context in which the College operates.
- The ability to oversee and shape the dependencies between the different aspects of the College’s business, covering the management of its financial assets, the operation and maintenance of its estate, and its core academic activities.
- An ability to lead large-scale strategic initiatives, balanced with an appropriate focus on the detail necessary for effective implementation.
- An outstanding capability to lead an urgent and ambitious programme of development and fundraising activities, by hosting events and building relationships with key donors, alumni, and friends of the College across the world, including the ability to influence and inspire philanthropy from major prospects.
- Charisma and presence, emotional intelligence, and an interest in people, combined with an ability to connect with individuals including Fellows, students, staff, alumni, donors, and people outside the College.
- A wholehearted and enthusiastic commitment to the role combined with the ability to foster an authentic sense of community and to be a visible and welcoming presence within the College.
- The attention to detail required to develop, maintain and champion an ambitious strategy appropriate for the College, alongside a talent for consultation and consensus, and an ability to manage relationships and diffuse tensions within the College with diplomacy and good humour.
- The ability to lead the Fellowship without expecting to direct it; the ability to chair effectively and encourage constructive debate. This should be manifest through a warm and inclusive leadership style with a commitment to reaching as much consensus as possible, while ensuring clear decisions are taken and implemented.
- The ability to address the complexity of issues that can arise from time to time during the operations of the College, including personnel issues, decisively and with sensitivity.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including an engaging and inspiring public speaking style.
- A sense of fairness and integrity, combined with a commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive culture where Fellows, staff, and students are actively supported to achieve their potential.

Terms of appointment

The College wishes to make an appointment for an initial period of five years. The Governing Body has the discretion to extend the appointment for periods not exceeding five years.

The salary will be competitive and will be reviewed annually. The position qualifies for membership of the Universities' Superannuation Scheme (USS), to which the employer currently contributes 14.5% of salary and the employee 6.1%.

The Master will have accommodation provided in the Master's Lodgings free of charge, and meals provided free of charge in College. The College will cover the reasonable costs of entertainment provided by the Master on College business.

The position is full-time, carrying an expectation of some work during evenings and weekends, in addition to work away from Oxford, for example on alumni engagement. The duties of the Master can only be met if they are resident in Oxford during the three eight-week periods of Full Term: specifically, the College Statutes require that the Master will be resident for at least 6 weeks in each academic term and for at least 24 weeks in each academic year.

Subject to the consent of Governing Body and the declaration and management of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest, the Master may undertake outside activities up to a limit of 30 days per year.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to St Catherine's College, Oxford on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **FBNZA**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is 1pm on **17th May 2024**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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