

2018/2019 WCSA President's end of tenure report

To:

Wolfson College Students Association (WCSA)

18th October 2019

Dear Wolfson (Full-Time and Part-Time Students)

It is with heart of fulfilment, joy and of course some mixed feelings that I send you all my end of tenure report as I sign-off with my team of WCSA committee who have helped navigate the affairs of WCSA in the past year. First, I would like to thank all my committee members, who have helped to run WCSA this year and to every student out there whose complaints, ideas, criticism and request had helped shape the community here at Wolfson. You all are the true heroes and heroines. I am humbled to have served you as your WCSA president for the 2018/2019 session. It has been a fulfilling year with so much learning experience for me and for other committee members.

Although the beginning of our administration as WCSA committee members wasn't as smooth but I am happy that we are signing out as strong as ever with all that we have done in our little ways to grow the Wolfson community and make it stronger than we met it. We shared love, passion, commitment, compassion, safe space, time, energy and a great sense of community spirit which I think is the greatest of all that we have done this past year. We also had our difficult moments but those conversation and engagement with the college, with you helped us address them and so I want to say a big thank you to everyone out there and for all your efforts.

WCSA exist to **represent** you, **support** you, **organise social events** for you and to **advocate** for you. Bearing this in mind, I would like to summarise and update you on some of the things we have done in these areas as WCSA committee in the past year in the following sub-headings (although the list is not entirely complete).

Social Events:

Upon your request, we diversified the number, nature, type and timing for all social activities in the college. This meant we had to do more day/weekend events, music related events, and had more events outside of Cambridge/College. We organised social events ranging from BOPs, Pub quiz, Movie nights, Games night, Get sporty events, Road trips, Informal drinks, Howler (standup comedy night), formal swaps, Jazz night, Afrobeat night, Halloween, Bridgemaids, Welfare tea and cakes, Karaoke nights, Picnics and BBQ, Paintballs, Japanese cultural arts, Theater trips, Wine tasting, Videogame tournaments, Yoga, Dance classes, and much more. Some of these events happened at Wolfson for the first time and we are happy to say they were very successful.

Support:

In the area of support, we also listened to your demands on what we believed would make your Cambridge experience more memorable and we provided you with facilities to improve those Wolfson experience you rarely find across Cambridge Colleges. Our support also extended to academics, WCSA-affiliated clubs and societies through arts and dialogue with the college whether on the use of library or study spaces as the case might be.

- a. **On Facility:** We were able to provide you with Gym facilities (Treadmills, Weights, Cross trainer etc), electronic drum kit, Karaoke machine, Deck chairs, Swing chair, Hammock, Massage chairs, Volleyball court, Tennis and automated tennis machine, Electric piano, TV set for the small TV room, Nintendo Mario Kart, inflatable-beds and sofas, among others.
- b. **Arts:** In arts, we organized the first ever student-led arts exhibition showcasing students research works and trips in front of the dining gallery all through the summer. We also invested in cultural

activities which saw us showcase some Japanese culture and art works to students as a way of showcasing the diversity at Wolfson and the need for tolerance of our cultural difference as well as understanding them.

- c. **Societies and Clubs:** We encouraged, supported and funded over 37 WCSA-affiliated societies and clubs and have since this term approved more societies to diversify the range of activities that students can choose to do.
- d. **Part-Time Students Experience:** On part-time students' experience, we promoted your inclusivity and enhancement of your Cambridge experience, for the first-time we organized series of out of term events running for 14 weeks from June to first week of October 2019 which helped to bring the part-time students together to interphase with full-time students who were here during summer. It was great to see how much we could do to improve part-time students experience for the short period they spend here. It wasn't that perfect, but I believe it is the beginning of better days for the part-time students. I believe WCSA will continue to do more to improve the part-time students' experience in the future.

Representation:

This is probably the most difficult part of the job given our diversity which is characterised by individual uniqueness, cultural differences, beliefs and what have you. We might not have made the best decisions that is satisfactory to every single student, we might have made bad calls consciously or unconsciously but I would like to firmly believe that we did all we could with the best of intentions which is to genuinely represent your interest, make you feel at home, be relatively more happy and be proud to call Wolfson your home. We might have offended some people in the course of our actions and discharge of our duties, and I would like to tender an unreserved apology if in any way we lived short of your expectations. However, I am happy to say that we did our best in students' representations and some of which are listed below;

- a. We pushed such agenda as requested by you and WCSA committee especially in the last WCSA survey across all college committees especially the Welfare, Health and Safety, House and Students' Events, Intellectual and Cultural Life, Building and Estate Committees as well as on the newly formed WCSA/College Liaison Group with the College Senior Management Team and the College Council. I want to especially thank members of these committees for their commitments in driving initiatives and supporting students' ideas on such matters regarding our overall students' experience. In the same way I wish to humbly request the college to continue to do more to make Wolfson even better than it is now.
- b. In a bid to create a vibrant student community at Wolfson, and get students interested in engaging with WCSA and the college in various aspects of our college life, I believed that the magic might be to welcome our new students in a vibrant way as WCSA might never have done before, and so we took initiatives to make things happen in a different way. I am happy to say that the 2019 Freshers' week was indeed a success, we made sure that the series of emails/chats sent out to new students from WCSA end were friendly, compassionate, and truly welcoming as we invited them to participate in the buddy programme with over 280 students signing up. This created a rich and friendly interface between current students and our freshers while helping them feel at home even before their arrival. WCSA committee alongside our amazing volunteers did the rest of the magic by welcoming our freshers with great smiles and laughter coupled with series of social events that graced the freshers' week 2019. The WCSA freshers' fair was another success during the freshers' week as WCSA was able to get interested students who have indicated interest to run for all WCSA committee positions. The immediate result of our efforts especially towards the new students is increased students' interest and engagement in various college/WCSA events compared to past years. I am optimistic that the vibrant community we have now will only become stronger.
- c. We also for the first time ever prepared a Freshers Guide with information to help get new students started smoothly. It wasn't easy doing all these but seeing the smiling faces all around college and

the impact of our commitment and time, I am proud to say that our efforts paid off. We have also made conscious efforts to have a dynamic electronic calendar (for android, windows and iOS devices and browsers) which students can download and save onto their calendar to stay up to date with WCSA events and more not to mention our revamped website.

- d. To help the next committee get started and reduce the chances of facing some of the difficulties we faced, we have created a central WCSA Handbook and a Moodle site with relevant information to make it easier for those who have put themselves forward to serve the community. We went ahead to also review our constitution which was approved first by WCSA committee and then WCSA Senior Treasurer, Jo Chefins, went through a referendum, passed and was finally approved by the College Council. A copy of the amended constitution with indications of the various amendments can be downloaded from WCSA website at <https://wcsa.wolfson.cam.ac.uk>. Some of the important reasons for the various amendment are summarised on the first page of the amended constitution. I also understand that some students felt we would have done better with the amendment but calling for an assembly. While I believe that such input would be meaningful, there are lay down processes on constitution amendment in WCSA constitution and we did even better than the constitution stipulated. The amendment wasn't done with input from WCSA committee alone, there was a wider consultation from non-committee student members as well and the process took 6 months before the referendum was called.

Advocacy

- a. On advocacy, we have engaged the college on those issues you raised, including diversifying the range and focus of the existing lecture series run by the college both in terms of issues been discussed, speakers, gender etc in such a way that portrays our diversity as a very internationalised Cambridge college.
- b. Our advocacy for your interest has seen us form a student-led Wolfson Entrepreneur Society (WES) which is focussed on helping Wolfson students with entrepreneurial ideas as well as giving a platform for students who are just curious. WES also exist to address your request to engage employers, CEOs, businesses etc with the aim of helping Wolfson students have access to employers and build partnership that will be useful for them upon graduation.
- c. We have advocated for issues relating to inclusiveness, diversity and our mutual respect for one another.
- d. We have also engaged the college with issues which our students had brought to us, be it political, social and welfare, some of which are still ongoing discussions which I believe the incoming WCSA executive will continue with.

I would love to on behalf of WCSA say a very big thank you to all the college staff who have supported WCSA in one way or the other, the Senior Management Team, the President and Vice-President of the college, the Senior Tutor, Bursar, Domestic Bursar, the entire Tutorial Office, the Porters, Housekeeping, our Gardeners, Conference and Events Office, and our Kitchen Staff. And to all the College Council members and fellows of the Governing Body who have contributed to the overall experience of Wolfson students this past year. Words cannot say how much we appreciate you all. And to you my fellow students, the reason that Wolfson exist is because of you and I say thank you all for being here and for your support. I hope we have affected your life positively this past year. The unspoken words carries the most weight.

Sincerely

David C. Izuogu

WCSA President (2018-2019)