

**Downing College Alumni Association –
President’s Report Summary for AGM 27 September 2025**

Widening the Association’s activities to add value to the Downing alumni community and to the college continues to be the priority.

A three year programme was put in place with year one focusing on fundamentals which underpin the Association’s activities more sustainably. Getting information out to Alumni on all that is going on continues to be a challenge. The successful merchandising working group continues and is reported on separately at the AGM.

2024/2025 focused on establishing a regular annual programme of events, improving communications and engaging recent graduates.

Subject to the Association executive committee’s discussion and approval 2025/2026 will build further on these objectives; develop the opportunity for Alumni to share expertise with undergraduates and improve information flow to the fellowship for greater awareness.

2026/2027 will focus on post graduate involvement with the advent of Anne Mitchener’s presidency. Anne was herself a Downing postgraduate.

The following summarises the Association’s programme over the past year:

Events and activities in 2024/25:

- Virtual Town Hall with the Master and hosted by Simon Wilson (1983) was held on 15th January 2025. Aim: update alumni who are unable to get back to college regularly on college and its plans. We had good [international] turnout. The event was recorded to maximise access. It will become an annual event.
- Downing Alumni Association London-get-together with a focus on recent graduates was held at the Natural Kitchen, EC4, on 12th March 2025. The event was well attended including by recent graduates and helped recruit new executive membership amongst recent grads. This will be repeated in 2026.
- Leadership panel discussion, held in College at the request of undergraduate sports captains the panel incorporated several alumni and was aimed at providing useful Alumni experience direct to a limited number of students in order to foster direct and open discussion. Feedback was enthusiastic and extremely positive and a programme of several similar panels will be run in 2025/2026.
- The Photographic Competition continues to be popular and winners are displayed alongside Hall during the Association dinner.
- The Association dinner continues to be well attended will take place in 2026 on 19 September.
- As part of the focus on info about the Association to the current College community, a Pancake Day event is planned for undergraduates and postgraduates on Tuesday, 17th February 2026

Organisational changes

In order to underpin and make sustainable the wider programme of activity the following changes have been implemented:

- an informal communications group has been established. This will be followed by a similar group looking at recent graduate engagement.
- Executive committee membership has been increased to provide room for post-graduate members reflecting the balance of post-graduate students in College.

By default the current presidency will run two years (subject to AGM approval – see agenda). This will be considered on a permanent basis going forward in order to provide more of a runway to implement and achieve goals.

Communications

Despite all best joint efforts and good cooperation, getting the word out continues to be challenging due to workload in the Development Office (all comms needs to go through the DO for data protection and simplicity reasons). We therefore aim to foster active enquiries, regular information flow integrated into events, LinkedIn and any other available channels to complement traditional comms at graduation, matriculation, newsletters etc.

A regular report will be provided twice annually to the governing body on Association activities in order to provide more visibility.

Social Media

The Association has a small and relatively inactive presence on social media and requires a lot of posting by volunteers to maintain so the Executive Committee decided to focus on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn alumni group

A private professional LinkedIn group was established from scratch and rapidly gained 1235 members. We can see active impressions/looks around events and so the key for the coming year is to encourage more active posting; member to member professional contact and its use as an information point for Alumni on relevant Association/ College activities.

Website and email addresses:

The association email address has been reinvigorated association@dow.cam.ac.uk, is regularly monitored, we will continue to build awareness and we hope to see increasing queries from Alumni which are directed to the relevant Association or College person.

The Association (jointly with the Development Office) is developing functionality and content on the existing pages on the two Downing College websites (College and Alumni& Development). Work in progress.

Looking ahead: What can Alumni do? Provide input, feedback and suggestions and above all participate actively in the life of Downing and the Association.

