

Poppy Blackshaw, Academic Affairs Exec

Hi everyone, I'm Poppy and I'm a second-year lawyer at Fitz! Although I haven't previously held a position on the JCR, I am running as a Cambridge student, who, more than most, recognises that although workloads are an inevitable part of uni life, maintaining a good work-life balance and mental health are far more important than any grade. This is why as Academic Affairs Exec I will take a welfare-based approach, working more closely with the Welfare team in order to emphasise the importance of "radical self-care" and sustainable studying - by focusing on these core messages throughout the year the hope is that that by exam term fellow students do not feel burnt out, pressurised or despondent. I believe that creating a relaxed, balanced environment is conducive to greater productivity, whilst it also helps to maintain one's passion for their subject which can so often be lost during exam term. Most importantly of all, as Academic Affairs Exec I aim to be a friendly face that anyone feels comfortable to approach with academic problems, no matter how big or small.

- **'Self-Care Saturday'**: We all know that Cambridge is known for having nothing going on on Saturday evenings - if elected I would encourage all students to take the evening off from work and throw themselves in to a different activity - it could be going for a run, going to the ADC with friend and in Week 5 especially could be a small, communal event organised by the JCR such as a movie night. In the 'Cambridge' bubble it may sometimes become hard to see the bigger picture, but taking a few hours out is important to recognising that there is more to life than work and to having a weekend (especially for those with Saturday lectures!).
- **Supervision feedback and academic survey forms**: It's all well and good having a DoS meeting at the beginning and end of term but this isn't helpful if students wish to discuss issues about their studies which arise in the midst of term - this is why I believe a supervision feedback form should be distributed every week at the end of the President's newsletter, which (optionally) students can fill out to allow for easier communication with your DoS without the need for a formal meeting. It also allows students to reflect on their own education on a more frequent basis than they would if filling out the uni-wide survey at the end of the year.
- **Let's have a debate on whether the library should be open in the early hours of the morning**: Whilst I appreciate that people work to different schedules, it cannot be ignored that sleep is also fundamental to academic success. This raises the question of whether the library needs to be open between 2-6am every day, especially when Cambridge terms are exhausting enough as it is. I believe it is important to explore this issue further in the coming year.
- **Exam and mindfulness workshop**: A fundamental part of Cambridge life is your academic life, and just like consent workshop are rightly a compulsory part of Freshers week, I believe a short half-hour mindfulness and exam technique workshop should also be - by giving students (particularly Freshers, who may not be used to the unique exam term environment) some quick and simple methods of alleviating stress at the start of the year, this should hold them in good stead for maintaining an important level of self-care throughout the year - especially when their first Week 5 blues hits.
- **Week 5 and Exam term drop in sessions**: Continuing in the tradition of last year's Exec, I would aim to extend these drop in sessions to Week 5 of every term - and not just hold them in Exam term! This again helps to emphasise to fellow students that there are people who have experienced similar stresses that they can turn to instead of their DoS or tutor.

- **May Week treat for the end of exams:** With the scholars dinner, Fitz celebrates those who achieved a First in their tripos exams - but why not come together as a community to celebrate the feat of reaching the end of exams before the results are even in? This would be a good way to celebrate the start of May Week and the summer as a whole.