

# UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



2024-25

# YEAR IN REVIEW



University College  
Durham University

# FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## **What a whirlwind of reflection, engagement, and transition our college community experienced in 2024-25.**



This has been another robust year for student engagement in leadership roles, college clubs and societies, the chapel community, paid roles as tour guides, librarians and bar staff and Castle volunteering in the local community.

The Castle SCR welcomed a dozen volunteers who formed a new steering group to lead and revitalise the common room with social and intellectual opportunities reinforcing the multi-disciplinary and intergenerational nature of our learning community. Our visiting fellows this year – Prof. Kateryna Maltseva from National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (IAS) and Prof Dominique Brancher from Yale University (IMEMS) – contributed tremendously to the life of the college and shared insights about their research interests.

Alumni continued to support and engage with the college this year, resulting in £1.4m raised and 114 students supported through scholarships, as well as access and opportunities grants. On a related note, after 6 years in development, the Fellows' Garden project was supported by more than 100 alumni donors, and we saw the first shovel go into the ground this March.

This year in review wouldn't be complete without acknowledging the challenging university context and the numerous changes to the staff team this year. Related to the financial realities throughout the HE sector, Durham University initiated a Voluntary Severance scheme this year which created tremendous tension and resulted in difficult impacts for colleges. Additionally, I spent much of the year on medical leave and/or working from home due to an accident, which led to our talented colleague, Dr Ellen Crabtree stepping up from Vice-Principal to Acting Principal. Amid the challenging university context, the unpredictability of my health, and the tragic death of two students this year, Ellen led the team and the college with wisdom, compassion, and grace. We will forever be grateful for her. We also said goodbye to a dear colleague, Assistant Principal Sukanya Miles-Watson, who left Durham for opportunities abroad after leading student support in two colleges for nearly 15 years. Fortunately, we were able to welcome a fabulous new Assistant Principal, Dr Natalie Craig, to the team this summer.

With pride for the year we had and enthusiasm for the year ahead,



**Professor Wendy Powers, PhD**

*Principal & Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor*

# OUR SHARED VISION & VALUES

Following multiple community conversations over the last two years with our staff, Common Rooms, and College Advisory Board, we have finalised and articulated our shared vision and values. This co-created statement grounds our learning community now and into the future.



**Inspired by our enduring heritage, University College aspires to be a welcoming and inclusive learning community dedicated to empowering individuals, foster a deep sense of belonging, and enabling all to flourish through service, scholarship, and shared purpose.**

**Kindness 🍷 Integrity 🍷 Collaboration 🍷 Progressive Spirit 🍷 Selfless Ambition**

## CASTLE BY NUMBERS 2024-25

**41**

Clubs and societies at  
Freshers' Fair

**46**

Community dining events

**20**

Research enquiries about  
Castle via our Curator

**18**

Guest Chapel Preachers

**339**

Number of alumni actively  
engaged with college

**£1.4m**

Donations / investments  
(including via the Trust)

**181**

Students supported by access,  
opportunity and ball funding

**74**

Countries of the world our  
students hail from

**953**

Years of Castle history

**287**

Alumni donors

**1,504**

Students in Castle 2024-25  
(1016 Undergrads)

**131**

Students in College  
Club/Society Leadership  
roles

# YEAR AT A GLANCE



Castle Orchestra and Choir Concert; Librarian Yuetong wins Student Leadership Employee of the Year; Blessing of the new Chapel doors; Act of Remembrance; repointing the steps; CAB members co-hosting the Durham Business Group Exec Lunch; Southmoor school visit; Castle Alumni Reunion; Remembering John Atkin MBE; Lunar New Year; Porters ready for the royal visit; Student Open Day Reps

# A PICTURE SAYS 1000 WORDS...



*Chapel Choir in Rome; victory for Castle X Hatfield Day; Castle bear in Space; Ele wins Volunteer Leader of the Year; Castle Charity Fashion Show; Primary School Concert; Ellen speaks at Graduation; Ariel and the candelabrum at College Feast; Fellows' Garden begins; June Ball; Castle Day; Wendy addresses new graduates and their families at Graduation.*

# OUR STAFF ARE PROUD OF:

Helping staff  
navigate  
University VS  
uncertainty

Helping students find  
fulfilling & developmental  
work opportunities

The operations and  
college staff team  
who made June Ball  
possible

The support and genuine  
care that the team shows  
towards each other

University recognition for  
Castle Community Action  
at the Student  
Volunteering Awards

Primary School  
Concert

The Matt Baker TV  
episode

Supporting students  
though difficult  
personal  
circumstances

Choir tour!

*Successful student  
museum and heritage  
placements at Castle*

The pride staff and students  
show when wanting to  
present the Castle in the  
best light to people far and  
wide



# PLANS FOR 2025-26

## 2025 – 2026 College Objectives and Key Priorities

### **Ingrain Sense of Belonging throughout the learning community**

- Flourishing identity-based student groups
- Impactful student led welfare efforts and reimagined Mentoring offer
- Connections with and development of student leaders
- Intentional student enrichment offers
- College-wide Sense of Belonging survey
- Increase SCR engagement and refine College Advisory Board

### **Illuminate and Strengthen Non Nobis Solum throughout College Culture & Operations**

- Strengthen focus on Castle Community Action and its contributions locally
- Revitalise MCR exec committee and PG community
- Successfully complete and reopen Fellows' Garden
- Engagement with university's Castle Strategy development
- Sharing and Caring for Castle – Security and Tidiness specifically

### **Connect, cultivate & collaborate with alumni networks**

- Socialise new Development Strategy and Alumni Communications Plan
- Refine and cultivate A & D Manager and Principal fundraising portfolios
- Successfully transition with new Society & Trust Treasurers
- Improve Society // Trust connectivity and efficiency
- 2027 Alumni Reunion – 40 years of Women at Castle
- Connecting current students with alumni (reunions, mentoring, etc)



*Matriculation, 2024*

# OUR **GRATEFUL THANKS** TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO LED, SUPPORTED AND GOT INVOLVED IN CASTLE THIS YEAR



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Castle JCR Frep Team, 2024*

We are grateful for the ongoing support, energy and commitment from

**University College students**

**Staff**

**Student leaders in both the JCR and MCR**

**SCR supporters and College Mentors**

**College Advisory Board members**

**Alumni, donors and supporters**

**Colleagues who partner with us from services, teams and departments  
across the University**