During 2011–2012 Birkbeck has dedicated extraordinary effort and resource to making sure that prospective part-time students understand the new fees and funding system, and we have continued to work with, and lobby, Government to ensure that these new arrangements appropriately accommodate part-time students. We have also expanded our full-time course offering, providing busy Londoners with flexible ways of fitting study into their lives, and over the next year we will continue to build the profile of part-time and flexible learning across the sector.

Development and alumni relations
This year we raised over £850,000 to provide student financial support and for other cross-College projects. Seventeen new members were welcomed to our Master’s Circle (for those giving £1,000–£4,999 annually). We continue to strive to find new, meaningful ways to engage donors at all levels, and will launch our 1823 Circle for supporters giving £5,000–£24,999 per year.

Our Alumni Fund had another record-breaking year, both in the number of supporters and the value of donations. This year 1,400 alumni donated a total of £152,850, proving that even in these difficult times our alumni still value our mission of making higher education accessible to all. For more information on giving to Birkbeck, see page 52.

In June the Lady Mayoress, Liz Wootton, hosted an event at the Mansion House in the City of London. Our guests heard not only from the Master and I but also from our alumni, who are better placed than anyone to inspire others about the impact that a Birkbeck education, and financial support from donors, can have on a student’s career, confidence and day-to-day life.

This year we launched ‘Get Talking’, an initiative to facilitate meetings between alumni and prospective students. Prospective students are able to ask questions and talk through concerns, and alumni offer advice from their own experience at the College. So far, 65 meetings have taken place, with positive feedback from both students and alumni.

College finances
Year on year, the total income of the College increased by £4,972,000 (5.6 per cent). Income from academic fees and support grants was up £8,640,000 (24 per cent), reflecting the healthy growth in our student numbers, and thanks to strong financial management the College ended the year with a surplus of £6,760,000. The College’s audited Financial Statements for 2011–2012 will be published in January 2013.

Green agenda
Greenthing, the environmental programme in which we are engaged with four other Bloomsbury Colleges, has gone from strength to strength. We have an active group of staff and student Green Champions and will offer training to staff over the next year.

Last year I reported that we had met phase 1 of the BS8555 Environmental Management System standard. This year we were assessed for phases 1–5 of the standard, and were found to have met them all, well ahead of our target date of July 2013.

We have been incorporating environmental objectives into College operations. Established improvement projects include efficient boilers and signing up to 100 per cent renewable electricity for all College buildings.

In recognition of this work, Birkbeck has been nominated for a Green Gown Award from the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges this year.

Outlook
The coming year will undoubtedly present new challenges, as we move into the first year of the new fees and loans system. However, Birkbeck’s strong leadership, effective management and strong financial position, together with our ability to develop new and innovative courses and study structures, gives me every confidence that the College will continue to flourish despite the challenging environment.

“Our Alumni Fund had another record-breaking year, both in the number of supporters and the value of donations.”