Access All Areas

ACCESS ALL AREAS

* Access is a political issue
* The underrepresentation of state-comp and BME students at elite universities reflects the education system’s failure to support disadvantaged and marginalised pupils
* Cambridge has a role to play and we need to pay attention to access in all areas

The Challenges

* There is underrepresentation of state-comp and BME students achieving the requirements to get into Cambridge and of those applying to Cambridge
* Disadvantaged and marginalised students have lower offer and acceptance rates than other students
* There is no guarantee students from disadvantaged backgrounds have their voice heard on student councils
* Poor social mobility contributes towards inequality. Access to elite universities is one factor causing a lack of social mobility in the UK

The Solutions

* Expand on initiatives like the foundation year, which help disadvantaged students catch-up and reach their full potential
* Push the university to consider contextual offers as they are common at many top universities
* Increase the resources available to help with interview preparation
* Expand post-offer support
* Push for Class Act representatives on JCR, MCR and CUSU councils and on campaign committees
* Make sure Cambridge follows the lead of other universities or is the leader in improving access to elite universities across the UK
* Recognise there are many more things Cambridge could be doing to better access

As PTE officer I will put pressure on the university to enact the above solutions – making sure issues of access are paid attention to all areas: before applying, during the application process, for offer holders and for students once they are here.

We are at a good time where Cambridge seems to be receptive to access and funding issues and we need to take advantage of this. The introduction of the foundation year, the Stormzy scholarship and the reform of the bursary system all show what can be done but we need to keep on pushing.