

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### *Transcription of an interview with individuals from the Blavatnik School of Government*

*Professor Ngaire Woods, Dean, Blavatnik School of Government*

We have our first ever cohort of Master of Public Policy students coming to the University.

*Leonard Blavatnik, Leading Benefactor*

The new School of Government, which I was so happy to endow, is a new chapter in my life, and I hope a new chapter in the University's life. Thank you very much.

*Ngaire Woods*

We had hundreds of applications from 84 different countries and, frankly, we would have liked to have taken more of them.

*Maria Almojuela, MPP student, Philippines*

Before I assume higher responsibilities – in my case that would be the rank of an ambassador – I thought that I need some refresher. If you want to energise an institution, and change it, I think you have to see what is happening outside.

*Ngaire Woods*

We set out to build this degree asking, 'What does the world need Oxford to step up to in the 21st century?' Oxford has educated so many people who have gone on to lead in countries right across the world, and that for us was a huge advantage because we went straight out to those alumni and said, 'What do you wish you had learnt at Oxford?' And the answer to that lies beyond the usual sort of public affairs course. We have developed a course with, for example, a strong component on how to use medical and scientific advice critically. It also includes the kind of skills that students have previously gone to business schools to learn, so very practical skills in negotiation, finance, project management and delivery.

*David Obert, MPP student, Canada*

I come from a medical background; I am currently in my third year of medical school. When we had our strategy and communication course taught by McKinsey recently, the same sort of approach to diagnosing a problem, coming up with a treatment plan for the problem and so forth, mirrored some of the same sort of thought processes as you would find in medicine.

*Wanjiku Nyoike, MPP student, Kenya*

The best they can do is actually teach us how to get things done, because I feel there is such a big disconnect between what you learn in class and what you go and do out in the world. Most of the universities, most good universities in fact, do not teach enough practical skills.



*Students Dina Marie Pitta, Temi Folaranmi and Wanjiku Nyoike with Leonard Blavatnik at the School's opening dinner*

*Yulia Taranova, MPP student, Russia*

We also listen to people who have actually dealt with these issues in their professional lives.

*Ngaire Woods*

Another component of the course uses Oxford's top philosophers to teach students how to reason through the ethical dilemmas that they will face in political leadership, because the higher you go, the more everybody around you simply says 'yes', because they are hoping you will promote them. There are very few people holding leaders to account – and a global peer group is something that could really work to do that.

*Wanjiky Nyoike*

...I am looking forward to seeing where I am going to end up by the end of the year.

*Yulia Taranova*

... we have obviously discussed this between us – what our own plans for the future are.

*Wanjiky Nyoike*

... I want to work on development policy.

*David Obert*

...sort of bridging a career between both public policy and clinical medicine.

*Yulia Taranova*

... to bring value back to my country again – I am from Russia.

*Enrique Zapata, MPP student, Mexico*

... make a positive and real change in Mexico and, if I can, in the world – why not?

To view the video interview visit: [www.ox.ac.uk/annual-review](http://www.ox.ac.uk/annual-review)