



CONNECTIONS

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking opportunities

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A LETTER FROM THE NEW CO-CHAIR

My name is Gwilym Rowlands, and it is my great pleasure to have been recently elected as the Co-Chair Voice for the Oxford Research Staff Society (OxRSS).

I have been an active and passionate advocate for Research Staff since the beginnings of my employment at the University, serving on early career researcher committees within my department (Zoology), division, as well as within OxRSS itself. As the incoming chair, I look forward to being a voice for research active staff across the university. In pursuing our objectives (available on our website) the OxRSS is dependent on continued input from our members, typically channelled through their Voice Representatives. I urge all members to reach out if there are any specific concerns or questions you feel the society should be addressing.



Dr Gwilym Rowlands, Co-Chair (Voice)

The next year will be an important one for researchers. For many, Brexit has cast a shadow across their funding and ongoing employment landscape; this is particularly true in Humanities and Social Sciences where EU funds are the dominant source of grant income. As a society we will continue to monitor the potential impacts of Brexit on researchers, and ensure that research staff are informed and empowered to react accordingly. *Continued on the next page.*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 30 May, End of month social, University Club, Mansfield Road
- 15 June, Family-friendly Mini Adventure, Buttery Wolfson College
- 23 June, Group bike ride to Brill
- 27 June, End of month social, University Club, Mansfield Road
- 11 July, St Cross College Summer Dinner

Continued from front page: Improving the environment for Research Staff at the University of Oxford is an overarching goal for OxRSS. In achieving long term objectives of the OxRSS, the *Researcher Excellence Framework (REF)* and *Review of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* represent upcoming points for impetus. I have fed into Concordat consultation through various roles representing Research Staff at the university. As Co-Chair Voice, I will work across departments, colleges and divisions and seek opportunities to consistently advance recommendations coming out of The Concordat in line with the objectives of the OxRSS.

A NEW ADVOCATE FOR RESEARCH STAFF

Professor David Gavaghan from the Department of Computer Science has recently been appointed as the first University Advocate for Research Staff. He will work in support of the priority in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2023 around early-career researchers and research staff, following the recommendations of the Research and Innovation Committee at the end of 2018.

David brings a wealth of experience and demonstrated commitment to developing the skills of researchers across the university, including as Director of the Graduate School in the MPLS Division and running the Doctoral Training Centre, and chairing the University's Research Staff Development Forum. He will spend approximately 1 day a week in his Advocate role, working with Divisions, Departments, the Careers Service, researchers and others leading the implementation of the University's Research Staff Development Strategy, along with supporting the University's commitment to the Concordat for Career Development of Researchers and identifying and propagating excellence in researcher development across the University.

David says of his new role: 'Research staff comprise some of the brightest minds in their generations drawn to Oxford from across the globe to conduct cutting edge research across the University's four divisions. The importance of the University's research

The formal appointment of an 'Advocate for Research Staff' (Prof. David Gavaghan) has been a welcome recent advancement; a long-term goal and notable success for OxRSS. The appointment has suggested a need for new committee structures to more formally represent the voice of Research Staff into University decision making. With voice representation and committee structures already in place, OxRSS is uniquely poised to contribute. As Co-Chair voice, along with the Committee and Voice Representatives, I look forward to shaping and formalising ongoing committee structures for Research Staff, and working to inform the agenda these committees then pursue.



Professor David Gavaghan (University Advocate for Research Staff)

staff in maintaining its position as one of the world's leading research institutions cannot be overstated. If the University is to continue to attract the best researchers to Oxford, particularly in the face of the current external challenges, then it needs to provide an environment within which each member of research staff can determine and successfully move on to the next stage in their career, whatever that next stage might be. In short, the University needs to provide a world-leading researcher development *environment* to support its research staff. Appointment to the role of University Advocate for Research Staff Development will enable me to continue to take a leading role in the development of this environment, and in ensuring that the University continues to be the destination of choice for researchers wishing to move on successfully to the next stage of their careers.'

NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Oxford Research Staff Society (OxRSS) sets out to be inclusive and representative of all research active staff. To this end, a special meeting was held on 29 March 2019 to address potential gaps within our Terms of Reference. Following discussion our Terms of Reference were expanded with two principle changes: (1) we expanded our remit to ensure the society is open to and seeks to represent research-

ers from Oxford colleges and the Gardens, Libraries, and Museums (GLAM); (2) we refined our definitions of researcher: OxRSS aims to represent *all research-active staff*, irrespective of their specific contract. The full [Terms of Reference](#) which contains an exemplary, but non-exhaustive list of such positions in the wider University can be found in the side bar of the about page on our website.

INTRODUCTION OF LUNCH SOCIAL, BRUNCH, AND MORE CHILDREN EVENTS

By *Liliana Cifuentes*

In the last year the OxRSS has introduced lunch social events during weekdays in Headington and the City centre to facilitate networking within working hours, and allow flexibility for colleagues with families to join and/or colleagues who would like to meet for lunch with people from other departments. Additionally, we have introduced brunch events during the weekends at colleges. One such event was hosted at Wolfson College, where around 15 people gathered together to share experiences over an English and continental breakfast. Children were very

welcome and my toddler had a great time walking around meeting other toddlers. He especially liked the child-friendly courtyards outdoors along the River Cherwell. Moreover, many events have been organised for children. OxRSS events offer the opportunity to increase integration of research staff among different and diverse divisions. These events also help research staff, particularly those new to Oxford, get to know the city, the structure of the University, its colleges, and other researchers.

FEATURED EVENTS

Fellowships and Interviews workshop

By *Lorraine Mumtaz*

On the morning of Wednesday 10 April we gathered for the 4th Fellowships and Interviews workshop we have run in collaboration with the Careers Service. This time it was in the Centenary room.

To begin Gill Wells gave a presentation on Fellowships, from early career to senior fellowships with plenty of useful advice, then a short tea/coffee break followed by a brief presentation from Gaelle Jolly on Research Professional; this is a platform for

finding out about funding and other tips. After this there was the Interviews presentation with Rebecca Ehata, who gave great advice for attending interviews, which could apply to non-fellowship interviews as well. We also had a practice session in groups of three. Some attendees had left by this stage but those who remained found it a very useful exercise. It was another successful workshop.

Christ Church Dinner

By Miaoqing Yang

On 13 March we had our social dinner at Christ Church College organised by Miaoqing Yang. The dinner was particularly well received. We had to close our application system earlier than planned since the number of researchers who signed up quickly reached the full capacity of the McKenna Room, where the dinner was held.

Everyone first congregated at the BATTERY Bar at 7.30pm for a welcome drink, where sparkling wine and soft drinks were served. The dinner started at 8pm in the McKenna Room and the place looked amazing with beautifully-laid long tables and nice portraits on the surrounding walls. The food was delicious: we had a starter of smoked pigeon breast (vegetarian option: gorgonzola and walnut tart) and a main course of slow roast belly pork (vegetarian option: butternut and Brazil nut pithivier). Anjali Shah gave a warm welcome speech during the dinner and



Dinner at the McKenna Room (Christ Church)

introduced attendants about various OXRSS activities. After the dinner, we were very fortunate to have a chance to enjoy coffee/tea in the main dining hall as well. Everyone who attended enjoyed the dinner and thanked Miaoqing Yang for organising such a lovely evening. Hopefully we will be able to organise more college dinners like this in the future.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Career development, workshops, fairs and personal development

[Careers Service](#)

For one-on-one meetings with a Careers Adviser, and workshops and events specific for research staff.

[Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff](#)

The University's commitment to supporting the careers of researchers.

[Oxford Learning Institute](#)

Obtain support for personal and professional development via courses and seminars on management, teaching, and personal development.

[Support for researchers](#)

This website contains information on support available to research staff from across the University.

[Vitae](#)

The national researcher development organisation.

Other resources

[Health and safety](#)

For information on occupational health and welfare

[IT services](#)

For technological and computing assistance.

[Welcome Service](#)

Welcome service for University members and their partners.

Social opportunities

[Oxford University Newcomers' Club](#)

For partners of researchers, graduate students and staff to meet each other.

[Oxford University Club](#)

Members of staff of the University are welcome to this sports and social club.

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