



CONNECTIONS

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking opportunities

SEPTEMBER 2013 ■ VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Research Staff Society Kicks Off!	1
Forthcoming Events	2
Did You Miss It?	2
New to Oxford?	2
Featured Profile	3
Useful Links	4
Contact Us	4

WHAT'S NEW

Ever wonder what one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors of Oxford does on a daily basis? Read our exclusive interview with Dr. Stephen Goss, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Personnel and Equality, and Chair of the Research Staff Working Group, on page 3!

NEXT NEWSLETTER

October 2013

RESEARCH STAFF SOCIETY KICKS OFF!



Committee members of the 2013 Oxford Research Staff Society. Pictured: (clockwise from top left) Jagadis Kapuganti, Laura Hodsdon, Helen Oliver, Julie McLellan, Pavitra Kannan, Sarandis Marinakis, and Joana Lopes. Not pictured: Louise Appleton, Julia Badger, Bonny Baker, Nicholas Hawkins, Zena Kamash, Nikki Luke, Lorraine Mumtaz, and Machilu Zimba.

Over 3000 research staff, including research technicians, postdoctoral associates, and fellows work at the University of Oxford. Although an integral part of research here, many staff members cannot fully take advantage of the university system because of their short-term contracts and lack of college affiliation.

Newly launched on 11 July 2013, the Oxford Research Staff Society (OxRSS) strives to tackle some of these issues and represent the needs of research staff at Oxford. Firstly, we will organise social and professional networking activities across departments and divisions to

build a community. The Society is planning to hold its first events in autumn (Michaelmas Term) 2013.

Another aim is to offer researchers a collective voice so that staff are represented on appropriate committees and decision-making bodies across the University. We also plan to engage with relevant organisations at a national level to ensure that research staff at Oxford have connections to a wider community.

OxRSS wants your input regarding activities and events that would support you as a research staff member. Please visit [our website](#) for more information.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 19 September, 9:00-17:00, Nature Jobs Career [Expo](#).
- 30 September, 9:30-12:30, MPLS Lab Demonstrators Teaching Course. More [here](#).
- 15 October, 9:00-15:30, Medical Sciences Teaching Skills Course. More [here](#).

DID YOU MISS IT? A LOOK BACK AT OXFORD'S FIRST RESEARCH STAFF CONFERENCE

On 11 July, 2013, more than 200 research staff attended the first Oxford research staff conference, *Research Connections*, held at the Examinations Schools. The conference highlighted important, and often neglected, aspects of developing a research career: connections with the public, connections with other disciplines, connections with those who make use of research, and connections with other researchers both within and beyond the University.

Vice-Chancellor Andrew Hamilton opened the conference by encouraging Oxford researchers to disseminate their science to the public and to work across disciplines. He also announced the introduction of the "Vice Chancellor's Diversity Fund". This 1 million fund has been created to improve diversity in all disciplines and to assist researchers, particularly women, who are re-entering the workforce after extended leave.

Keynote speaker, Professor Frances Ashcroft, enthusiastically conveyed her experience in using media and popular science books to

bring her science into the public eye. Following the talk, researchers had the opportunity to develop and practice a 2-3 minute spiel about their research that they could use for speed networking. This session, which was led by the Careers Service, was quite popular.

During the afternoon panel session, attendees had the opportunity to name one thing that Oxford could do better to foster interdisciplinary research. Here are a few things researchers would like to see implemented:

- More common areas for research staff to spend time with colleagues, as college system makes it difficult for staff to meet casually over coffee
- Establish more links between research staff and colleges
- Opportunities to spend a week in another group to obtain new skills and to foster interdisciplinary collaborations
- Updated departmental websites to include information on staff
- More introductory open days

ARE YOU NEW TO OXFORD?



If you have recently joined Oxford as research staff, you may find useful information regarding the University, welcome events, accommodation, and other general information [here](#).

FEATURED PROFILE

Dr. Stephen Goss

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Personnel and Equality

As Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Personnel and Equality as well as Chair of the Research Staff Working Group, Dr. Stephen Goss oversees many professional aspects important to Oxford research staff. We had the opportunity to ask him about his role at the University and his recommendations for staff career development.



What is your research background?

My academic post is in the Pathology School, and my research was in human gene mapping, which in the late 1970's still had a long way to go! After that, I moved to studying the behaviour of liver cancer cells. After some twenty years in research, however, I moved into administrative roles, first in the Medical School and now, centrally in the University.

What do you do as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) on a typical day?

A PVC's work is very varied, and it is difficult to imagine a typical day: my role is to oversee policy development in the area of personnel (recruitment, employment, salaries and pensions, staff development and promotion) and equality and diversity (making sure we treat all our staff fairly and that we employ the very best people for each role regardless of their personal characteristics). I am advised and assisted by an able and hard-working secretariat, and together we work with senior post-holders and elected members of the central committees of the University. I spend a deal of time chairing committees and also keeping up to speed on national and international developments in the sector.

What are three things you would recommend for researchers in early career development?

1) Do make time for yourself to reflect on your own career development. There are many different aspects to a researcher's role (have a

look at the [Researcher Development Framework](#)) if you want some prompts. Anyone who is honest can find areas where they could put in some effort to become more skilled and so position themselves to enjoy their work more, to make progress and to improve their prospects. If you are offered mentoring or a review with your manager, do take it. Research is a competitive world – look after your future.

2) Do take advantage of training that is available. There's a great deal out there that's potentially useful. It may well not all suit your needs or interests, but don't be put off.

3) Do talk to other researchers – and not just about their research. Find out how others are planning a career, hear about the problems they see and the solutions they are finding. You'll find you have much in common and can help each other. Support the OxRSS and make it work – it can provide excellent opportunities for such 'networking'.

4) I want a fourth – find what you enjoy in your work and aim to do more of it!

What is your favourite place in Oxford and why?

The Ashmolean Museum has always been a marvellous collection – but since its redevelopment its displays have been made more accessible and all the more rewarding. It is full of beautiful and interesting things – an easy choice.

USEFUL LINKS

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

[IT services](#)

For technological and computing assistance

[New research staff](#)

This website provides information for research staff who recently joined Oxford.

Social opportunities

[Oxford University Club](#)

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

CONTACT US

Call for Research Staff Profiles

We are very keen to hear from Oxford University Research staff about the work that they are involved in and would like to share these experiences through OxRSS with our audience. If you would like to feature in our profile section this can be organised as follows;

- > ***You can e-mail us your article (maximum 1 page A4 Size) as a word document and attach up to 2 photographs for inclusion.***
- > ***Contact us if you would like to be interviewed about the work that you are involved with.***

We would also be interested to hear from you about any hobbies or interests that you have. Please e-mail us using the contact address given below. We look forward to hearing from you.

E-Mail: committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk