

UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Gazette supplement



Vice Chancellor's Oration 2023

Oxford leading together

New beginnings: autumn is my favourite season. With its perceived sombre tone, this is perhaps surprising for someone so incorrigibly positive. The heat of summer is over, there is a crisper feel to the air, the low-angled evening light sets the stone of our beautiful colleges and University buildings ablaze. Yet, as nature begins to rest, there is tangible excitement in the air as a different part of nature sets itself ready to grow, intellectually, with the planting of new ideas. This is why I love autumn. It's the cyclical hope that a new chapter of learning brings and the thrill of new beginnings – not just for our students but to us all. Renewal is restorative, energising – and it keeps us young. So, as we start the academic year, let us be grateful for a year well spent, let us remember those dear to us who we have lost, let us remember the peoples of the world in anguish through war or natural disasters. And let us thank all those colleagues from our great collegiate University who have stepped down from their various roles this past academic year and who have served our community with skilled leadership, dedication and compassion – and let us welcome new members to our family. With the rugby ball safely caught and me now off and running, let us embrace new beginnings and what's to come through our endeavours of learning, teaching and discovery.

May I add a personal thank you for the warm welcome I have received from all members of this magnificent community and to the wider academic sector in the Russell Group and Universities UK, Oxford city and county officials. I want to particularly thank those Heads of Departments and colleges who have hosted me for visits so far. It is astonishing to see for myself the depth and breadth of our collective mission, and I look forward to visiting more of you in the coming academic year. What strikes me from these visits is a strong sense

of common purpose, shared values, the fact that we belong to something bigger than ourselves. Our motto since the late 16th century, DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA (THE LORD IS MY LIGHT), was of its times. But drop just a couple of letters (with thanks to my Latin guru, Tristan) and we come up with something more up-to-date: Domus illuminat nos – our home enlightens us. Don't worry, I'm certainly not going to mess around with the University crest. But I do reflect on who we are: the world sees an assembly of individual awkward geniuses, and yes, there are plenty of you out there. But I see a home, a community, with a shared purpose: enlightenment. What we stand for is in our DNA – how else can such a devolved institution move forward together. We share a firm belief in the transformative, illuminating power of education and research in tackling the greatest mysteries and challenges of our time. Leadership, partnership and excellence through our people. That is our shared purpose and what this great collegiate University is built on. It's our secret sauce and I have felt that this year.

It's worth reflecting that this time last year ChatGPT was unknown to most of us. Artificial intelligence has arrived, centre stage, and it heralds a new era. Yes, there are real and present dangers; yes, we need regulation for both good and bad actors; and yes, we need to develop long-term ethical and philosophical frameworks to guide us as we live alongside this rapidly changing, paradigm-shifting tool – and it is a tool, remember, not a brain...

Oxford is emphatically at the party, and we have the capability to be truly world leading. Four of the seven holders of the prestigious UKRI Turing AI World Leading Fellowships are based in MPLS, with two awarded this year, representing £8 million of investment. We

welcomed our first cohort of Eric and Wendy Schmidt AI in Science Postdoctoral Fellows. In Humanities, Schmidt Futures is funding work to explore whether the age of AI has created the need for new human rights. So, as we adapt to the rise of AI, data scraping and the amassing of more information, we must always ask, as TS Eliot did in 'The Rock': where is knowledge in all this information? To come back to our motto: where is the illumination? I think there's still a place for us mere mortals... However, to ensure we continue to thrive, we're investing significantly in digital infrastructure services and skills fit for this new world.

The Chancellor forewarned of headwinds during my tenure – well, they've arrived. We have a cost-of-living crisis for staff and students with food, rent and mortgage costs going up and yet maintenance loans and salaries lower in real terms. And we have a business model to fund our great British universities which is not fit for purpose. No-one is winning: universities or students. If we want to remain one of Britain's most valued, trusted and respected brands and exporters worldwide, help Britain be the science-based superpower, and keep leveraging the economic contributions that places like Oxford make, with £1 million of our research income generating over £10 million in economic impact across the UK, it really is time for a cross-party root-and-branch review of the business model for how we fund the higher education system in Britain. We stand ready for that conversation and review. Oxford will weather the headwinds. But it's time we too calculate the full range of costs to teach our students if we are to better understand our business model. I want to thank divisional heads and administrative teams for engaging with the new financial white paper, and I want to thank Simon Boddie and his team for their careful stewardship and bringing much greater transparency to our finances. But we must be vigilant on how its implementation impacts our core mission. None of us want the 'eat what you kill' model to inculcate an entitlement to operate in isolation. We belong to a university after all – and in a university we work together because we share a common purpose. It is a testament to you all that, despite headwinds, we continue to have the highest research income in the UK higher education sector as of last year – and indications look similarly hopeful for this year. And how fantastic it is that we are re-joining Horizon Europe. Please start writing those grants!

I often joke that I've gone rummaging around Wellington Square trying to find where all the money is hidden. I've yet to find it... However, I am a very fortunate Vice-Chancellor because we have a true ace up our sleeve: philanthropy. Through the generosity of alumni and non-alumni, we survive and thrive. I am so grateful for their vision and support. I'm delighted to announce that we've had our best year yet for fundraising across the collegiate University – £385 million (and counting) in new funds. Congratulations to college and University

development teams, and a heartfelt thank you to our donors. We have time yet to thank David Gann, PVC for Development and External Affairs, before he moves on, but let me here thank him for all he has done to support Oxford. And we are planning to embark on our most ambitious multi-billion-pound philanthropic campaign to date – more on that in the coming year.

Many of those who donate, particularly at a college level, are our much-loved alumni. They are out there shaping the world for the better, literally, with currently 16 heads of state and one deputy. We are deeply committed to our alumni community – I am one of you, remember. With a global community of over 350,000 alumni and associates, this is power, leadership and influence: soft and hard. Two weekends ago, we hosted our Meeting Minds weekend – over 1,700 alumni visiting for a feast of events and intellectual stimulation. Congratulations and thank you to our alumni office and the academic and staff members for curating a fantastic gathering. And to Christine Fairchild for many years of alumni service: happy retirement.

Celebrating Success: Now please indulge me as I congratulate you on your achievements this past academic year. In the 2024 QS World University Rankings only two public universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were listed in the top five. That is beyond impressive. In a new 2024 QS ranking for Europe, we took top spot – and in our favourite Times Higher Education 2024 World Rankings, we were just listed as number 1 for the 8th year running – a record in their history. Combined with our outstanding Gold ranking across the board in the recent Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), these results are breathtaking. Congratulations and thank you for the midnight oil, actually now mostly renewable electricity, you burn to drive that excellence.

And we have other measures of excellence to celebrate. No less than twelve of our current community or emeriti professors were recognised in the New Year or Birthday Honours Lists. And our early-career academics are knocking it out of the park. Four researchers from across the University were awarded Philip Leverhulme Prizes, the largest number awarded to any single UK university. We had an Award Laureate in the 2023 Blavatnik Awards for Young UK Scientists; seven Oxford early-career researchers were among the shortlisted and winners of the STEM for BRITAIN 2023 awards at the Houses of Parliament. The Academy of Medical Sciences elected eight of our biomedical and health scientists to its fellowship; eight Oxford academics were elected as Fellows of the Royal Society, including yours truly; six were honoured in the Royal Society of Chemistry's annual Research and Innovation Prizes; twelve were elected Fellows of the British Academy; and, if that was not enough, our researchers have been recognised by the very highest presidential and national awards,

prizes, fellowships and honours from governments around the world. And to round it off, Professor John Cardy, emeritus at All Souls, has just won the Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for work on quantum field theories. What a haul.

In turn, we have done our best to honour and celebrate those who support our teaching and research mission. Simon and David Reuben were presented with the Sheldon Medal in recognition of their support. Eight esteemed individuals drawn from arts & literature, sciences, politics and journalism received honorary degrees and joined our community at Encaenia in June 2023. We celebrated landmark events, with over 700 Rhodes Scholars alumni descending on Oxford from all corners of the globe, including President Bill Clinton, for the 120th anniversary of the Rhodes Trust. More recently, the Reuters Institute and Journalist Fellowship Program celebrated its 40th anniversary. Journalists from all the global major news outlets gathered to discuss the challenges they face in a world of disinformation, fake news and AI. Like academia, I believe that journalism at its best is about the curation of truth and enlightening the world. Closer to home, my beloved Neuroimaging Centre (FMRIB, now WIN) celebrated its 25th anniversary – I was proud to witness the enormous influence this world-leading imaging centre has had on our understanding of the human brain as well as on the many people – scientists, technicians, administrative staff and students – who scientifically grew up there. The joy I witnessed at these reunions and at Gaudies hosted by our wonderful colleges is the story of what a university offers at its best: a lasting sense of belonging, no matter the distance in time or geography, a home from home where a shared purpose creates something special, impactful and life-changing, together. Let me now provide an update on the four areas I identified as a priority in my inaugural address last January, peppered with my impressions to date and how I want to shape things going forward.

Let me start with people: this university and all its successes are derived from the outstanding and dedicated people who work here. We cannot stay world leading without the very best of the best, and in a competitive market this is going to be increasingly difficult. We must adapt, be bold, and have the humility to accept we've got work to do. The national strikes and marking boycotts highlight some issues, but have been deeply painful for our students, most of whom suffered plenty enough through the pandemic. I respect the right to strike – I get it; but I am also deeply grateful to colleagues for working extra hours to ensure we had minimal impact at Oxford for our students.

So, what are we doing? Well, our staff experience survey shows that many people feel valued and heard; but fewer are satisfied with pay, benefits and development opportunities. Divisions are focusing on action plans

to respond, and we have established a People Strategy group to rise to the challenge of retaining, developing, attracting and rewarding world-class talent. We know that juggling teaching and research alongside other duties of governance, good citizenship and trusteeship, let alone having some personal life, is near impossible. I am grateful to Anne Trefethen, PVC for People and Digital, and colleagues for their work developing the Academic Career and Reward Framework. Their recommendations will be formally consulted on later this academic year and change must follow. I am acutely aware that our postdoctoral community are facing real challenges too, and I am grateful to the Researcher Hub for their work to improve the experiences of fixed-term researchers, to support their academic supervisors, and to strengthen our research culture. And, of course, we have my Pay and Conditions Report. The Steering Committee has worked hard over the summer. Their initial findings will be reported to me by the end of December, and we will then work to put in place a short-, medium- and long-term action-plan.

University employees now have access to an Employee Assistance Programme delivered by Health Assured, providing access to counselling and other support services 24/7, 365 days a year. 'Thriving at Oxford' is now in its second year and with excellent participation. Our Harcourt Arboretum has established a new programme linked to brain health and wellbeing, including Green Social Prescribing. For the nay-sayers out there, listen to my Fire & Wire podcast interview with Professor Jan van de Neve on the measurable productivity, happiness and economic benefits of wellbeing in the workplace. And we've listened to the feedback on bullying or harassment. There is no place for it in our institution. Report + Support will be piloted in January 2024, and we will keep working until we've got this right.

Thinking about people more broadly, it's great we have a full-time Chief Diversity Officer in: Tim Soutphommasane. Since Tim's arrival in January, he and colleagues across the collegiate University have been building on the excellent departmental, divisional, central and college-based EDI activities, to co-create and accelerate the cultural change we recognise is needed. We secured our first institutional Silver Athena Swan award and our first gold award for the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. Excellent progress is happening, but we must not rest if we are to embrace the top talent pool that does not reside solely in particular types of individuals. 9% of our professors are from BME backgrounds and, with the proportion of senior researchers from BME backgrounds now at 17%, I am hopeful that percentage will increase with a more diverse pipeline of talent. But I do ask myself why, in 2023, are only 29% of our professors women? The gender gap is far from closed. And looking beyond, I am proud that Oxford has a long tradition of supporting refugees and people displaced by violence and war. In

May, we co-hosted the city's first Sanctuary Fair and became a University of Sanctuary – the first collegiate University to be awarded this status. Congratulations to all those involved.

How might we work better together? Oxford's devolved nature is one of its key strengths – I love our collegiate structure and local autonomy. It's our secret sauce. However, it presents significant challenges to our professional services who, despite their dedication and hard work, are struggling with a growing workload driven by increases in student numbers and research activity, and a more complex regulatory and funding environment. The Registrar, Gill Aitken, has not shied from tackling this challenge. Professional Services Together, launched last year, aims to help Oxford's professional services colleagues work as one even more joined-up community, while also investing in skills and opportunities for our professional staff. Its ambitions are focused on People, Collaboration and Quality and I have been really impressed with the programme. There is a new vibe within our professional services across this institution. However, we need to take a more strategic view. So, a strategic review of Professional Services was launched in Trinity term to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current model; to build a collective understanding of where there is (and is not) a case for change; and to help build a consensus on strategic direction. I am confident that Gill, in consultation with colleagues from central administration, departments and divisions, will bring forward a comprehensive set of plans to drive the culture change we need, embedding trust at its heart, and with quality of service and value for money as a key goal. My hope is that there might be benefits too for our colleges – Oxford Leading Together by learning and sharing in a culture of trust and belonging.

Let me now move to the two core areas of our mission: teaching our students and research. I am a passionate educator. I am so proud that we were awarded GOLD overall in the recent Teaching Excellence Framework – a just result. Again, congratulations to all of you in divisions, departments and colleges, to college senior tutors and to our PVC for Education, Martin Williams, and his entire team for the huge amount of work they did to prepare for the TEF submission. I was pleased to open the Centre for Teaching and Learning symposium in June, attended by 150 colleagues. They have a lot to offer. For example, they were instrumental in helping to support the Oxford Simulation, Teaching and Research team in anaesthetics win a national Advance HE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence this year.

Our students are amazing. I am continually inspired by them, as I'm sure you are too, and their love of Oxford is palpable. That is why I'm so pleased we are increasingly getting our message out about what Oxford is really like – the one you and I know – through our many engagement, open days and outreach programmes. The launch of the

Astrophoria Foundation Year this term is a landmark. I enjoyed welcoming the first cohort by Zoom earlier in the year and then in person last week. I am grateful to the participating colleges and departments, as well as the Department for Continuing Education, for hosting these students as a cohort, and to the generous benefactor. Over 170 undergraduates are here under the auspices of Opportunity Oxford – our academic bridging program to prepare students for our demanding degree courses – and about 400 standard offer-holders took part in the online component. We are stepping up to meet student needs. UNIQ is our flagship outreach residential programme. This summer it gave over a thousand students a real taste of what Oxford can offer. It was inspiring to see former UNIQ students teaching on the programme when I visited the laboratories. Serendipitously, I even sat next to one student on a train north heading home – they were reading and making notes about something in Classics. Just fantastic. Don't worry, I wasn't a bore... and I hope they apply. Spending more than £7 million each year, these are just a few of our efforts to help raise attainment in schools and encourage applications to selective universities. Talent is everywhere but opportunity is not... yet. We are helping to fix that.

Graduate access is another area of focus and Oxford is well ahead of the sector. The UNIQ+ research internship programme for students from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds welcomed 127 interns for seven weeks in the summer. Interns worked on a research project with academic and post-doctoral staff in departments across the four divisions and were accommodated in one of the 11 participating colleges. The Close the Gap project funded by the OfS and Research England, which we are running in equal partnership with Cambridge, aims to improve access to doctoral study for under-represented groups. Thank you to all the participating departments, colleges and to colleagues supporting these internships. You are changing lives.

Academic Futures, our flagship graduate access scholarship scheme, provided increased numbers of scholarships for UK Black and Mixed-black students, care-experienced UK students and refugee/displaced students from around the globe. Offering these scholarships really does make a difference because we are seeing increased numbers of applications and offer-holders from these under-represented groups. A £2 million gift from Optiver Foundation will support scholarships for women from low- and middle-income countries on STEM masters' courses, with the first six scholars from five different countries starting this year. Our Ukraine Graduate Scholarship scheme saw 27 scholars at Oxford in this past year, with a new scheme established for this year thanks to a generous gift from XTX Markets. This is terrific progress. However, to be competitive with our counterparts, and not lose talent due to funding constraints, we must move to a position

where all our graduates are fully funded. The Graduate Endowed Matching Scheme (GEMS) has been wildly successful – I know from experience how important it was when raising funds for graduates at Merton. There is still money in the GEMS pot, and rest assured that graduate scholarships will be a major part of the fundraising goals for our ambitious Development Campaign.

I've said before that I am a firm believer in the importance of lifelong learning. Our Department for Continuing Education is an extraordinary powerhouse within our university – 15,000 enrolments from age 18 to over 90 and from all walks of life, including Hollywood... I love the degree days. Through the Online Course Steering Group they and others have been developing the mechanism for secure digital authentication through which the collegiate University can optimise its online course provision. My ambition for us to be 'Streaming and Dreaming Spires' is happening, but we need to be innovative and willing to experiment if we are to remain world leading in education.

Now let me turn to the student experience across our collegiate University: We have put in place a number of measures to mitigate the impact of the increasing cost of living, from undergraduate bursary and graduate scholarship uplifts, streamlining application processes and creating new funds. We've listened to students and have launched an enhanced and renamed hardship fund, now called Oxford Financial Assistance. Demands on all areas of Student Welfare and Support Services continue to grow. A quarter of the student population identifies as disabled or neurodiverse, and so there is a constant need to explore ways to improve the student experience – I am hopeful that the Disability Advisory Service's new, streamlined approach to Student Support Plans will help. 42% of students approaching our Counselling Service are seen in fewer than five working days, and our new Head of Counselling has set further goals – but we must remain vigilant and I'm grateful to the college welfare teams for all they do to support students. Anxiety remains the largest presenting issue for Oxford students. New partnerships with Oxford Brookes and the NHS to improve student pathways to mental health treatment services, the launch of a collegiate University Common Approach to Student Mental Health and the GLAM Origin project are just a few of the new ways we're trying to do things better and make a difference. Working closely with the colleges, we are expanding our Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service in the coming year. Our goal is to ensure that Oxford is known as a place where there is zero tolerance for any form of sexual harassment or violence.

In my student breakfast meetings and dog walks I've been listening and, although the quality of our student experience is above average for the sector, we do have some unevenness between departments and colleges.

The same might be said for the experience of our academics. I'm not ignorant of the challenges in levelling up, for want of a better expression, and I welcome engagement with departmental and college heads on this issue going forwards.

Now let me turn to new learning opportunities for our students: I spoke during my admission speech about the de-skilling that British students experience due to the 'great divide' that A-level choices brings when it comes to humanities versus STEM. I am pleased to announce that we will be launching, in Hilary term, the Vice-Chancellor's Colloquium, an experiment in helping students learn from each other across the divide. This pilot, non-compulsory course, being currently developed in collaboration with Continuing Education and colleagues from across divisions and colleges will allow undergraduates from STEM, humanities and social sciences backgrounds to come together to enhance their critical thinking, communication, numeracy and data analysis skills. Building on the success and popularity of our student-led Oxford School of Climate Change, we've decided to make climate the unifying theme of the pilot colloquium.

But it doesn't end there. Free speech has been centre stage this year. I have been clear about our role in the university sector to protect free speech: it is core to how we teach subjects and expose students to different views; and it also goes hand in hand with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. I have publicly acknowledged that this means some legal free speech will be hard for some individuals to hear. However, I am also disturbed by what I witness as an amplification of discourteous, intolerant and hateful rhetoric on social media platforms under the guise of free speech. I was deeply saddened to learn of the abusive and threatening language and behaviours that our trans community suffered this year. We should have done more to support them; rest assured lessons were learned. In this University, I expect more and we will continue to strive to create a culture of tolerance and respectful disagreement on key issues of the day. That is how we learn together and evolve.

According to a survey of students and the public last year, conducted by King's College London Policy Institute, while there is strong agreement that free speech is protected in universities, only 20% of those surveyed agree that universities should allow for all ideas and opinions to be expressed when it means that people feel threatened. This highlights one of the tasks we have: making sure that free speech happens within the bounds of civility, intellectual rigour and the law. So I'm grateful that colleagues from a few colleges, led by David Isaac, have created a toolkit in consultation with students with top tips for how to navigate free speech. We're also creating a series of discussions on challenging topics to showcase what engaging with different views

and beliefs, in a courteous manner, can look like. More on that in the coming term.

Many see the printing press as the foundation of free speech – and what a joy it has been to learn about Oxford University Press over the past ten months. I aim to make it more visible and interdigitated with the University community. Its global reach, brand recognition, educational impact and financial importance to the University cannot be overstated. Staying true to our core mission, while maintaining their need to be commercially responsible, is a difficult path to walk, and I am full of admiration. For example, OUP has launched a mobile subscription service in South Africa, allowing more than 140,000 people to access their content through their phones; more locally, ‘Raise a Reader’ encourages children to become lifelong learners. OUP and the National Literacy Trust are donating books and setting up established reading spaces for children in 10 schools in the most disadvantaged parts of Oxfordshire. Word of the Year saw 340,000 people cast their vote, with ‘goblin mode’ receiving 90% of the public vote and making headlines worldwide. In case this passed you by, it means ‘a type of behaviour which is unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly, or greedy.’... ah, one day... And how wonderful that our Press was commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury to produce the Coronation Bible used by His Majesty King Charles III during the coronation ceremony. Hand-bound in leather and decorated in gold leaf, the intricate design drew inspiration from both historic Coronation Bibles that OUP created and His Majesty’s love of the natural world. It truly is spectacular.

Moving to research, impact and innovation: Our rankings, research grant successes, awards, prizes, fellowships, and key government roles all speak to the quality, impact and relevance of our research and research talent to society. Let me here thank Patrick Grant, PVC for Research, for his thoughtful and engaged work to support our research endeavours. Generous leadership, partnership and excellence is in our research DNA.

I am proud that we are standing up for the humanities – particularly against a strong rhetoric focusing on STEM in media and policymaking circles. We need humanities to flourish in Britain and the world. It’s not just, as Irwin Miller put it, that humanities make us truly human in the best sense of the word. Look at the report the Humanities Division released in June which evidenced the value of studying humanities to people’s careers and wider society, having followed the careers of over 9,000 Oxford humanities graduates aged between 21 and 54. So, let’s get the positive message out to schools, media and policymakers about the value of studying and researching subjects within the humanities. Our stewardship of the humanities is evidenced by the establishment of the Schwarzman Centre – on schedule

for completion in 2025. The Cultural Programme will bring the centre’s venues to life as a truly magnificent offering for local people, the nation and world. Its first director, John Fulljames, is already in full flight and recently launched a wonderful public programme, focused on the environment, called ‘Everything is Connected’. Please buy tickets.

We welcome a new Head of MPLS, Professor Jim Naismith, former director of the Rosalind Franklin Institute and an outstanding scientist and academic leader. Let me here thank Professor Sam Howison for his terrific leadership of the division for the past five years – he represents the very best of us. I was pleased to attend a topping out ceremony to mark the midway point in construction of Oxford’s new Life and Mind Building for the Departments of Biology and Experimental Psychology, and more recently to plant a tree at the topping out ceremony of new buildings at Begbroke Science Park. I want to thank David Prout, PVC for Planning & Resources, and Estates for their efforts and skill in delivering these incredible new buildings. However, I have been surprised to discover how dilapidated some of our estate has become, notably in MPLS; this is simply not good enough for an institution of our calibre and for the teachers and researchers working here. I will work tirelessly with Jim to fix this in the coming years.

The new research, impact and engagement strategy for the Social Sciences Division is clearly paying dividends, showing how partnerships, co-creation and leadership can lead to outstanding impact and engagement, alongside their fantastic teaching. One example is the establishment through fundraising of a new, permanent ASEAN Institute at the University, connecting us with several southeast Asian universities. The institute will be based at the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies with shared posts and teaching across several departments, including six new associate professorships. And social sciences are really pushing the streaming spires ambition. In August, the Saïd Business School launched its new in-house EdTech unit – Oxford Saïd Online – with a new course on ESG and Sustainable Financial Strategy with further courses planned, including an online postgraduate diploma. And it’s great to witness the enthusiasm for social sciences by the public – annually inspiring the next generation through the ESRC Festival of Social Science, now in its 21st year. But social sciences also face infrastructure challenges that, coupled to ambitious capital plans to support their planned growth, require our collective support.

Leadership and partnership are the hallmarks for building yet further success within our Medical Sciences Division. Its beating heart stays strong with a recent £30 million award from British Heart Foundation’s Big Beat Challenge, called CUREHEART, and in collaboration with Harvard to develop the first cures for inherited

heart muscle diseases. Oxford Global Health is a pan-divisional endeavour spanning 55 departments, 450 global health researchers, 60 countries, and more than eight postgraduate programmes. Professor Alan Bernstein, former head of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and Advanced Research, has been successfully recruited to lead our ambitions in this space across all academic divisions of the University. And I warmly congratulate all those involved in preparing and succeeding in securing Oxford's two National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centres who will receive a staggering £122 million over the next five years to improve diagnosis, treatment and care for NHS patients. And just yesterday afternoon, the culmination of 30 years' work on malaria vaccines by the Oxford Jenner Institute has led to the WHO, after analysing clinical trial data, recommending for use our R21/Matrix-MTM malaria vaccine developed with the Serum Institute of India and leveraging Novavax's adjuvant technology. Congratulations to all involved on reaching this landmark.

I was reminded recently, 'science without policy is just science, policy without science is gambling'... so working in partnership with our other great institutions here and abroad, I think it's time for us to show what leadership and partnership looks like on a grand scale to tackle the greatest challenge of our time: climate change. Frankly, I have come to the view that, if we as a sector don't step up, then I don't know who will. We are trusted, we are not limited by electoral cycles or geopolitics. I have been socialising this idea in my deep-dive departmental visits and in conversation with Conference of Colleges, and I sense there is appetite. We have the expertise to make impact – we're already doing it in house with our maturing sustainability plan that is already delivering; our ZERO Institute and Net Zero Initiative; the new Centre for Energy Materials Research; our spin-out with the UK Atomic Energy Authority, First Light Fusion; and our world-leading research in social and medical sciences in the vital area of behaviour change, to name but a few. I will be talking much more about this grand mission in the coming year as we develop our next strategic plan for the collegiate University.

And we're great at innovation. The University has created its 300th company with the dedicated support of Oxford University Innovation and Oxford Science Enterprises, who have appointed a new and dynamic CEO. The companies have raised over £6 billion in investment and created over 9,000 jobs. We remain the highest university patent filer and spin-out company generator in the UK. The IP & Commercialisation Review expertly led by Chas Bountra, PVC for Innovation, has meant that OUI's start-up incubator has tripled in size. Their Increasing Diversity in Enterprising Activities programme is delivering with 18 social ventures created so far, more than half by female founders. Colleagues

won £1.25 million in Impact Acceleration Account funding to translate the University's social sciences research into social, economic and behavioural impact over the next five years. The creation of a new hub for entrepreneurship, EnSpire Oxford, connects our students, staff and alumni to the entrepreneurial people, places and programmes available within the University of Oxford and beyond. I am grateful to the Careers Service for their support of this initiative.

I sense a growing taste for entrepreneurship at Oxford. With the Life Sciences sector taking off and an unquenched thirst for laboratory space, I am optimistic about what we can build for the city, region, nation and world. Opportunities afforded by Larry Ellison's upcoming very significant financial contribution to enhance the scholastic environment around Oxford in taking on some of the major challenges in modern society, including climate change, health and food security, will help us take Oxford to a level we've not witnessed before.

I believe we're on the cusp of creating models that allow for more porosity between the public and private sector that can be beneficial, intellectually and financially, for both sides. I want collegiate Oxford to lead and shape this direction of travel. We have several ambitious plans with Begbroke and Oxford Science Parks, Osney Mead, Oxford North, the Ellison Institute and our involvement at Culham and Harwell. However, I believe there is a greater prize to be won that ties our ambition to secure Oxford as the most attractive place on earth to come and study, teach, research or work, while being impactful locally for the region and nation. By developing and curating in a more strategic manner with the city and county what we're doing and yet can still do, we will create one of the world's – if not THE world's – greatest interdisciplinary innovation and knowledge-exchange ecosystems. This will secure our competitiveness worldwide, while creating conditions for work that impact local people as well as enabling more of our students to live in the region once graduated. The report that I have been co-chairing with Andrew Williamson for the government on the role of UK universities to drive economic growth for Britain through innovation is near completion. It's given me insight into what's possible. Working together with our other great British universities, I am optimistic, excited and energised about what is possible and our ability through our generous leadership, partnership and excellence, to play a leading role helping shape Britain.

Now let me turn to my new favourite... sorry... Gardens, Libraries & Museums: At a time when funding for such public places is pressured, I am proud that we are Curators and Custodians extraordinaire, bringing light to so many lives. It's been such a joy to learn more about GLAM this year and to host dinners for donors and

alumni in their magnificent surroundings. In addition to their sterling work to support our teaching and research, our four museums, the Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum, the Old Library and the Weston Library are the conduit for the public to come inside our world and be wowed by what we have to offer. We welcomed over 3 million visitors to our public spaces – back to pre-pandemic levels, and more than 67,000 school and educational visitors this past year. The Bodleian came top nationally in the ‘library question’ in the 2023 national student survey with 96.9% satisfaction. After a four-year closure, the long-awaited Radcliffe Science Library is close to opening – thank you for your patience. Curation thrives too in the Museum of Natural History – a place I’ve loved since childhood – it remains a beacon of hope in a world of collapsing biodiversity. Indeed, the £1.6m HOPE for the Future project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has now completed its main aims, with 1.1 million British insects conserved, documented and rehoused. And, in keeping with our digital transformation goals to reach yet wider audiences, we launched the Pitt Rivers Museum Collections Online platform with over 500,000 records from the museum’s collections available to global audiences. Oxford Botanic Garden has ambitious fundraising plans for new glasshouses to reduce their carbon footprint by 92% and enable the conservation of rare plants from around the world – we’re still looking for an inspired donor. The designs draw inspiration from the water-shedding capabilities of a palm leaf, building on the Botanic Garden’s cutting-edge research on biomimetics – nature-inspired design – working together and in partnership with Oxford mathematicians and physicists.

GLAM evidently impacts locally and globally, as do our colleges and departments. Let me here acknowledge Jan Royall, not just for her work as Chair of Conference of Colleges, but for her enthusiasm to make a difference in our region and upon which we will build. Colleges have a twinning project with primary schools; social investments to offer housing for the homeless; a cargo bike delivery scheme to reduce city centre congestion; and amazing new buildings bringing life to Cornmarket and being thoughtful about local procurement. Division- and department-led initiatives include Science Together, which connects local community challenges to our world-class researchers. But I want us to do more. So I am delighted that Professor Alex Betts took up the new part-time senior position of Local and Global Engagement Officer in May 2023. He has hit the ground running – not even I can keep up! Working with the city, county, Whitehall or the United Nations, we aim to champion, connect and coordinate the extraordinary engagement work ongoing, as well as pilot new initiatives, such as: a new Local Policy Lab to better connect our researchers to county and district authority policy-makers, in areas like sustainability, health and education; building stronger connections with schools and community organisations in historically deprived parts of the city, including a new Sport and Education project with secondary schools and

a collaboration with BMW’s Mini Plant; and working strategically with government and business to shape our regional economy, including through our plans to develop an innovation ecosystem, and by making our job and training opportunities more inclusive and accessible to the community. The recent three-day Oxford Inside Out event was inspiring and revealed local enthusiasm for more co-creation.

I started with the autumn light on our ancient buildings, *Dominus* literally *Illuminatio* on stones from Headington Quarry and the late Jurassic. But if we no longer rely on God to illuminate us, we need to step up ourselves. This is the power of a university, the power of thinking together, made all the more precious to us through the enforced separations of COVID. By bringing a critical mass of enquiring minds together, we enlighten each other, and through that great chain reaction of ideas – yes, I watched *Oppenheimer* too – we bring light to the world. At a time of gathering darkness, long may we together keep Oxford a home of light.

Addendum to the Vice-Chancellor's Oration

Oxford University notes the retirement this year of many distinguished members who have contributed to the University's intellectual life over the years. The University also notes the retirement of members who have retired from administrative, library or service posts in the University*:

Gail Anderson, Head of Communications and Marketing, Continuing Education; Patricia Andrew, Mathematical Institute; Professor Nigel Arden, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Professor Jonathan Austyn, Professor of Immunobiology, Surgical Sciences; Diane Baker, HR Manager and Deputy Head of Administration, School of Archaeology; Nicholas Barber, IT Services; Colin Bartlett, IT Services; Keith Belcher, Deputy Departmental Safety Officer, Physics; Dr Nicholas Belshaw, Earth Sciences; Professor Sir Timothy Berners-Lee, Professorial Research Fellow and Professor of Computer Science; Dr Peter Biggs, IT Project Manager, Chemistry; Professor Marilyn Booth, Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World; Professor Charlotte Brewer, Associate Professor English Language and Literature; Professor Deborah Cameron, Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication; Professor Luca Cardelli, Royal Society Research Professor in Computer Science; Richard Catling, Assistant Editor, Classical Languages and Literature; Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart, Professor of the Law of Contract and Dean of the Faculty of Law; George Clack, Vacuum Facility Manager, Atmospheric, Oceanic and Planetary Physics; Alison Coldstream, Payroll Operations Manager, Finance Division; Professor Richard Compton, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry; Brenda Deeley, Office Administrator, Computer Science; Katrina Dicks, Finance Manager, Computer Science; Jenny Dix, Administrator, Institute for European and Comparative Law; Susan Douglas, Senior Systems Analyst, Research Services; John Duffy, Assistant Estates Project Officer, Bodleian Estates Office; Susan Dutton, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Dr Lorraine Earl, Senior Research Fellow, Surgical Sciences; Peter Fair, Mechanical Engineering Senior Technician, Chemistry; Dr Ruth Feber, Biology; Susan Field, Administrative Officer, Clinical Neurosciences; Dr Luciano Floridi, Oxford Internet Institute; John Freeman, IT System Support, Chemistry; Professor Peter Ghosh, Professor of the History of Ideas; Audra Giles, Sir William Dunn School of Pathology; Mary Gilgunn-Jones, Pharmacology; Professor Lesley Gray, Professor of Climate Physics; Owen Green, Earth Sciences; Professor Nicholas Harberd, Biology; Simon Haycox, Radiation Safety Assistant, Safety Office; Renate Henison, Personal Assistant, Computer Science; Maxine Hewitt, Head of Student Wellbeing and Conduct, Saïd Business School; Professor David Hills, Professor of Engineering Science; Alan Hillyer, IT Services; Dr Philip Holdway, Materials Analyst, Oxford Materials Characterisation Services; Graham Hooper,

Joinery Workshop Manager, Estates Services Facilities Management; Professor Gregory Hutchinson, Regius Professor of Greek; Professor Jeremy Johns, Professor of the Art and Archaeology of the Islamic Mediterranean; Charlotte Kerr, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Paul Kimber, Building Maintenance Manager, Estates Services Conservation and Buildings; Professor Alexander Korsunsky, Professor of Engineering Science; Dr Tom Kuhn, Professor of Twentieth-Century German Literature; Andrew Lamb, Bate Collection Manager, Music; Gale Lockwood, Interconnect Operations Manager, Particle Physics; Professor Gavin Lowe, Professor of Computer Science; Alasdair MacDonald, Vice-Chancellor's Office and Registrar; Professor Louis Mahadevan, Professor of Biochemistry; Pramodi Majithia, Executive PA, RDM, Investigative Medicine Division; Sue Marcus, Managing Editor, RDM, Investigative Medicine Division; Helena McNally, Medical Sciences Divisional Office; Professor Christopher Melchert, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies; Dr Anne Miller, Enterprise Education Programme Manager, MPLS Divisional Office; John Minogue, Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health; Professor Mark Moloney, Organic Chemistry; Professor Irene Moroz, Mathematical Institute; Katherine Morrison, Deputy Facilities Manager (Governance), Oncology; Professor Philip Mountford, Inorganic Chemistry; Professor Shona Murphy, Sir William Dunn School of Pathology; Dave O'Dell, Workshop Manager, Engineering Science; Andrew Pickering, IT Network Manager, Chemistry; Professor Nicholas Purcell, Camden Professor of Ancient History; Rosemary Rey, Executive Officer to Bodley's Librarian and Head of GLAM, Bodleian Libraries Directorate; Linda Robins, Education; Dr Kathryn Robson, Health and Safety Manager, MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine; Professor Patrick Roche, University Lecturer, Astrophysics; Professor Gervase Rosser, Professor of the History of Art; Professor Richard Rutherford, Professor of Greek and Latin Literature; Timothy Shaw, Medical Sciences Divisional Office; John Simmons, Head of Facility Management, Pitt Rivers Museum; Timothy Stevens, General Manager, Oxford University Rugby Football Club; Gary Strickland, Business Manager, Jenner Institute; Diana Taylor, Student Systems; Professor Rajesh Thakker, May Professor of Medicine, RDM, Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism; Philip Thornton-Everson, Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics; Max Todd, Assurance Department; Professor Lloyd Trefethen, Mathematical Institute; Nigel Wellman, Assistant Sponsorship and Ethics Lead, Research Services; Philippa Wells, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Angela Whittaker, Journal Administrator, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry; Professor Robert Whittaker, Professor of Biogeography; Professor Simon Whittaker, Professor of European and Comparative Law; Ian Wild, IT Services; Professor Tony Wilson, Professor of Engineering Science; Susanne Woodhouse, Griffith Librarian, Art and Archaeology Library; Stephen Wyatt, Earth Sciences.

This year the University community has lost valued colleagues* whose early deaths have been a source of great sadness:

Mr Andrew MacKinnon, Senior Librarian, Bodleian Digital Library Systems and Services; Dr Ricarda Menke, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Clinical Neurosciences; Dr Anne Ndungu, Researcher, Wellcome Centre for Human Genetics and the Nuffield Department of Women's Reproductive Health.

Finally, we pause to remember the contributions of those colleagues* who have died in retirement over the past year:

Dr Eileen Adamson; Mr Roy Ashwell; Mr Robert Atkins; Dr Corin Bourne; Mr Frederick Boyce; Mr John Bramble; Miss Susan Burdell; Dr David Butler; Dr H M Charlton; Mr Philip Cleary; Mr M D Deas; Mrs Sara Dickson; Dr Alan Dorey; Mr Michael Dowsett; Mrs M Godden; Professor John Goodenough; Mr John Gray; Mrs Irene Greenham; Mr Brian Hawes; Mr Anthony Henwood; Mr A Holmes; Dr Mark Hylton; Dr Cressida Jervis Read; Dr B E Juniper; Dr Andrew Jupe; Dr Celia Kerslake; Professor John Ledingham; Professor Wilfred Madelung; Dr Jaromir Malek; Mr William P Mansell; Mr Anthony Mattingley; Ms Anna Melland; Professor Sir Peter J Morris; Mr A M R Newman; Dr W H Newton-Smith; Dr Joseph Olliver; Professor Robert O'Neill; Professor Peter Parsons; Mr Andrew Payne; Professor Donald Perkins; Mrs Patricia Pugh; Professor Peter Pulzer; Mr Anthony Sanderson; Professor Richard Sheppard; Dr Stephen A Smith; Dr Philip Stewart; Professor Mark Stokes; Dr Michel Treisman; Dr John Walsh; Mr John Ward; Mr Stewart Watson; Dr Edgar Williams; Mr David Witt; Mr Howard Womersley; Professor J R Woodhouse; Dr David Wyllie.

*This addendum represents a full listing of individuals we have received notification to include.