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Establishing the Guru Nanak Career Development Fellowship at Oxford

A proposal to interested philanthropists

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Oxford skyline featuring the Radcliffe Camera, the University Church, the Sheldonian Theatre and Hertford Bridge

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Introduction

Oxford has a robust programme of South Asian studies, ranging from languages and religion to culture and history. Yet compared with the study of other major religious, regional, and cultural groups, the field of Punjab and Sikh studies along with research into the teachings of Guru Nanak and the traditions established and influenced by these teachings, is understudied at Oxford.

This leaves one of the world's major religions under-represented at the world's greatest university where it could be given greater prominence by world-leading academics and students.

Furthermore, it is a challenging time for the next generation of scholars. Early career posts for post-doctoral researchers are limited, threatening to push a generation of rising stars out of academia. We have an opportunity to create a new area of expertise at Oxford and build a programme of career development fellowships to launch the next generation of academic leaders.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with a group of likeminded philanthropists to rectify this weakness, to inspire future generations of students and to apply Oxford's incredible intellectual strength and convening power to the study and application of Sikh and Punjab studies.

The current situation at Oxford

Oxford's Faculty (i.e. department) of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) is a dynamic department encompassing students and experts ranging from undergraduates through to statutory professors (also referred to as 'chairs'). The Faculty's expertise covers more than half of the population of the world and some of the world's major civilizations. Currently the faculty has significant expertise in South Asian languages, cultures and history, and adding additional resource focused on the study of Sikhism would help bolster this area of strength.

With the excellent library facilities of the Bodleian Library, which includes the former Indian Institute Library, and the outstanding collection of Indian objects in the Ashmolean Museum and various degree courses on South Asia, the academic field flourishes in Oxford. Furthermore, the university has a large body of staff and students with close links to Punjab.

The Future of Sikh Studies at Oxford

Endowing a new Guru Nanak Career Development Fellowship will create a launch pad for an early career scholar to undertake research related to the culture of the Punjab from c. 1450 CE to the present with particular reference to the teachings and the traditions established by Guru Nanak. The post will attract someone who has recently completed their doctoral studies and be part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and affiliated with St Cross College, giving them an academic home and helping them to build a robust network for their future career. St Cross brings together postgraduate students and Fellows from more than 70 countries and every academic discipline to create a dynamic intellectual culture where ideas are shared across subject boundaries and perspectives from around the world are welcomed. The post will be offered to rising stars in the field for a 3-year term, giving them invaluable time and experience to build their academic reputation and gain teaching experience.

How you can help

The University is seeking to secure an endowment of £2.1m to create a sustainable funding stream to ensure that this post is a permanent part of the Faculty. We would welcome discussions with anyone who is able to contribute to the overall target.

Recognising your support

Oxford is committed to recognising our donors in meaningful ways. This includes an ongoing relationship with the academic faculty that is being supported and reporting on the impact of your gift.

Oxford can also invite donors to join our recognition societies, in particular the Vice Chancellor's Circle, the Vice Chancellor's Guild, or the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors. These societies offer opportunities to interact with the University's leadership at the highest levels, and also meet like-minded philanthropists from around the world.

Thank you

Thank you for your enthusiasm for supporting Sikh studies at Oxford. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this document.

Contact us

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