



*Celebrating*

**WOMEN**

**PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF**

**AT RGU**



# FOREWORD

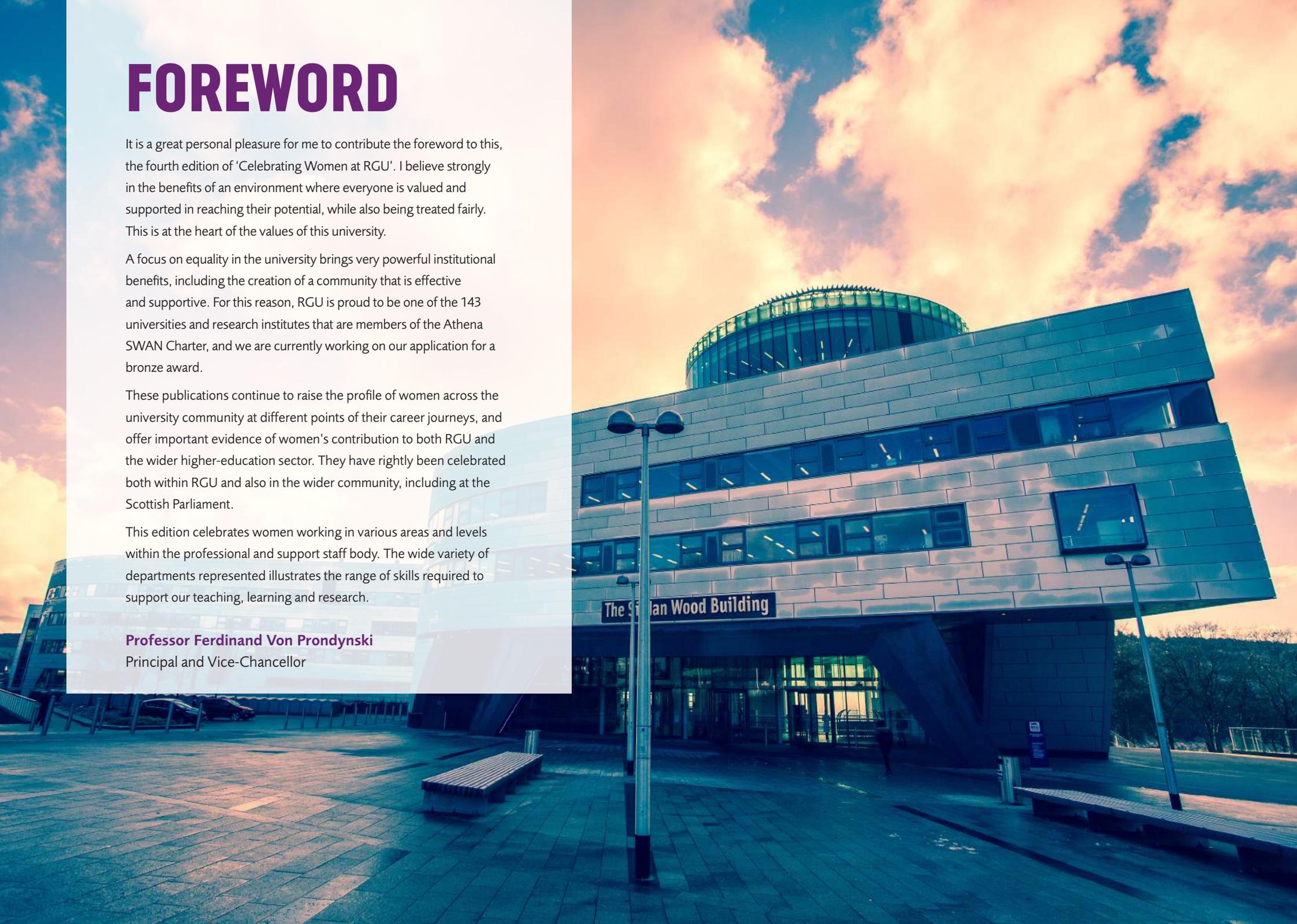
It is a great personal pleasure for me to contribute the foreword to this, the fourth edition of 'Celebrating Women at RGU'. I believe strongly in the benefits of an environment where everyone is valued and supported in reaching their potential, while also being treated fairly. This is at the heart of the values of this university.

A focus on equality in the university brings very powerful institutional benefits, including the creation of a community that is effective and supportive. For this reason, RGU is proud to be one of the 143 universities and research institutes that are members of the Athena SWAN Charter, and we are currently working on our application for a bronze award.

These publications continue to raise the profile of women across the university community at different points of their career journeys, and offer important evidence of women's contribution to both RGU and the wider higher-education sector. They have rightly been celebrated both within RGU and also in the wider community, including at the Scottish Parliament.

This edition celebrates women working in various areas and levels within the professional and support staff body. The wide variety of departments represented illustrates the range of skills required to support our teaching, learning and research.

**Professor Ferdinand Von Prondynski**  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor





**Vicki Nairn** is Vice Principal of Corporate Operations, with a role that covers ICT (including projects/project management), Finance, HR, Estates and Facilities, Health and Safety and Business Continuity. "Additionally a major part of my role is to be an active and engaged member of the Executive Leadership Team of the University and to work with the Principal, the Board and my VP colleagues on University strategy, direction and achievement – which can involve quite a few different areas."

With such a varied job Vicki really enjoys the diversity in her role and getting out and about and meeting different schools and colleagues to learn more about their worlds and make connections.

"I have had a very varied career, moving across the private, public and academic sectors. I have been an Independent board member/trustee at the University of the Highlands and Islands and the Glasgow School of Art.

"I love the fact that my job is to work across and support the entire institution, and a lot of what people use on campus or the professional services they need are managed by my teams, such as catering, money, rooms, buildings, IT, etc. We provide professional expertise and support to the University and ensure that we are financially sustainable and in line with legislation and guidance. I have wonderful individuals and teams within my departments who are experts in their professional fields and who take a great pride in delivering an excellent service to the University.

*"RGU has one of the best modern campus sites in Europe and it is a pleasure to work at Garthdee. The future for me is about exploiting opportunities and making best use of recent achievements such as TEF Gold and ensuring that the university maintains a sustainable financial position."*

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**VICKI NAIRN**



**SUZANNE SIM**



*"I think RGU is a great place to work. There is such a wide variety of people with a huge range of interests and backgrounds. Getting involved with networks such as the Women's Network and the Language and Culture Network has really helped me meet new and interesting people. I think RGU is good at putting on events for staff that can help expand your network, whether it's social events like the Quiz night or attending Professorial lectures."*

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**Suzanne Sim** works in Student Recruitment as an International Officer responsible for assisting the Regional Manager for the Americas and the Middle East. Her job involves regular travel to recruitment fairs abroad and engaging with students, agents and schools overseas to encourage potential students to study at RGU.

"I really enjoy meeting the students. I'm quite new to the role but I'm excited about the September intake. I can't wait to meet the students who I have previously spoken to in their country at recruitment fairs, and see how they are settling in to RGU and life in Aberdeen. I think Aberdeen is a great city to live in and I've already met many international students who agree!"

Suzanne first joined the university in January 2015 and moved to her current department in April 2017. Her trips abroad for RGU are not the first time she has travelled. "I always wanted to travel so I went backpacking for 6months. I travelled round Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Central America and the USA.

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**Toni Latimer-Simpson** is an eLearning Advisor in the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences. She joined RGU in 2005 as a Learning Technologist, having completed a degree in Computing at the University in 2001. Since joining Pharmacy and Life Sciences in 2007 she has helped in the creation of NES Modules on Moodle, such as pre-registration and sexual health. Her specialties are Technology Enhanced Learning, web 2.0 technologies, Plagiarism, Assessment, simulation and project management.

She also works closely with AsthmaUK and is currently on several volunteer teams (Research and Policy, Readers Panel and Lay Reviewer).

Before joining RGU Toni worked for a local company, fixing and building computers, and also becoming their European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Training Centre Manager.

"In my role as eLearning Advisor I enjoy my work supporting both academic staff and students. However, I also feel supported by my colleagues in that I am able to progress and participate in a research project on a subject that is close to my own heart - Asthma. I have recently been appointed Deputy Patient Chair of a project, run by the European Lung Foundation, investigating Severe Asthma which aims to create registries across Europe. Without the support of my colleagues in the School I would not be able to continue this research."

In her work, Toni is keen to encourage students to think more about their writing, particularly in relation to academic misconduct issues such as plagiarism. "It is important to emphasise to the students that this is an issue that could come back and haunt them in later life and is not just something they need to do for the university."

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# TONI LATIMER-SIMPSON



**ANNETTE DAVIDSON**

Disability *Dyslexia*



**Annette Davidson** is the Disability & Dyslexia Manager at RGU and also manages the Student Counselling & Wellbeing Service.

"I particularly enjoy the opportunity to work with students and colleagues across the University and hopefully make their experience more positive. I'm interested in people and how we can work together to improve accessibility. I like that each day is different and I love seeing students flourishing and succeeding because they have the support they need."

Before she joined RGU, Annette worked as a Cost Controller in the oil industry, working on budgets and projects. This meant that she had to travel offshore when required, and she was once in a helicopter that had an emergency landing at sea! Annette joined RGU in 1994, working in Student Accommodation before moving to her present post in 1998.

Annette's ambitions are to achieve accessible courses and support within RGU so that students will no longer need individual adjustments. She feels that supporting students' resilience is important to help them live strong and happy lives.

"I've been at RGU for a very long time, so have a lot invested in the University doing well and being the best it can be. I'm very lucky to work across the University and have friends and contacts throughout the organisation. The Disability & Dyslexia team have been together for a number of years and we support each other through thick and thin, and now Counselling and Wellbeing are part of the new team with many common issues.



Student Life as a department is relatively new but we have a number of projects we're working on together, which is helping us gel and the Centre has disability contacts in each school who work closely with us to support students. It's all very much a team effort."

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**Chloe Bruce** works in the alumni office as a Career Programme Officer, responsible for developing a suite of mentoring programmes.

"This is an entirely new role at the University and a new challenge for me. I enjoy receiving the positive feedback from the mentors and mentees. It is fantastic to learn that the work I do has a positive impact on their career development and personal progression."

Chloe joined RGU in 2013 after completing a MA (Hons) English Literature and History at the University of Aberdeen. She has also worked in RGU's Postgraduate Admissions department and the Careers and Employability Centre.

"I enjoy working with students and want to pursue a career within a higher-education environment. I would like to progress to a management role, eventually, and gain experience in roles that involve relationship building, hopefully with an international element."

At the beginning of this year Chloe organised a three-day series of events connected to entrepreneurship for RGU students, staff and alumni, and also established a Language and Culture Network for staff at RGU.

This year she was awarded the Robbie Ewen Fellowship (a bursary for support staff in Scottish Universities) and is currently planning a two-week trip to visit universities in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. "I will be going there to learn more about mental-wellbeing initiatives as I am a part of a 'Building Resilience' working group. This group has been a fantastic development opportunity for me, which the trip will also be, to enhance my skills and knowledge in a new subject area."

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**CHLOE BRUCE**



**Dr Emma Gillibrand** is Research Strategy Manager in the Research Strategy and Policy team. Her role involves leading a small team that supports academics developing proposals for external research funding.

Emma graduated from University of Aberdeen with a PhD in deep-sea biology in 2004. She joined RGU as the sole Research Development Coordinator in CREDO in 2005. Over time the team grew and she was appointed Research Team Leader. She joined the newly established Research Strategy and Policy team in 2016 following the appointment of Professor Paul Hagan as Vice Principal (Research).

"I enjoy supporting academics from every School as that gives me the opportunity to learn about the breadth of excellent research that is being undertaken across RGU and identify overlapping interests that I can try to bring together." Emma enjoys the challenge of working to meet tight funding deadlines, although she wouldn't want academics to do this with every submission!

Emma will be a key part of the team managing the next Research Excellence Framework submission in 2020 (REF2021). This exercise, led by HEFCE, allocates £2 billion in research funding per year to UK universities. In preparation for the REF2021 exercise, Emma has recently collated data on staff with time allocation for research from all academic schools and this has enabled her team to have a more detailed understanding of those staff across RGU with research interests.



She is involved in the data analysis for RGU's submission for an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award in November. The Athena SWAN charter recognises the advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success in all subject areas and across academic and professional and support areas.

Emma is hoping that the new common room facilities in Garthdee House will become a meeting space for research-active staff to share proposal ideas and develop interdisciplinary collaborations.

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# DR EMMA GILLIBRAND



# JACQUELINE MACLEAN



**Jacqueline Maclean** is Office Administrator in the Department for Governance and Academic Quality. Her role is to support the Academic Registrar and Secretary to the Board, who heads up this unique department within the university providing administrative support for the university's academic activities in a number of key areas. These include committees and governance, quality assurance and regulations, assessment policy and procedures and course information.

"My role is an extremely varied one where there are never two days the same. It deals with every aspect of committee work, from typing agendas and minutes through to the dissemination of papers. This sometimes involves working to extremely tight deadlines, which we pride ourselves in being able to meet and still maintain high-quality documentation."

Web information is also a large part of Jaqui's role, keeping committee pages, memberships and calendar dates as accurate as possible.

Jaqui joined RGU in 2002 having worked for a number of years at Aberdeen University. Her last position there was in residential and catering services, where she planned and organised events such as wedding receptions, balls and even a medieval banquet!

"I really enjoy working at RGU; the university is modern and has moved with the times and this is reflected in the courses it offers to its students. The Garthdee campus is a beautiful location to work in and our Department for Governance and Academic Quality is based in the Central Services Building. We are a small department and work very much as a team; there is always someone available to ask should the need arise!"



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**Helen Castle** works as University Solicitor, providing in-house legal advice and support for all departments of the university. Since becoming a mother she job shares this role with her job-share partner Amy Goodbrand.

"I love the diversity of work the job offers. No two days are the same and, aside from this being really interesting, it helps me to develop a broader range of legal skills and experience than many more traditional legal roles offer. The diversity of my role also includes the range of people I work with on a daily basis, I get to meet and work with people across the institution and I enjoy learning from the huge spectrum of individuals we have working together to make RGU what it is."

Helen studied law at Aberdeen University, where she felt that her personal values and potential career satisfaction pointed her in the direction of practising law in-house within the public sector. She undertook her traineeship at The Moray Council and, upon qualifying as a solicitor, moved back to Aberdeen to work for Aberdeen City Council. Helen joined RGU in September 2012, jumping at the chance to work for a university.

"Since becoming a mother to Ben (4) and Rosie (1), I've experienced a shift in focus. All of a sudden, the centre of my world is my kids and I want to provide the best life I can for them. That has made me re-evaluate a lot of things and adjust to changed priorities. That can be daunting but it's also hugely motivating as I strive to achieve goals in order to not just satisfy my own ambition but to better support my family.



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# HELEN CASTLE





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