



VICE-CHANCELLOR &
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
PROFESSOR LISA ROBERTS

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Professor Qiu
President, Tsinghua University

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30th November 2020

Dear Professor Qiu,

As a longstanding and valued friend of the University of Exeter, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Exeter. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you in anticipation of the 110th anniversary of the founding of Tsinghua University on 25 April 2021.

These are unprecedented times, but I fully believe that our partnership will only assume greater importance in these turbulent times, as we work to recover from the impact of the virus.

One positive to come out of the pandemic has been how easily we have been able to maintain and develop our joint activity through virtual means. Of course, we would prefer to see our friends and colleagues from Tsinghua in person, but I have been impressed by how the strength of the relationship has inspired strong virtual engagement.

Coronavirus has even presented us with new opportunities for collaboration. For ten years we have operated the Tsinghua-Exeter Mobility Fellowship to enable our academics to move between our two universities. While travel is difficult, our staff have been thinking creatively about ways to work together without meeting in-person. For example, your Institute of International and Area Studies at Tsinghua University is working with Exeter's Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies on creating a Digital Archive of the Middle East. We have also appointed recently a Joint Chair in Area Studies.

We are also the lead universities for the China-UK Humanities Alliance and recently co-convened the virtual Higher Education Youth Talent Alliance (HEYTA) conference. Our partnership matters for individuals too; our Jointly Awarded PhD in Earth System Sciences has graduated its first student, who has gone on to further his academic career at Yale University.

Thank you for the invitation to the University Presidents' Forum that is due to be held at Tsinghua University on 23-24 April. While we don't yet know whether travel in-person from the UK will be possible next spring, I am hopeful that the 110th anniversary of the founding of Tsinghua University will present us with the opportunity to meet in person. I look forward to using that as an opportunity for our two institutions to consolidate our already blossoming relationship.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. O. Roberts".

Professor Lisa Roberts
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive