

AOGS Mission Statement: Professor David Higgitt nominated for President

After 14 years, AOGS has developed a strong reputation for promoting geosciences in Asia and Oceania, principally through the organisation of high quality annual meetings. In a region vulnerable to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change, AOGS has an important role in providing an opportunity for geoscientists to exchange and share scientific knowledge with fellow researchers, policy makers and the public. The challenge is to consolidate and enhance the reputation of AOGS moving forward. As Program Chair for the previous four annual meetings I have sought to balance consistency with innovation, to promote efficient and effective exchange of the latest scientific research among experts, with a varied and interesting slate of distinguished lectures, special events and outreach activity. Now AOGS is poised to expand beyond the annual meeting to develop topical meetings on specialist themes – I am involved in the organisation of a joint AOGS-EGU conference on Natural Hazards to be hosted in The Philippines in 2018.

Earlier this year I took up a new appointment as Dean of the Lancaster University College at Beijing Jiaotong University in Shandong Province, China. This is a new international campus establishing degree programmes in environmental sciences, engineering and computer science. I was previously Chair Professor at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, the first Sino-Foreign university to be established. Prior to this position, I was tenured professor at the National University of Singapore. My research expertise is in geomorphology, with a particular focus on fluvial sediment budgets and sediment-related hazards. My work has ranged from developing radioactive tracers for quantifying soil erosion, field-based catchment hydrology, biogeochemical fluxes in large rivers and most recently on nature-based solutions to urban flooding problems. I have variously presented work in HS, IG and BG sections and convened several sessions.

Although originating from the UK, I have three decades experience undertaking field research in China, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. And I have been working and living in Asia since 2003, the year in which AOGS was founded. I attended the first AOGS conference in Singapore and have attended all but two of the thirteen annual meetings. Enlisted as a Singapore-based candidate for Treasurer in 2007, I was subsequently elected Secretary-General twice. I have now served on Council for ten years building up a strong working relationship with the Secretariat and networking with all science sections and office-holders. In the wider world it has not been a good year for continuity candidates, but I have been encouraged by many AOGS members to stand for the post of President. The experience gained during my years on Council is invaluable for guiding AOGS into a bright future. As Secretary General, I prepared the brief for the Strategy Review Team and have overseen the Council's response to the review. Some key issues are to ensure the success of the society's journal *Geoscience Letters* and to develop an enhanced publications strategy, enlisting additional editorial teams; strengthening the operational capability of the scientific sections; encouraging more interdisciplinary and topical issues-based sessions. Some initiatives to encourage participation and engagement with younger scientists (such as the mentor system introduced by OS) can be further enhanced, but there is also a need to examine how AOGS can retain the services and good will of experienced scientists retiring from Council. If given the opportunity I would be honoured to serve all members of AOGS. There is plenty to do and much to achieve.