



Alumna Subject Graduated Place of Work Ruth Bush
MA History
1991
Rady Children's Hospital,
San Diego

Position Research Scientist



Rady Children's Hospital is located in San Diego, California. Rady Children's opened in 1954 with 12 patients, and has since treated over 2 million sick and injured children from all over the US.

Ruth's role as a Research Scientist involves writing research methodology, analysing data and project managing research across the hospital.

Great minds *go on to* great places

Were you considering any other universities before Royal Holloway?

I was selected for a Rotary International Fellowship during my final undergraduate year at Princeton University. I considered Oxford and Cambridge but was steered toward Royal Holloway based on the advice of Dr. Peter Brown, who was then at Princeton, but who had been in the History department at Royal Holloway, and Dr. Peter Mandler, one of our British historians, who thought I would be pleased with the programme there.

Why did you choose the course you studied?

Every independent research project I completed as an undergraduate had to do with Women's History, so there really was not a choice; it was as if the course had been developed specifically for me.

Was your priority the university or the subject of study?

As an American coming to the UK, it was difficult to say where the priority of being at the University of London ended and the subject of study began. The idea that I would be studying history at the University of London was very important.

What is the most important thing that Royal Holloway taught you?

My year at Royal Holloway taught me so much about living in another culture, communicating clearly, respecting other backgrounds, and being far away from people I loved - especially since at that time, email was not in common use and a call to the US was about a dollar a minute. I often refer to my year at Royal Holloway as the most important of my life. I learned to be completely independent, made wonderful friends among the students and faculty, with whom I am still in touch, and learned that it takes about six months to start to find your feet when you do something new. I have reminded myself of this lesson several times since and it has helped me to persist in some challenging situations.

Tell us about your Royal Holloway experience.

I loved cycling and walking in Windsor Great Park, found the trains to London convenient, and enjoyed having a class in the Bedford Square location. I was involved in the History Society and learned to play cricket!

I have many fond memories. My fondest is probably of attending the Postgraduate Dinner in the Spring of 1991 and Dr. Caroline Barron inviting

a number of us back to her history office for coffee after dinner. As I remember, a group of history postgraduates were up with Caroline until the wee hours of the morning arguing about history, politics, and everything in between. It was an evening that made me realise that I wanted to be an integral part of higher education. It provided a glimpse of all the facets of development that an institution's talented and dedicated faculty can impart on an individual.

What did you learn at Royal Holloway that helped you develop your career?

Additional respect for cultural differences, critical thinking and persuasive writing.

Tell us about your career path since graduating

After Royal Holloway I gained a Master's and a PhD in Public Health. My first fulltime job was as an Epidemiologist studying Gulf War I veterans. My second job was with Pfizer in clinical trial research project management. My third job was with Booz Allen Hamilton, again studying veterans, this time from the Second Gulf War. My current job is as a Research Scientist with Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego.



people *with* passion

“My year at Royal Holloway taught me so much about living in another culture, communicating clearly, respecting other backgrounds.”

What do you do at Rady Children's Hospital?

I do a combination of determining the appropriate research methodology to use when designing a study, analyzing research data, and writing manuscripts. I write research grant applications. I also teach epidemiology and statistics courses for our medical fellows (additional training past medical residency). I provide project management for various research initiatives at the hospital.

What exciting projects have you been working on?

Recently, I have become involved in an initiative to use electronic medical records and am helping to design the best implementation strategies for research uses. I believe that if we do it correctly, we will vastly improve our ability to do significant longitudinal pediatric health research.

What challenges have you come across in your role?

There are simply not enough hours in the day to do everything that I would like to do! There is also never enough research money for all of the hypotheses I would like to test.

Have you had any international experience?

In my first Epidemiology position, I worked directly with colleagues from the UK Ministry of Defense and collaborated on numerous studies of returning veterans. As an aside I worked with the spouse of a Royal Holloway graduate while they were living in Washington DC and we enjoyed gravitating to the corner of the room at various social gatherings to talk about Royal Holloway! While at Pfizer I worked with colleagues at the Sandwich facility, including travel to the UK.

What are your aspirations?

I am lucky in that I have been able to meet many of my aspirations still fairly early in my career. I have met the aspirations of being a principal investigator on a number of research studies, having my work published, and being able to teach. I hope to be able to continue with all of those activities as well as to enter a phase where I will be providing more mentorship. I also hope to one day write an engaging novel that combines my love of history and epidemiology!

Why did you choose to work for Rady Children's Hospital?

After I had children, I could think of no better use of my training that to conduct research needed to improve children's health.

Have you been back to the College since graduating?

I have been back to Royal Holloway twice. The more recent time, in 2003, I hardly recognised the campus!

What advice would you give students to help them with their career eg top career tips?

Don't eliminate yourself; for example apply for something even if you think it is beyond you. I have lost track of the number of times I have applied for a fellowship, special scheme at work, etc. where I really did not think I met the criteria or I had to work hard to convince someone I was 'really senior enough' only to finally land the position!

For more Alumni Profiles visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/alumni/profiles/