**Andrea Cooper, Department of Respiratory Sciences (16.06.22)**

So my name is Andrea Cooper, I’m Professor of Cellular Immunology, and I’m in the MSB, which is the Maurie Shock Building.

I have a group, I have a specialised laboratory, a Category II laboratory, right next door to me, and I have my students and my fellows working in offices right next door to me. So I’m a great believer in everybody being in the same place, and seeing each other face to face, so that they can interact and develop ideas spontaneously, so that’s how we’ve designed the space that we work in.

I work in fundamental immunology. I need to work out how the body responds to infections, and I do that by using animal models - I deliver infections to the animals, I watch the animals responding in a very definitive way, and then we translate that information into possible mechanisms that might be occurring in humans. And then we look at human responses to infection, and identify pathways, mechanistic pathways, in the humans, and then we use the mouse models to identify ways in which, or to determine whether, those pathways are actually legitimate pathways which may be mediated. Whilst I’m looking at the fundamental elements of immune response, I’m also thinking about human problems, and one of the big human problems in the world is tuberculosis; it’s the single biggest killer - infectious disease killer - bar none, and it’s a disease that we don’t yet have an effective vaccine for. So as a basic immunologist, my job is to understand immunological mechanisms, and then provide suggestions for those people who are designing vaccines that will allow us to combat this disease.

A lot of health and health-based research is addressing problems, and therefore it’s intrinsically interdisciplinary - you can’t solve a problem following one intellectual path, and that’s really stimulating. One of the things about interdisciplinary activity is that you present your ideas, and people say, ‘Well what about this?’, and you go, ‘I hadn’t even thought about that!’, and the fact that you’re broaching ideas with individuals who don’t have those underlying prejudices that you have allows you then to overcome your own prejudices, or in-bound ways of thinking.

So I do like, oddly enough, the Fielding Johnson Building, because of its historical foundation and the fact that it’s a really funky building - it’s built because it’s the way someone wanted it to be rather than being functional, and so you’ve got this really personalised building with loads of corridors that nobody knows, you know, you get completely lost in, narrow doors - I don’t go there to stomp, I go there and I get lost, basically, but it’s a really interesting building for me in that regard. We’ve got a couple of interesting architectural buildings on campus, which are really funky, and I like that, I like that idea of somebody building something because they want to, not because it’s functional.