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OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
沖縄科学技術大学院大学

VISITING PROGRAM

TSVP TALK

Understanding How Fungi See Light

2026

Wed.

Sep. 02

15:00–16:00

HYBRID

L5D23, ZOOM



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Many fungi form tiny flagellated spores that can swim toward light in aquatic environments. They do this using cell structures that work somewhat like animal eyes. These structures contain a unique family of proteins that forms a light-detection circuit. This circuit directs how the cell moves. The cells can therefore perform sophisticated light-detection and motion functions. I will discuss our progress in understanding these systems, as well as their potential uses in optogenetics and neurobiology.



University of Oxford

Tom Richards

Thomas Richards is Professor of Evolutionary Genomics at the University of Oxford. Tom's research focuses on the diversity and evolution of eukaryotic life, especially microbes. Over 1.5 billion years ago, a major evolutionary transition led to complex, compartmentalized cells called eukaryotes. His research aims to understand how this radical transition happened and how it led to diverse cell structures. He completed his undergraduate degree at University College London and his graduate studies at the University of Oxford and the Natural History Museum, London. He was also a Miller Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, EMBO Young Investigator, ERC Investigator, and a Royal Society University Research Fellow.

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