Outreach Committee Meeting

Monday, 11 November 2019,
2 p.m., Room GC22, William Gates Building

Minutes

Present
Tim Jones, Chair (TMJ)
Vasundhara Agarwal, Undergraduate Student Representative (VA)
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator and Secretary of Committee (CB)
Jonathan Goddard, Digital Communications Manager (JG)
Dinah Pounds, Teaching Administration Manager (DP)

1.   Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Lise Gough, Graduate Education Manager.

2.   Minutes from the Previous Meeting
The minutes from the last meeting held on 18 February 2019 were approved.

3.   Report on Actions from the Previous Meeting

   i.   **Outreach at Masters and PhD Level**
        The suggestion for a taster week had been considered by the Senior Management Team but since there were no available resources, the initiative would not be taken further.

   ii. **Murray Edwards College – Outreach Collaboration**
        TMJ reported that he had met with Andrew Spencer (who has subsequently moved to Gonville and Caius) in March to discuss establishing an outreach collaboration. They discussed the various outreach activities currently running and agreed that if anything of mutual benefit came up in the future, the two parties would get in touch. If Murray Edwards do contact the Department again, we can also suggest that they might like to pair with another College.

   iii. **Digital and Communications Officer**
        JG reported that removal of the old Computer Lab site was in progress and the home page of the Undergraduate section had been redesigned. Stock photos were currently being used on the webpage, but the plan was to replace the stock photos with photos of our own students (to be taken at the upcoming Recruitment Fair).

        A Twitter feed has been created and a lot of work undertaken to increase the number of followers. The feed has received 1200 new followers over the last nine months (including more than 500 in September) and is connecting with a lot more potential students.

A Facebook page has been set up. The old Wordpress blog has been removed and replaced with news articles embedded in the Department web page; the feed on the home page has been changed (it now uses images rather than blue links); and UTOs and research groups have shown interest in setting up their own blogs (such as Alan Blackwell's blog on AI).

Zeb Goriely, a CST undergraduate student who is a filmmaker in his spare time, is working on two videos for the Department webpages to help widen participation and increase diversity in undergraduate applications. The first video, on students' experience of studying computer science at Cambridge, should be finished by the end of Michaelmas term; and the second, an introduction to the course, is in progress.

iv. **Research Group Film**
The compilation of the Research Group film was still ongoing. IS was not at the meeting, so an update on progress would be provided at the next meeting.

v. **Sponsorship Opportunity**
A meeting to discuss IBM sponsoring events in the Department had not taken place, and Jan Samols has now left the Department. Helen Francis, the new Research Strategy Manager, would be in post from 25 November and could follow up on this. CB to follow up.
Post-meeting note: Caroline Stewart suggested the Chair speak to Helen Francis when she arrives in order to pass on any available information about this issue.
Action: TMJ

vi. **CS Enrichment Days—Teaching Content and Provision of Teaching**
Following a request from Westcliff High School for Boys for CS enrichment days, ABR was going to approach UG and PG students to ask for volunteers to develop the teaching content and provide the teaching. ABR was also going to draft a budget proposal and contact the University's Widening Participation Team to enquire if funding was available. ABR was not at the meeting so an update would be provided at the next meeting.

vii. **Girls Who Code Club**
TMJ reported that he and CS had met with the coordinator of the proposed club, Anna Lu, and it had been agreed in principle that the Department would host a week-day early-evening club. However, in the process of filling in an online form required to get the club up and running, it became apparent that there were several clauses that the Department as a venue could not sign up to. Consequently, the project has come to an end. The organiser was referred to Murray Edwards College, but TMJ was not aware that any progress had been made there either.

viii. **Actions from Athena SWAN Silver Application**
Open Day Helpers: It was not known whether the target of 50% female helpers at the UG and PG Open Days had been met. Details on the gender of volunteers would be tracked at next year's event.

Free places on the Cambridge Coding Academy: TMJ had spoken to Caroline Stewart (CS) about this proposal to offer free room and facilities in the Department in exchange for ten free places for girls on the Cambridge Coding Academy, and CS was going to discuss with the Head of Department. CB to follow up with CS.
Action: CB

ix. **Industrial Supporters Members Donations—Blue Sky Initiatives**
At the meeting in February, ABR had reported on the CSAT Practice [+] Platform. Feedback received had requested more content, for which ABR was willing to develop online resources if funding was available. However, since the last meeting things have changed, with the Climb Foundation now running the CSAT, and only seven Colleges requiring their candidates to sit the test.

4. **Outreach Requests / Enquiries**
The following enquiries had been received:

- *College Computer Science Visit:* a request from Tresham College (part of the Bedford College Group) to bring Computer Science students to visit Cambridge. CB had sent a response suggesting that the students might like to come along to a Wednesday Seminar.

- *Science Taster Day:* a request from the Cambridge Admissions Office, asking if CS colleagues would be interested in contributing to a Science/Technology outreach event. TMJ had requested more information and had subsequently arranged a Taster Day for 50 GCSE-level students on 4 February 2020. TMJ and his Post-Doc, Tobias Kohn, would run an event beginning with a short talk to set the scene, followed by a series of computer science activities the students could do on tables of seven or eight, and finishing with a round-up session.

- *Coding Club Ideas:* a request from Trumpington Community College for assistance in setting up a coding club. CB had sent a response, referring them to the Code Club website.

- *Career Information:* a request from an individual requesting assistance in finding information relating to a career in science and technology for his daughter. CB had sent a response, referring the individual to various resources.

Sponsor for summer school: TMJ reported that he had been approached by a Director of Studies about a sponsor who would like to fund extra places on the Sutton Trust Summer School. TMJ has spoken to the Cambridge Admissions Office about the funding. Discussions are in progress and funding might be in place for 2020/21. There are some logistical issues that need to be addressed, for example how applicants are ranked (e.g., according to different flags of economic and social deprivation or in a way that offers more flexibility).

5. **Sutton Trust Summer School 2019**
Committee members received the feedback received from the 2019 Summer School participants. TMJ was pleased with the feedback. There had been 32 participants, nine of whom were female. Lectures had been presented by Alice Hutchings, Neel Krishnaswami, Cecilia Mascolo and Noa Zilberman.

6. **Sutton Trust Summer School 2020**
It was noted that the 2020 Summer School will take place the week beginning 17 August. The number of places has increased to 41 (from 32).

7. **Athena SWAN and Outreach**
Committee members discussed the Department's outreach in general, and how it might be improved. The following topics were discussed:

- The distinction between focussing on getting students interested in computer science and getting students interested in applying to Cambridge.
- The need to focus on teachers to cultivate a mindset from where they encourage their students to apply to Cambridge
- Misconceptions about Cambridge
- The possibility of more PhD students giving talks to their sixth form college about computer science (while acknowledging that this initiative would still not reach schools that don't have ex-students at Cambridge)
- The possibility of working with Colleges, perhaps having (or joining) link areas, or having PhD students accompany the School Liaison Officer on school talks.
- Consideration of how outreach is currently done in the Department and the resources available and required, including:
  o Web pages
  o Contact with schools
  o Link areas
  o A list of people who would be willing to give a talk
  o Staff giving talks at their children's schools, but not joined up with the Department's outreach efforts
- Knowing what we want to achieve or target; our remit:
  o Influence on the people who apply (UGs, MPhils, PhDs)
  o Increasing the number of female students
  o Increasing the number of students from particular backgrounds
- Key outreach activities:
  o Experience Cambridge Day
  o Sutton Trust Summer Schools
  o Oxbridge Conferences
  o Open Days
  o Other, ad-hoc, events
- The possibility of doing more outreach days and developing them to be more than just question-answering and information-distribution events (e.g., include more activities and talks)
- The difficulty in finding volunteers, particularly women, for the Oxbridge Conferences (probably due to the requirement to travel to different locations each day for a week). PhD students have done these talks in the past, but the preference is for them to have done the Tripos themselves.
- The possibility of using videos instead of slides to make the Oxbridge Conference talks more interesting.
- The use of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- The difficulty of having a Computer Lab Instagram account, specifically the need to adapt news to better fit this medium, along with the lack of resources currently to do this.

8. Any Other Business
There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting will be held on Monday, 10 February 2020 (2 p.m. in Room GC22).