



Outreach Committee Meeting

Monday, 18 May 2020, at 2 p.m.
Meeting held remotely via Teams Video

Minutes

Present:

Tim Jones, Chair (TMJ)
Vasundhara Agarwal, Undergraduate Student Representative (VA)
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator, Secretary of Committee (CB)
Rachel Gardner, Digital Communications Manager (RG)
Lise Gough, Graduate Education Manager (LG)
Helen Neal, Undergraduate Course Administrator (HN)
Dinah Pounds, Teaching Administration Manager (DP)
Bogdan Roman, Research Fellow (ABR)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Caroline Stewart and Tara Leggett.

2. Membership of Committee

TMJ welcomed a new Committee member, Rachel Gardner, Digital Communications Manager. Rachel noted that she had been in a similar role in the Department of Chemistry, where she had done some work on outreach, including some alumni events.

3. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Committee members approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2020.

4. Report on Actions from the Previous Meeting

i. Research Group Film

The compilation of the Research Group film is ongoing. As Ilia Shumailov was not in attendance at this meeting, an update will be provided at a future meeting.

ii. Sponsorship Opportunity: IBM Sponsoring Events

Helen Francis, Research Strategy Manager, was going to follow up on this issue. TMJ noted that he had not heard anything further; however, as the issue is low priority and speculative, it is on hold for now.

iii. 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 look for volunteers to develop the teaching content and provide

the teaching, and draft a budget proposal and contact the University's Widening Participation Team to enquire if funding was available.

ABR reported that no one had volunteered, and he noted that the timing for this event clashed with submission of Part II projects and students' vacations. Students had seemed interested but noted that volunteering for the event would take one or two days out of their schedule. ABR suggested hosting a school visit instead, which could take place mainly in the Colleges and would not have as much impact on students' time. Committee members agreed to leave this item for now and pick it up again if we receive a further request.

iv. **Action from Athena SWAN Silver Application**

Free places on the Cambridge Coding Academy

Since the Computer Lab would not be hosting the Cambridge Coding Academy this year (due to the coronavirus pandemic), Committee members agreed to put the issue of free places for girls on hold until next year's event.

v. **Undergraduate Open Days**

TMJ reported that the Open Days would be taking place as virtual events on 2-3 July. Rob Harle has agreed to record the talk that is usually given in person. Participants will need to register. They will watch some recordings and then there will be the Q&A session. TMJ, Peter Robinson and Alastair Beresford had already volunteered for the Q&A session, and ABR volunteered to join them. TMJ hoped that the Q&A session would be set up in a one-to-one format to replicate the Q&A session usually held in the Intel Lab so that a visitor and their family could have a private conversation with a CL member and ask questions that they might not be comfortable asking in the normal, open Q&A session.

The Admissions Office (CAO) are running Q&A sessions on both days but have given us the option of committing to one day only if we wish. Further information, including the timings of the Q&A sessions, is forthcoming.

Committee members discussed CAO's request for a 20-minute sample lecture. Suggestions were to use one of the lectures recorded for this term's Part IA and Part IB students, or a previously recorded lecture. Other suggestions included using one of Jon Crowcroft's recorded Part IB or Part II lectures on Principles of Communications or Networking, or one of Ross Anderson's videos, which are publicly available on YouTube. It was also noted that part of a video of a previous year's Part IB project presentations would be an interesting item to include. TMJ agreed to see which of this year's recordings seem accessible for the open day and to contact the lecturer concerned to ask for permission to use a snapshot of their recording.

vi. **Calls for Volunteers**

At the February meeting, TMJ had agreed to speak to the Head of Department about what aspects of outreach she would like the Committee to focus on (for example, focusing solely on state schools, targeting particular POLAR quartiles, encouraging more girls, etc.). TMJ reported that he had not had an opportunity to do this before the lockdown, and he will pick this up again later.

Action: TMJ

vii. **Women in Computer Sciences – Widening Participation Event**

A request from Fitzwilliam College had been received in November 2019 to include in its widening participation event a visit to the Computer Lab and/or to take part in an activity here. TMJ had responded to the College, expressing the Department's interest and requesting further information. He had not heard back from the College, but the event has probably been cancelled or postponed.

viii. **STIMULUS – Help Children Learn in a Local School**

The Committee had agreed at the last meeting that it would be useful to have more information about this programme, and had proposed a presentation to staff by the STIMULUS Co-ordinator before a Wednesday meeting early in the Easter term. DP had agreed to contact Jacqui Watkins about this and CB would liaise with Jo de Bono to reserve a Wednesday meeting slot. It had been suggested that it would be useful to invite semi-retired members of staff to the relevant Wednesday meeting, as they might be potential volunteers.

DP had suggested that we pursue the Isaac Computer Science Platform instead, and will follow up this issue with Alastair Beresford.

Action: DP

ix. **Rotary Club 'Technology Tournament'**

An enquiry had been received from Julian Landy enquiring about a technology tournament for local schools that the Rotary Club could sponsor. TMJ had contacted Mr Landy to find out more about their request.

TMJ reported that the Rotary Club currently holds a technical tournament, which is a three-hour event involving volunteer teachers, where teams of four students solve problems. Although the technical tournament is for Year 9 students (13/14 years old), Mr Landy had suggested that we might be more interested in Years 6 and 7.

Committee members discussed what school year was most appropriate for the competition, the timing of the event and where to hold it. The Committee agreed that, since students choose their GCSE options early in Year 9, it would be good to target the event for Year 8 students and, in terms of timing, hold the competition outside term so as not to interfere with undergraduate students' study.

A discussion about how much input and resources might be expected from the Lab prompted a suggestion to contact Isaac Computer Science, which provides the platform and content for its outreach events while Raspberry Pi delivers the content. The Committee felt that this arrangement would also be appropriate for the Rotary Club tournament, with the Computer Lab simply hosting the event and perhaps providing volunteers on the day. The Committee also felt that Isaac Computer Science might provide content for and deliver some of the future Lab outreach events.

TMJ agreed to contact Isaac Computer Science with this proposal and to contact Caroline Stewart about using the Lab as the venue.

Action: TMJ

x. **Extended Projects Week at Hills Road Sixth Form College**

An enquiry from Nicolle McNaughton about possible outreach during the week of 18-22 May 2020 had been discussed at the last meeting. LG had not heard any more from Nicolle. The event has probably been cancelled or postponed.

5. **Open Days, 17 and 18 September 2020**

TMJ reported that the Department would not be holding an in-person event at the Lab, but instead will have a stand at the Student Services Centre. A few people had volunteered to participate on the stand but less than would be ideal. TMJ said that he would bring this up at the Wednesday meeting, and ABR suggested asking students to volunteer. TMJ said he would email students about this volunteering opportunity, and VA volunteered on the spot. ABR also offered to volunteer depending on his availability.

Action: TMJ

6. **Sutton Trust Summer School**

TMJ reported that this event will be going ahead online, from 17-21 August (over five days instead of the usual four days) and we are expecting 43 students.

We have been asked to cut down the content to about 2 hours per day. There is a range of activities and materials planned to accommodate the range of experience of participants (from those with no coding to others who are already writing programmes). These materials and activities include recorded lectures, articles to read, pen and paper exercises, programming tasks (with three levels of difficulty available), online forums, and a daily webinar for any questions that participants may have. Work is in hand to tailor existing materials for the online event. The materials are required by the end of June and they will be delivered by an online platform developed by Sutton Trust.

7. **Sponsor for Sutton Trust Summer School**

Having spoken to the Cambridge Admissions Office about the sponsor who wanted to fund extra places on the Summer School, TMJ had gone back to the relevant Director of Studies, but they were not sure if the donor was still interested. TMJ will follow this up for next time the Summer School takes place as a physical event in Cambridge.

8. **2020 Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences**

In light of developments with the coronavirus pandemic, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had jointly taken the decision to cancel the 2020 Conferences. TMJ noted the Committee's thanks to Matthew Ireland, Michael Dodson, Jeremy Yallop and Simone Teufel, who had volunteered to attend the conferences but ultimately had not been required.

9. **Outreach Requests / Enquiries**

No new external requests or enquiries had been received since the last meeting.

10. **Any Other Business**

Volunteer Alumni

RG asked the Committee about whether we involved alumni as a source of volunteers, since working with alumni is part of her remit. RG reported that her experience in the Department of Chemistry had been that alumni felt strongly about wanting to get involved in outreach events (particularly female alumni wanting to encourage girls to engage with science). RG suggested that she could use the Rotary Club event as a pilot to see if there

is any appetite for outreach amongst the alumni. The Committee agreed it was a good idea to include alumni in outreach activities.

Action: RG

11. Date of Next Meetings

Committee members agreed to schedule the 2020/21 meeting dates as follows:

Monday, 9 November 2020, 2 p.m.

Monday, 8 February 2021, 2 p.m.

Monday, 17 May 2021, 2 p.m.