



Outreach Committee Meeting

Monday, 9 November 2020, at 2 p.m.
Meeting held via videoconference

Minutes

Present:

Tim Jones, Chair (TMJ)
Vasundhara Agarwal, Undergraduate Student Representative (VA)
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator, Secretary of Committee (CB)
Marion Cobby, Undergraduate Course Administrator (MJC)
Rachel Gardner, Digital Communications Manager (RG)
Helen Neal, Undergraduate Course Administrator (HN)
Dinah Pounds, Teaching Administration Manager (DP)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Lise Gough, Graduate Education Manager (LG).

2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 18 May 2020 were approved.

3. Report on Actions from the Previous Meeting

i. Research Group Film

Iliia Shumailov (IS) was not at this meeting and therefore not available to provide an update on the progress of his Research Group film – informal interviews with graduate students about their experience in the Computer Lab. RG noted that she would contact Iliia to ask if she could put his film on the website if/when it is available.

Action: RG

ii. Sponsorship Opportunity: IBM Sponsoring Events

There had been no further developments on this issue so, as it was low priority and speculative, the Committee agreed to remove it from the next agenda.

iii. Action from Athena SWAN Silver Application

Free places on the Cambridge Coding Academy

As it was doubtful there would be a Coding Academy event in 2021, the Committee agreed to remove this issue from the next agenda.

iv. Undergraduate Open Days

TMJ reported that the open days had taken place as virtual events in July and September. Materials had included a video of the admissions talk usually given by Robert Harle, a 20-minute sample of a lecture (Ross Anderson's intro to his Software and Security Engineering course), Undergraduate Student Zeb Goriely's video, Student Admin's brochures on admissions and pathways through the Tripos, and a webpage.

For the July open day, there was also a live event where questions submitted to an email address set up for this purpose were answered on a rota system by TMJ, Peter Robinson, Alastair Beresford, and David Greaves. There was also an online FAQ page which they updated with the answers to the more general questions received. Although TMJ sent out the same material for the September event, no questions were received (possibly due to the answers being available on the FAQ page and/or the much lower attendance at this event).

In response to a question about whether there were different target audiences for the July and September events, HN noted that the September event was aimed to coincide with several Colleges' open days and drew only about 5,000 attendees, whereas the July open day drew around 40,000 attendees.

TMJ also reported that they had considered providing a virtual session to mimic the face to face chats with Directors of Studies in the Intel Lab. However, due to the difficulty in accommodating safeguarding rules, the idea had been dropped.

v. Outreach Focus

At the February 2020 meeting, the Committee had discussed how to deal with the various requests for volunteers. 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 yet spoken to the Head of Department but will do so.

Action: TMJ

vi. Isaac Computer Science Platform for Outreach

DP had followed up with Alastair Beresford the idea of using Isaac Computer Science and Raspberry Pi for some of our own outreach events. DP reported that Alastair was happy with such an arrangement but wanted to know if the Committee would want Isaac to simply coordinate events (in which case, we could contact Matt Patterson) or whether we would want Isaac to do more than that (for example, design content). The Committee discussed this and agreed that DP would set up a conversation with Matt Patterson and RG to explore options for collaboration with Isaac and/or Raspberry Pi.

Action: DP and RG

vii. Rotary Club 'Technology Tournament'

An enquiry had been received from the Rotary Club about sponsoring a technology tournament for local schools. TMJ reported that he had been in touch with the Rotary Club again and they had agreed that the timing of the event should be

around Easter time. While the Rotary Club were very keen to run the tournament around Easter 2021, it is likely that it will not take place until Easter 2022. TMJ had spoken to the central outreach pre-16 team, who had advised that schools would probably not want to commit to an event in 2021 as they would be trying to make up for lost class time and scaling back out-of-school activities. TMJ agreed to get back to the Rotary Club about a 2022 event.

Action: TMJ

viii. Sponsor for Sutton Trust Summer School

TMJ will follow up on this issue the next time the Summer School takes place as a physical event in Cambridge.

ix. Volunteer Alumni

RG reported that she had hoped to gauge alumni interest for outreach during a planned alumni event, but the event had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions. However, she would be circulating an email to alumni this week, in which she would ask alumni if they are already doing outreach or if would be interested in doing so.

Action: RG

4. Outreach Requests / Enquiries

i. Request for progression info and a mock interviewer

An enquiry had been received in June from Janet Symonds, Head of Computing at Saffron Walden County High Sixth Form College, asking (i) about recommended A Level subjects for progression to a career in Cyber Security via studying at Cambridge; and (ii) whether there was someone in the department who could run mock interviews for all of their Cambridge/Oxford applicants. TJ had advised Mrs Symonds of the relevant subjects and that we could not provide anyone for the mock interviews.

ii. Subject Webinar for Year 12s

A request had been received in July from Kathryn Singleton, St Catherine's College, for help in promoting the St Catharine's Computer Science subject webinar taking place the following week. RG had produced some social media about the event.

iii. Cambridge Applicant Support Programme

A request for help had been received in August from the Widening Participation Project Coordinator, Admissions Office, looking for departmental support in the setting up of preparation work for students around admissions tests and interview practise. David Greaves had volunteered for this programme. TMJ noted his thanks to David, particularly as the request for help had been last minute.

iv. CompSci undergraduate committee/society

An enquiry had been received in August from Michael McGrade, the Clydeside Project, who wished to speak to an undergraduate committee or society about life on their course in relation to an outreach project he was doing. RG had responded, offering various contacts and resources.

v. **CTMUA preparation resources**

An enquiry had been received in October from Radhakrishnan Hariraj about how to access further resources for CTMUA, especially on logic and proof questions. TMJ had referred Mrs Hariraj to Isaac Physics.

vi. **Science Girls Squad--new (free) science education initiative for girls**

An enquiry had been received in October from Solenne Le Billon, a Grade 12 Student and the founder of Science Girls Squad, a multimedia initiative created by girls, for girls, to raise awareness and engagement in cutting-edge topics in 21st-century science. Solenne had written to ask whether we would be interested in their free educational materials to use in our science outreach program. TMJ had responded, conveying that their target age (7-10 years) was a little low for our purposes.

5. **Any Other Business**

2021 Summer School: TMJ reported that CAO will probably run a hybrid Summer School next year as they do not want to risk planning a solely physical event and having to change it at the last minute. Instead, the hybrid event would involve all the academic work being delivered online and the additional tutorial-type material being delivered at a two-day physical event. This way, if a last-minute cancellation of the physical part of the event were necessary, it would not be as disruptive.

Communication from CAO: TMJ noted that there had been no update from CAO since June, when they had cancelled all in-person outreach events to the end of December.

Post-meeting note: TMJ received an email from CAO the day after this meeting saying that they will continue to deliver all outreach events virtually until at least May 2021.

6. **Date of Next Meetings**

The next meetings are scheduled for Monday, 8 February 2021 at 2 p.m. and Monday, 17 May 2021 at 2 p.m.