



Outreach Committee Meeting

13:30 – 14:15, Tuesday 11 June 2024
William Gates Building, Room GS15

Minutes

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)
Aga Niewiadomska, Outreach Administrator (Secretary)
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator (Notetaker)
Rachel Gardner, Communications Manager
Lise Gough, Postgraduate Education Manager
Jeremy Yallop, Associate Professor (Observer)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Carl Henrik Ek, Laurie Gale, Neel Krishnaswami, Peter Ochieng, Sue Sentance, and Becky Straw. Tim noted that Jeremy Yallop was attending this meeting as an observer since he will be taking over as Committee Chair next academic year.

2. Conflicts of interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

3. Updates on current outreach projects

Aga updated the Committee on the current outreach projects:

a. Women in CS

The programme began in February with 20 students who have been mentored and have been writing their own projects. Aga has been marking the projects and is very impressed with them. The residential for this programme will be taking place from 30 June to 1 July at Corpus Christi. Aga also noted that the Research Strategy Team had managed to secure a donation from Qualcomm to cover all the programme costs. Rachel added that this project had been devised by Aga at her own initiative.

b. DeepMind internships

This is a new programme this year, funded by DeepMind. The interns, mainly undergraduates and some recent graduates from other universities, will start on 8 July for eight weeks. There will be lots of events organized for them, including talks on research skills, a careers event, and a showcase event where they can present posters. Aga was pleased that they had found the full 10 interns as initially there had

been issues with selection. In response to Rachel's question about whether this programme may be run again, Tim noted that he had spoken to the widening participation team who said that DeepMind do not want to make a commitment until August.

c. Sutton Trust summer school

Tim has been overseeing this programme for several years but this year, Aga is overseeing it. Most plans are now set but she still needs to ask for help from some students. Aga noted that, in terms of programme activities this year, she has changed a few things, including a visit to the Centre for Computing History and a visit by the Institute of Astronomy (since they don't have their own summer school).

d. STEM SMART

The half-day (morning) residential for this programme will take place at the end of August. This is the first time that the Department will be taking part in this programme. Aga noted that initially we were expecting around 60 students to attend, but there are now over 100 students expected, which is great. This is a long-running scheme, running for 18 months, starting in Year 12. Initially, participants attend tutorials and answer questions online. The next stage is smaller tutorials, similar to supervisions. Next is the residential event—which is what the Department is taking part in. And subsequently help with making an application and getting the required grades. The teaching for the Computer Science strand is handled by the Raspberry Pi team.

Lise asked whether data was available regarding gender and Aga said she would get the data together for the next meeting.

4. Discussion on outreach strategy

Tim introduced the draft strategy document (which had been included in the agenda papers), noting the three sections: undergraduate students (with subcategories for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and female students), postgraduate students, and funding and partnerships.

The Committee discussed the strategy, including the need to audit the website to more effectively signpost and advertise the Department, and the potential benefit of acquiring testimonies (with accompanying photos), to personalize the website content. Testimonies could be requested as part of the exit process. The frequency of strategy review was also mentioned, and it was suggested that it should be reviewed regularly, perhaps every three years, though this should also be reviewed.

As several Committee members were not at this meeting, the Committee agreed to revisit the strategy at a future meeting.

5. Future outreach events

Aga noted that she had been approached by the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) and Trinity College about possible outreach collaborations.

- NCCE 'I Belong' event: an event for 96 Year 8 girls designed to encourage them to take up GCSE Computer Science. A whole weekend of computer science workshops will be delivered at the Cambridge Maths School, and NCCE has asked if we could give the girls a tour of the Department and a few talks about studying computer science at university. Since they hope to get university students to help run the workshops, they

have also asked if we would advertise this opportunity to our students. The tour/talks are provisionally set for Saturday, 16 November, 12.00 – 14.00.

- Trinity STEM events: The School Liaison Officers at Trinity have asked the Department to plan and run computer science workshops for the following events:
 - (i) primary school students will visit Trinity to do some fun, hands-on subject sessions followed by a tour of the college.
 - (ii) an event for female Year 12 students to encourage them to study STEM subjects at university. This event would involve workshops and sessions about university life and applications.

It was suggested that the primary school event should be deferred to Sue Sentance and Laurie Gale. Aga noted that Laurie had already said that he liked the idea of the 'I Belong' event but thought that, since at Year 8 university is still far away, it might be more useful to talk about computer science.

It was also suggested that it would be useful to gather some role models, perhaps by organising a poster event for female students, giving them the opportunity to speak to a younger audience, and the students one-to-one interaction with the role models.

6. Future membership of the committee

Tim noted that his term of office as Chair would be coming to an end at the end of this academic year and that Jeremy Yallop would be taking over from October.

Carl Henrik is also finishing his term on the committee, while Jamie Vicary will be joining.

The Committee took a moment to thank Tim for all his work as Chair over the last few years. They agreed that he has done a lot for outreach in the Department and has been a pleasure to work with.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Aga will circulate a Doodle poll for the next meeting.