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## Outreach Committee Meeting

10:00, Monday 21 October  
William Gates Building, Room GC22

### Minutes

#### Attendance:

Jeremy Yallop (Chair)  
Aga Niewiadomska, Outreach Administrator (Secretary)  
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator (Notetaker)  
Laurie Gale  
Rachel Gardner, Communications Manager  
Sue Sentence  
Becky Straw, Undergraduate Teaching Manager  
Jamie Vicary

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Lise Gough.

#### 2. Conflicts of interest

Committee members were asked to declare any conflicts of interest at the relevant item.

#### 3. Updates on current outreach projects

##### a. Women in CS

Aga reported on the Women in CS programme, which had just finished. A programme evaluation report had been circulated with the agenda. The residential had been held at the end of June/beginning of July and had gone very well. Students had been very engaged, got on very well together, and reported they had really got a feeling of what it felt like to come to Cambridge. The students had enjoyed several events including a mock interview with a student ambassador, a programming Prolog workshop, and a College formal dinner.

Aga noted that there were limitations on the feedback data due to some students having dropped out early in the programme and/or who were not able to attend the residential and so were unable to leave feedback. Aga asked the committee for ideas on how to tackle the engagement issue (20 students had started the programme, but only 13 had finished) and how to make the programme one that could benefit more students. The Committee discussed these issues, including:

- Having a funnel system: to split the programme into phases, with eligibility for the next phase being dependent on engagement with the current phase
- Including an online self-study option to address the limitation on numbers
- Having very early circulation of dates for programme events (some of this year's students missed parts of the online events because they coincided with Ramadan, for example)

- Consideration of the timing of the programme (for example, in terms of A-level exams and UCAS applications, the availability of College accommodation, and the need to fit in the research project before the residential part of the programme).

Sue suggested that Women@CL could have more engagement in this programme and Jamie invited Aga to contact him about his College (Kings) who have a really involved outreach programme.

**b. DeepMind internships**

Aga and Rachel reported on this programme, noting that it relates to widening participation for postgraduate outreach, with the invitation having gone out to non-research-intensive universities, targeting undergraduate or recently graduated students. Four other universities were offering the same programme.

Aga noted that a funding application for next year had already been submitted to the Royal Academy of Engineering. The programme had been very useful for the 10 interns, who had spent 8 weeks in the department, working on a project, attending weekly research skills workshops and talks, and attending social events. Though, the feedback had highlighted that there had been too much to do.

The Committee discussed the programme, including:

- How the programme is evaluated:
  - surveys were carried out at the beginning and end of the programme (the same questions).
  - We are unable to register postgraduate students in HEAT (Higher Education Access Tracker) but a survey will be sent to the students after the event.
- Student concerns about getting funding.
- The need to be very selective with applications:
  - The Committee noted the importance of selecting students with academic profiles that gave them a realistic prospect of success in subsequent applications to postgraduate research programmes
  - candidates were interviewed by the people they were going to work with.

**c. Sutton Trust summer school**

A summary of feedback had been provided with the agenda. Aga reported that the summer school had been running for years with Professor Tim Jones as the coordinator but she had taken over the coordination this year, adding new activities including a visit to the Centre for Computer History (which was shown in the feedback as the favourite of the activities), an escape room activity as an icebreaker, and an Astronomy workshop and tour of the Astronomy Department. Generally, the feedback was good and had improved since the year before. Much of the negative feedback was about things the department had no control over (such as the distance required to walk to and from the department, bad wi-fi and food issues). Feedback also mentioned the packed schedule, but this related to what was scheduled in the evenings rather than the 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. schedule in the department.

**d. STEM SMART**

Rachel and Aga reported that the department took part in this initiative for the first time this year. Raspberry Pi led the tuition on the programme. Almost 100 students (out of the 500 students taking part in the whole programme) had attended a half-day residential in the department, experiencing a taster lecture, admissions lecture, and a practical lesson (introduction to graphics). Aga had not received feedback yet but noted that data is input to HEAT so we will be able to see the applications data in the future.

**e. Cambridge Festival**

Rachel and Aga reported that the 2025 event will be the fourth year that the department has run events as part of the Festival. The 2025 department events will take place on Saturday 22 March 2025 as part of the Open Days across the West Cambridge campus. Last year, the event was badged as a family day (because the University family weekend coincided with the Open Days) and so attracted families and fewer teenagers. More teenagers are expected for the 2025 event as it is badged as an Open Day.

The Cambridge Festival Schools' Days will be taking place on 25 and 26 March, but Rachel and Aga are considering whether to organise schools events themselves for a few reasons: the Festival team didn't provide many students interested in computer science for the 2024 event, they don't target the same schools that the department wants to target, and the department is considering providing a bursary for these events.

There was discussion about potential activities for the events. The Committee discussed the suggestion from Jamie for the Outreach team to curate some workshops (Jamie offered a Quantum Computing Workshop) so that they don't depend on one academic but instead can be presented by others at different events. The idea is for the events to be sustainable, quality-assured, and made available as open source.

Budget for kit for events was also discussed (for example the Outreach Team has a need for monitors).

**4. Outreach strategy**

Jeremy noted that he planned to slightly revise the strategy document that Professor Tim Jones had drafted (circulated with the agenda), but before doing so wanted the Committee's thoughts, particularly with regard to monitoring delivery of the programmes and evaluating their effectiveness. Ideas included:

- comparing year to year, noting the effect of any changes made in terms of participants' experience and applications
- using HEAT data
- recording how many people the programmes are reaching
- the possibility of running the programmes on a much larger scale
- the effect of the teacher as the multiplier, but bearing in mind it's about increasing the diversity rather than just the numbers
- the difficulty in evaluating the impact of events
- partnering (e.g., with Colleges, other Departments, The Brilliant Club)
- the desire to get groups of schools together
- the importance of building relationships with schools

It was noted that the amount of events has quadrupled since Aga started as Outreach Coordinator.

**5. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place in the Lent term. Aga will circulate a meeting poll.