UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Department of Computer Science & Technology

Outreach Committee Meeting

14:00 - 15:30, Monday 2 June
William Gates Building, Room GS15

Minutes

In 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

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Apologies had been received from Lise Gough and Neel Krishnaswami.

2. **Conflicts of interest**
   Jeremy asked for any conflicts of interest to be raised as they were encountered.

3. **Updates on current outreach projects**

   a. **Women in CS**
   Aga reported that, since the last meeting (at which time only the first seminar had taken place), the series of five weekly seminars had been completed, with approximately 150 attendees at each seminar. The feedback (from 55 respondents), circulated with the agenda, had been generally positive. Aga noted that a key question was 'Has attending the seminar series changed your mind about applying to study Computer Science?', with 33% of respondents saying 'Yes, I wasn't sure about applying and now I'm planning to apply'. The comments were also really nice to read. It was clear from both the numbers and the text that the programme had had an impact, and Aga was pleased that the seminars had been opened up so more students could benefit.

   Participants had been selected on their participation in the seminars as well as on their WP criteria (Aga followed the University guidelines, which are based on a ranking system). 20 candidates were selected, all of whom accepted and who have been on the programme since April. The mentoring has started and yesterday was the deadline for the first draft of their projects. Aga noted that selecting the students based on their engagement had made a difference, with all students still engaged (compared to 3 dropouts at this stage of the programme last year). The project titles had all been very interesting and, with a month to the final deadline, Aga was looking forward to what they do.

The residential, for 20 students (compared to 13 students last year), will be held on 19 and 20 July. In order to encourage better attendance than last year, the timing has changed from last year and the event will be held on a weekend.

There was a brief discussion about finding mentors for the programme. Aga noted that she had asked participants whether they had a preference for female or non-binary mentors and she had managed to match participants to mentors accordingly. In terms of finding mentors, Sue suggested including a call in the Women@CL calendar and perhaps doing some posters.

Jeremy asked about capacity limits for the non-residential part of the programme and Aga noted that the most they have had for a seminar was 180. Anything above that might make it hard to monitor the chat and read people's questions.

b. DeepMind internships

Aga reported that since the last meeting, 10 interns had been selected, all of whom have accepted the offer. Aga is now finalising arrangements for the programme, including finding mentors for the interns. She is also looking for individuals to take part in a panel discussion to talk about how doing a PhD has helped them in their career. Aga had reached out to one past PhD student and is still looking for more. Rachel offered to raise this at a Wednesday meeting.

c. Sutton Trust summer school

Aga reported that arrangements for the summer school are coming along nicely, with the programme schedule similar to that of last year, apart from a change from the Astronomy workshop (which is not possible to do this year) to an AI workshop, which Ryan Daniels from the Accelerate team has agreed to do.

d. Cambridge Festival

Rachel reported that this was the fourth year that the Department had done an open day at the Cambridge Festival, and it was easily our biggest and best event (there was a lot more advertising this year). Quite a few school groups had attended even though the event was held on a Saturday. This is good, particularly because due to miscommunications, the University has not included the Department in previous Schools Days.

The head of the Festival Manager, David Cain, had visited the event and said positive things on seeing all the participants engaging with the different activities, and that he would ensure that the Department is included for the School Days next year.

Rachel also mentioned that the Festival office does not promote the Festival to schools (as it does the School Days).

Rachel is looking for a fun technology to get feedback from attendants. This year they had a Furhat robot, feedback from which suggested that all the activities (including escape rooms, Sonic Pi events and AI activities) had appealed to attendants.

4. Outreach strategy

Jeremy noted that the discussion about the strategy at the last meeting had been very useful. He had since made a couple of changes to the strategy and he asked the Committee for any final comments before he submits the strategy to the Faculty Board. The changes he had made related to a section about liaising with the central University to maintain the admissions page and coordinating with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Rachel noted that she would be meeting with the Postgraduate Office about upgrading the postgraduate websites. She also noted that a particular question she receives a lot is about when an applicant will hear about the outcome to their application; and that the Department is losing a lot of students due to the long time it takes for this decision to be made.

Sue asked whether it would be possible to work out from the collection and analysis of data for the undergraduate students which activities are most impactful. Aga said that that is one of the goals of collecting data and uploading data to HEAT, as she can then track whether those students have gone on to apply to Cambridge, whether they received an offer, and whether they accepted. HEAT does not provide data on whether a programme participant went on to apply for computer science elsewhere though; it would be necessary to go through HESA for that. Rachel suggested, as a way around this, to contact last year's participants after A Level results to ask them directly.

5. Data collection strategy

Celia noted that the Head of Department and Departmental Secretary would be bringing a data collection strategy to the ED&I Committee meeting next week.

Aga noted that it would be most useful to keep to the data that can be put on HEAT (such as ethnicity, nationality, refugee/asylum seeker, in care (and for how long), young carer, gender identity, POLAR4 number, indices of deprivation of postcode, etc).

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Jeremy introduced this item as a new standing item for matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

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