



Research Staff Forum Meeting

Friday, 19 November 2021, 2 p.m.
(via videoconference)

Minutes

Present:

Matt Danish (MRD) (Chair)	Angeliki Koutsoukou-Argyragi (AKA)
Daniel Bates (DB)	Zohreh Shams (ZS)
Celia Burns (CB) (Secretary)	James Sharkey (JPS)
Helen Francis (HJF)	Sergei Skorobogatov (SS)
Chaudhary Ilyas (CMAI)	Caroline Stewart (CS)
Eva Kalyvianaki (EK)	

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew Caines, Frank Courbon, and Angeliki Koutsoukou-Argyragi.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 were approved.

3. Report on Actions from the Last Meeting

i. Forum Membership

Franck Courbon (Security Group) and Chaudhary Ilyas (Rainbow Graphics & Interaction Group) have joined the Forum, with Chaudhary filling the vacancy in the Rainbow Graphics & Interaction Group. James Sharkey reminded the Forum that he had initially joined the Forum as the Rep for Research Assistants, but he is no longer a Research Assistant. However, he said he would be happy to take on the role of Rep for the Networks & Operating Systems Group, and the Committee were pleased to accept his offer.

ii. Representative for Research Assistants

The Forum is still seeking a Research Assistant who is not doing a PhD.

iii. Lecturing Opportunities for Research Staff

This matter had been discussed at the recent Postgraduate Education Committee. Guidance for post-docs about teaching experience had recently been drawn up and circulated widely so that staff are aware of the opportunities and advisors are aware of what they can offer. The information will also be put on the website.

Action: CB

iv. **Communications**

Following a discussion about improved communication within the research staff group, Forum members had agreed to look into adding a Slack group for research staff to an existing CST Slack group. MRD noted that he and Andrew Caines had joined the existing "Computer Lab" slack workspace (cl-cambridge.slack.com) and set up a new channel "research-staff-forum". The workspace was publicised to 'lab-ras' and 'lab-sras-fellows' in May, but it may be worth publicising to those lists again, and to the 'cl-cooler' list.

Action: MRD

v. **Migration of the Hermes email system to the Microsoft Exchange Online system**

At the last meeting, Forum members had been concerned about the migration to the Microsoft Exchange Online system and what action, if any, individuals needed to take. MD noted that Andrew Caines (not in attendance) had compiled some information about the migration, which would be circulated to Forum members.

Action: CB

vi. **Social events**

MRD drew attention to the department Garden Party held in September at Churchill College and the first reinstatement of Friday Happy Hour last Friday. CS noted that the consensus was that events could now take place, particularly in The Street where it is well ventilated, but that plans for events should still be checked with the department first.

CMAI raised the issue of a department Christmas event. CS explained that the different groups within the department tend to arrange their own events at Christmas, but CMAI felt it was important for there to be a wider event. He noted that he has experience of organising such events and would be willing to do so if he had official consent. CS asked CMAI to email her some ideas to discuss with the HoD Team. CS will email CMAI to confirm the number of department staff and research students.

Action: CMAI and CS

ZS reminded the Forum about the department tea and cake events that used to take place termly before the pandemic. CS noted that these haven't been resumed because there would potentially be too many people in The Street. MRD noted that the sensors had shown that the ventilation had worked well for Happy Hour last Friday. He agreed to give CS an idea of numbers in attendance at the next Happy Hour.

Action: MRD

4. **Wellbeing – Departmental Announcements**

MRD reminded Forum members about the department's suggestion box, which is available on the Wellbeing Committee webpage (<https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/local/committees/wellbeing/>).

5. Wellbeing – Report for the Wellbeing Committee

There were no wellbeing concerns reported. Forum members discussed social events (see item 3vi above), including the desire for more department-wide events, and in particular, a Christmas event, although this could be early in the new year rather than in December.

6. Buildings and Environment Committee (B&EC) – Update

MRD, Postdoc Rep on the B&EC, noted that he had attended the most recent B&EC meeting on 1 October but there was not much to report of relevance to the Forum. The expected cycle park re-fit has been postponed. It may take place over the winter break, but MRD has not received any information about it yet so that seemed unlikely.

7. Equality and Diversity Committee (E&DC) – Update

CS noted that the composition of the E&DC (now the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee) is under review but will most probably include a Postdoc Rep (currently vacant since Heidi Howard stepped down). James Sharkey noted his interest in taking on the Postdoc Rep role.

8. Any Other Business

Postdoc Academy – Research Culture

Helen Francis, Research Strategy Manager, noted that she had recently met with Liz Simmonds, Assistant Head of the Postdoc Academy. Liz is chair of the University's Research Culture Working Group, leading on the implementation of the Institutional Action Plan. She is keen to engage with researchers in the Department and has offered to give a brief talk to this Forum at a future meeting. The Forum would welcome a talk from Liz, and it was agreed that Helen would liaise with her about a date for next term.

Action: HF

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that CB would circulate a Doodle poll for the next meeting in the Lent term.