



Research Staff Forum Meeting

Wednesday, 2 March 2022, 11 a.m.
(via videoconference)

Agenda

Members:

Matt Danish (MRD) (Chair)
Daniel Bates (DB)
Celia Burns (CB) (Secretary)
Andrew Caines (APC)
Franck Courbon (FRC)
Helen Francis (HJF)
Chaudhary Ilyas (CMAI)

Eva Kalyvianaki (EK)
Angeliki Koutsoukou-Argyraiki (AKA)
Zohreh Shams (ZS)
James Sharkey (JPS)
Sergei Skorobogatov (SS)
Caroline Stewart (CS)

1. Postdoc Academy – Research Culture

Talk by Liz Simmonds, Assistant Head of the Postdoc Academy, about the current priorities for improving research culture in Cambridge.

2. Apologies

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2021 are attached.

4. Report on Actions from the Last Meeting

i. Lecturing Opportunities for Research Staff

Guidance for post-docs about teaching experience had been circulated widely. CB has now included the information on the Support for Research website (<https://www.cst.cam.ac.uk/research/researchsupport/postdocs>).

ii. Communications

MRD and APC had set up a new “research-staff-forum” channel in the “Computer Lab” Slack workspace (cl-cambridge.slack.com) and publicised the workspace to ‘lab-ras’ and ‘lab-sras-fellows’. At the last meeting, the Forum had considered publicising the workspace again to those lists and to the ‘cl-cooler’ list. MRD to report.

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

Following Forum members' concern about the migration to the Microsoft Exchange Online system, APC had compiled some useful information, which CB has circulated to Forum members.

iv. **Social events**

(i) CS and CMAI were going to communicate about ideas for a social event that CS could discuss with the HoD Team. CS to report.

(ii) MRD had noted that sensors had shown that the ventilation was working well for the Happy Hour events. He was going to give CS an idea of numbers in attendance at those events. MRD to report.

5. Wellbeing – Departmental Announcements

The Wellbeing Committee has asked the RSF Chair to make any wellbeing-related departmental announcements as a standing item on the Forum agenda. MRD to report.

6. Wellbeing – Report for the Wellbeing Committee

The Wellbeing Committee has asked the RSF to discuss wellbeing as a standing item on its agenda. To discuss.

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

The B&EC met on 1 February 2022. MRD, Postdoc representative on the B&EC, to report on anything of relevance to the Forum.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) – Update

At the last RSF meeting, James Sharkey noted his interest in taking on the Postdoc Rep role on the EDI Committee. However, the Committee is currently in abeyance, with the last meeting held in March 2021.

9. Any Other Business

10. Date of Next Meeting



Research Staff Forum Meeting

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

Minutes

Present:

Matt Danish (MRD) (Chair)

Daniel Bates (DB)

Celia Burns (CB) (Secretary)

Helen Francis (HJF)

Chaudhary Ilyas (CMAI)

Eva Kalyvianaki (EK)

Angeliki Koutsoukou-Argyragi (AKA)

Zohreh Shams (ZS)

James Sharkey (JPS)

Sergei Skorobogatov (SS)

Caroline Stewart (CS)

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.