

Graduate Students' Forum

Minutes: 13 November 2014

Attending: LG Lise Gough
IT Ivo Timoteo (AI&B) [Secretary]
EW Errol Wood (Rainbow)
BF Bob Fang (MPhil)
DT Daniel Thomas (DTG)
AR Andrew Rice (GEC) [Chair]
RK Ramana Kumar (PLS)
GS Gheorghe Sarbu (CAG)
HH Heidi Howard (SRG)
LF Luana Fagarasan (Women@CL)

1 Apologies

Kumar Sharad, Sandro Bauer.

2 Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3 Matters Arising

i. *Unofficial PhD guide (VI, SMB)*

LG informed that SMB has already uploaded his part. LF will ask Yoli Shavit, who was recently on a leave to work away, and coordinate with SMB to add some information on the topic to the Unofficial PhD guide.

ii. *Department barbecue over summer. (DT)*

DT informed that the barbecue was successful. GS is considering undertaking the food hygiene course as DT and VI, the only currently certified, are finishing their PhDs and the GSF wants to continue to organize barbecues and similar events.

iii. *RT ticket software update (GS)*

DT informed that the update has been done and that it is now fully functional.

iv. *GSF supervising hours survey (feedback)*

AR will forward the document produced to the Graduate Education or Teaching committees.

LG: supervisions might be, in the future, included in the final transcript if people record it on the research development forms.

AR and LG will investigate on the possibility of directly retrieving the supervision records from cancors.

v. *Bicycle maintenance course (feedback)*

The general feedback was positive even though the attendance could have been better: 12 people on the maintenance course and 5 on the safety course. LG suggested that we include MPhil students next time.

vi. *PLS group suggested acquiring a table tennis table (RK)*

The most appropriate location seems to be outdoors by the cafeteria. It might be possible to have one table provided by the Cambridge City Council like the one at the sports centre.

RK will report back to the suggester who would then find out whether that route is possible.

vii. *Christmas quiz*

EW is willing to assume the responsibility of quiz master. The quiz will likely take place on the forth of December after the research students presentations.

4 Sys-admin feedback

GS raised the issue that some machines have different internet speeds. I has been suggested that people unhappy with their internet speed should contact sys-admin. AR suggested collecting a list of the machines that are suffering from the lower speed access to provide to sys-admin.

BF suggested that the page explaining SSH access to the lab might not be clear enough and that that led to difficulties among MPhil students. LG will speak with Graham Titmus.

5 Departmental announcements

LG informed that the following Tuesday there will be an open house day for prospective PhD students.

Our MPhil degree is the best in the Russell Group according to the Postgraduate taught experience survey. Some current and previous MPhil students will be interviewed to identify what areas we can improve on. According to the survey one of the weakest section is the feedback given to applicants. BF will collect comments among the MPhil

students.

FS07 and FS09 are now used as MPhil teaching rooms.

6 Staff-student consultative forum

HH has succeeded DT.

The aesthetic versus functional aspects of the bike shed enclosure are still being discussed.

7 Researcher development

AR will investigate the possibility of providing an advanced supervising course for students who have already supervised over a minimum number of hours.

8 Student feedback

DT: demonstrating and open days require the signing of a new zero-hour contract every time. Maybe a generic contract at the beginning of the PhD would be a better solution. (AR will look into it.)

DT also reported on: the undergraduate insufficient writing quality, the difficulty of recording talks at SW02, Intel lab lighting issues, the request for standing desks, and a suggestion of acquiring a departmental bike trailer to help moving large loads when needed.

HH: the quality of the food should be improved, a table tennis table would be a good addition, the fact that Wednesday seminars are compulsory for Research skills course should be mentioned from the start.

LF: information concerning insurance coverage for conferences should be provided during the induction of new students. Currently, filling a form to work away from the University is required which is felt to be overly complex. We should investigate the possibility of creating a "Conference leave" form, simpler and more specific.

BF: Some carpets in the lab are not fixed to the floor leading to possibly dangerous situations.

9 Date of next meeting

The next meeting should take place in February.

10 Any other business

None.