

MINUTES OF MEETING
of the
POLICY AND RESEARCH COUNCIL
held on
Wednesday, 16 September 2009
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Turing Room

Present:

Dave Robertson (Chair), Colin Adams, Stuart Anderson, Alan Bundy, Gordon Duckett, Bob Fisher (substituting for Sethu Vijayakumar), Michael Fourman, Johanna Moore, Alan Smaill, Jon Oberlander, Mike O'Boyle, Don Sannella, Mark Steedman, Perdita Stevens, Phil Wadler, Chris Williams, Marjorie Dunlop (Secretary)

Apologies: Bonnie Webber

The meeting began by welcoming Mike O'Boyle as the new Director of ICSA (taking over from Nigel Topham), Alan Smaill as the new Director of CISA (taking over from Dave Robertson) and Perdita Stevens as the new Director of Computing (taking over from Steve Renals).

Item 1 – Research Opportunities (Paper A)

EPSRC Bridging the Gaps

Only one proposal per University is permitted for this call and the one chosen is an Informatics-led bid involving several other Schools. This has now gone to EPSRC.

EPSRC Innovation and Knowledge Centres

Liz Elliott of Centre for Systems Biology is interested in collaborating on a proposal. The committee agreed to support this. Liz had offered to call a meeting of a preliminary group involving herself, Andrew Miller and Mark Parsons. The committee suggested that Stuart Anderson, Jane Hillston (suggested "champion" on the Informatics side) and Colin Adams should attend. Guido Sanguinetti (soon to be arriving as a new lecturer) might also be involved.

Action

Dave will give Liz the go-ahead to arrange a meeting
Dave will ask Jane Hillston to act as Informatics champion

EPSRC Next Generation Resilience Sandpit

Stuart Anderson reported that two of our research staff have expressed interest in attending this meeting.

Action

Stuart to encourage them to attend

EPSRC Extreme Computing Sandpit

Mike O'Boyle is interested in attending. Miles Osborne, Phillip Koehn and Paul Anderson were suggested as potentially interested.

Action

Mike O'Boyle will coordinate our engagement with this

Item 2 – Research Opportunities (Paper B)

EPSRC Career Acceleration Fellowship

This year College offers (optional) reviews with the aim of improving the quality of proposals. This was welcomed.

Royal Academy of Engineering

Three applications from the University can go forward. A ranked list of Informatics candidates will go forward to College selection committee on 23rd September.

Royal Society of Edinburgh

We have one candidate for this at present. It is believed that we had not yet had a scholarship from this source so this would be a welcome addition.

Item 3 - EPSRC Review of Impact Plans (Paper C)

There was a discussion about how to promote best practice in explaining impact in research proposals. The committee suggested that successful grant proposals (including impact plans) should, with each relevant PI's permission, be put on our Web site as exemplars.

Action

Gordon will arrange for successful grants to be on a website

Jon Oberlander volunteered to convene a small meeting (involving Julie Young and Steve Renals) to look in more depth at impact plans.

Action

Jon to arrange a meeting to discuss impact plans.

Item 4 - Managing Cross-School Funding Opportunities (Paper D)

The committee supported the proposed arrangement where we identify an internal “champion” for cross-School funding opportunities as quickly as possible. Where possible, PRC should be involved in the discussion of who it should be. There is a need to ensure that more junior academics are supported in championing proposals.

There also is an issue of how to use the Web more effectively to support our research strategy. This will be an item at another meeting but a Wiki should be set up before that meeting so that people can record information.

Action

Phil will set up the Wiki

Item 5 - Idea Lab (Paper E)

Mike Fourman reviewed the Idea Lab. There should be the potential to stimulate cross-School research that will obtain follow-on funding.

Item 6 – Informatics Recruitment Strategy (Paper F)

Gordon reported our, and the University's, current financial position. We have filled eight out of ten SICSA posts and want to recruit the remaining two as soon as we can. It was decided that we should attempt to recruit a post in neuroinformatics and a post in security.

Action

Dave will (re)start the process of recruitment for these posts

Item 9 – International Review of Informatics Research (Paper I)

We have committed to an international review of Informatics this academic year so must now plan it, starting by identifying the key questions that we wish to answer.

It was suggested that Alan Bundy could be an anchor for this activity.

Action

Gordon will send out, for information, the remit from the last International Review

Action

Dave will ask Alan to be the anchor

Item 10 – Move of Informatics Papers to Edinburgh Research Archive

This will be reported at the General Meeting.

Item 7 – Reacting to National Student Survey Results

Stuart Anderson and Dave Robertson reported on a meeting with Dai Hounsell to discuss the NSS results. Stuart has prepared a plan of action.

Item 8 – New Academic Governance Committees

Murray Cole and Don Sannella are on the QA Committee. We are not aware of Informatics representatives on any of the other three governance committees.

Action

Dave will investigate who is on the committees

Item 11– Swine Flu Preparations

Although the impact of swine flu remains uncertain, we discussed our preparations for it.

Item 12– Head of School's Business

Jim Bednar has (unusually) requested an out of cycle application for a sabbatical (Semester 2, January to May 2010). This was approved (without prejudice for any other applications).

Action

Dave will tell Jim that he has approval

Item 16– Any Other Business

Graham Spittle is visiting on 5 October 2009. Graham should be briefed about IKC, entrepreneurship, ProspeKT and the industrial front. It was suggested that Stuart Anderson, Colin Adams, Jon Oberlander, Nigel Topham and Mike Fourman should talk with Graham.

Action

Dave will involve the relevant people

Item 17– Next Meeting

Because of various time conflicts, the next meeting will be on 7 October 2009.