

Minutes of ILCC/HCRC Staff Meeting

Wednesday 2nd March 2016, 1.00 pm

Attendance

Jon Oberlander, Frank Keller, Kenneth Heafield, Caroline Hastings, Carrie McNamee, Henry Thompson, Mirella Lapata, Alan Bundy, Alex Lascarides, Bea Alex, Adam Lopez, Diana Dalla Costa, Sharon Goldwater, Mark Steedman, Kami Vaniea, Johanna Moore, Chris Lucas, Simon King, John Lee, Markus Guhe, Seona Wharrie.

Apologies were received from Charles Sutton.

1. Matters arising from previous meeting

- 1.1 JO reported that there was no progress yet to report on Pim's 'LinkedIn profiles' Knowledge Management item 5 discussed at the last meeting, but JO would pursue it with Pim.
- 1.2 Take up the PhD students activity suggested by Adam and encourage a students led seminar series to the Research Committee. JO was keen on this pilot scheme, but because semester had already begun, possibly leave it to the next academic year to allow more time to plan.
- 1.3 HT reported that he would follow up item 1.1, from the last meeting, for the next meeting.
- 1.4 Item 6.1 from previous meeting. JO reported that he was keen to pull resources from School level regarding the purchase of GPU servers and not just rely on the Institutes resources. Mirella reported that she was keen that 2 GPU servers be ordered, at 5K each. JO would check whether there is broader support for the purchase of such servers at the next Strategy committee meeting.

Action: Staff were asked to nominate 3 potential student members to run a seminar series starting in the next academic year.

Action: Henry's action on 'alumni destinations' from the last meeting was carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: Level 3 admin office to obtain a list of graduate students, supervisors and years of graduation from the last 6 months from the Careers Office.

2. Directors report

JO spoke on the Strategy Committee papers, which were also available on the School website – Strategy Committee Meetings.

A Lascarides spoke on the student experience recommendations highlighted in the Minutes of meeting. AL reported that it was proposed to create a small group of PhD students from 2nd, 3rd and 4th year to meet with other postgraduate students and talk to other supervisors and students as a way of getting to know each other. Gender balance would have to be taken into consideration.

JO outlined the new staff guidance on recruitment and reminded staff that they were all required to complete online courses on recruitment. He reminded staff that completing the courses online was essential and reminded staff to complete online training every two years.

3. Finance and Funding

C Hastings reported that the finances were on track as projected for this year with a budget of intended carry forward of 33K for next year.

She reported that there could be some flexibility over the purchase of a GPU server this financial Year. However institute income forecast for following financial years would decrease considerable with some big research council grants coming to a close.

CH reported that we'd been notified of a number of EU applications being unsuccessful, but reported on the successful awards given which could support research students – Google Research - Award, Xerox and Amazon Academic.

CH asked staff to inform her of any new funding applications.

Mirella Lapata informed the committee that she had successfully received a 1.7 million euro ERC fellowship.

Action: CH to check up on Shay Cohen's application for the EPSRC fellowship.

4. New posts

JO reported on 2 new vacancies:

Natural Language Processing – closing date 23 March 2016

Multimedia/Multimodal Information Retrieval – closing date 23 March 2016

The shortlisting meeting panel would be meeting on 5th/6th April and the longlisting meeting would be held on 25th March. Staff who wanted to be on either shortlisting panel should contact JO. JO reminded staff that they were not allowed to view the applications if they were not on the shortlisting panel.

The Design Informatics and Visualisation – closing date 25th March 2016

JO reported that there was a chance that more than one appointment would be made, so there was a need to interview more than 4 candidates.

5. Deputy Directorship of Institute

JO reported that he had taken on a role at the Data Technology Institute, but this meant that these new commitments meant that he could not fulfil all his ILCC duties. He was now looking for a volunteer to take up a new post as Deputy DoI. Interested staff should email him. It would be a mid-year appointment.

6. Human-like Computing

Chris Lucas spoke on a disciplinary meeting that he had attended. Alan Bundy would organise workshop and a call would be put out in due course.

FK would organise a meeting to focus on cognitive science.

Staff could refer to a current document online with Nigel Birch's input from the meeting. FK said that information would be circulated and the sub-set would respond before the next meeting.

The key pieces with respect to the human-like computing workshop are:

- * EPSRC funded a workshop to discuss possible initiatives in "human-like computing". Several people from the school were present, including Frank Keller, Chris Lucas, Alan Bundy, Ram Ramamoorthy, and Michael Rovatsos. Alan Bundy was a member of the organising committee.
- * Inspired by discussions at and following the workshop, Stephen Muggleton is resurrecting a set of meetings on "machine intelligence".
- * Liam Blackwell and Nigel Birch were both in attendance and appear to still be interested in the idea of funding projects that are about human-like computing, but no call is currently planned. We're still awaiting Nigel's report on the workshop.
- * No clear consensus emerged as to what human-like computing actually is; it came up in the ILCC meeting that Liam and Nigel might be receptive to arguments about what it is or should be.

7. PhD recruitment

JO reported that ALopez would be taking over the academic duty from HT. JO gave thanks to AL and HT.

HT spoke on PhD recruitment and gave a funding update. HT reported on the tuition fees and living costs for 3 years and fees and 3.5 years for stipend. UK and EU costs were the same – approx. 4K. Overseas fees were approx. 14K. HT spoke on the various University funding opportunities available to students:

HT reported that there were 2 EGRs, 3 PCDs, 1 IGS, and 3 ITU more or less guaranteed with 10 EPSRC DTA's (one of which can go to an overseas student). There were no ILCC funds.

He reported that incoming student figures were low with only ILCC only being awarded 1 EGR and one IGS. Currently ILCC is waitlisted for an EGR, an IGS and a PCD. He reported that the low figures could be the result of competing with other Institutions over very high quality students. Currently there was one applicant decision pending.

JO reminded staff that it would likely become essential that the School know where tier 2 and 5 staff and students were. It was a requirement of the UKVI and the consequences for the School could be serious if staff didn't comply. Staff were to submit an email in advance of absence, indicating where they were going and the length of time they'd be out of the country for.

8. AOCB/Date of next meeting

JO reported that the ERI workshop was still in hand. He suggested holding a half day 'sandpit' workshop for staff to share ideas and seek advice with other colleagues in increasing funding applications.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 4th May (TBC) at 1pm in room 4.31/33.