

PdOC Society

Minutes 25 February 2016

Minutes of the meeting held at The Postdoc Centre, 16 Mill Lane at 6pm on Thursday 25 February

Present: Maya Ghoussaini (President) **MG**, Adina Feldman **AF** (Vice-President), Paul Bennett **PB**, Marta Costa **MC**, Alice Hutchings **AH**, Arne Jungwirth **AJ**, Antonis Kanellopoulos **AK**, Stephen Kell **SK**, Susanne Leger **SL**, Clare Simpson **CS**, Lori Turner **LT** (Treasurer), Hannah West **HW**, Joy Warde **JW** (Secretary)

In attendance: Chad Allen, President of Graduate Union until end of item 4.

1. Apologies: Paul Coxon **PC**, Ewa Marek **EM**, Aamir Mukadam **AM**, Severine Mollard **SM**, Tariq Masood **TM**, Nicky Blanning **NB**

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January (**2015_01_21 minutes**) were approved as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of Interest

JW would like the ctte to note that, in reference to item 7.2, her tickets a have been paid for by the OPdA since start of 2015.

4. Discussion with Chad Allen, President of the Graduate Union (GU)

This item was chaired by Alice Hutchings.

AH welcomed CA to the PdOC committee meeting. CA was elected GU president in Dec 2015.

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AH welcomed CA to the PdOC committee meeting. CA was elected GU president in Dec 2015.

CA outlined the history of the GU from its formation in the 1940/50s, to meet the needs of graduate students, through to the present day. Cambridge University has two recognised student unions, namely GU and Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU). It should be noted, firstly, that the GU is independent from CUSU and, secondly, only CUSU is recognised by the National Union of Students (NUS). After a series of crises over recent years, the University has undertaken a review of the status of the GU. The review concluded that the GU will continue as an independent student union with a review of joint GU and CUSU services/facilities.

Under the current GU constitution postdocs are 'affiliate members' and are referred to as students (<http://www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Final-Draft-Prospective-2014-GU-Constitution.pdf>). CA's opinion is that the current GU constitution, although legal, is not fit for purpose and will be revised over the next year. References to postdocs will be updated. It is timely to discuss how/if the GU should represent postdocs. Representation for postdocs is limited at present and the GU will continue to represent postdocs until the need is removed. However, there is no robust mechanism in place for GU to understand the needs of postdocs. The GU president is a member of the OPdA Management Committee.

There followed a wide-ranging discussion about how postdocs are currently represented at University level, how this might change in the future, postdoc membership of Regent House, how/if the GU should represent postdocs, and options to ensure that the GU understands the needs of postdocs. It was noted that University Council is establishing a working group to consider membership of Regent House.

In the short to medium term, it is a sensible approach that PdOC and GU should liaise to ensure that the GU has a clearer understanding of postdoc needs. Funding for a second sabbatical GU post focusing on 'interfaces' with other stakeholders has been secured, and once created this post should aid communication. The PdOC committee agreed to discuss this further as part of the PdOC 'future vision' meeting.

Action: Interface with GU to be included on agenda for PdOC 'future vision' agenda 14 March (SK).

5. President's Report (MG)

5.1. Update from OPdA management ctte.

The OPdA mentoring scheme pilot is underway. Aims to create 125 mentor-mentee matches. Postdocs need a minimum contract of 15 months to be eligible. Department of Physics, Vet School and Chemical Engineering are partner departments.

OPdA has submitted 1 million bid to Erasmus + bid for a project entitled 'Higher education and Industry Alliance for Entrepreneurial Postdoc Pathways (HIAP)'

The NW Cambridge working group will be convened to consider the governance of the OPdA.

Action: PdOC to invite Rob Wallach to next ctte meeting on Tuesday 22 March

5.2. PdOC Future Vision led by SK Monday 14 March, 7-9pm.

Action: SK to circulate instructions to all with the aim of articulating a future vision for PdOC.

5.3. Researcher Development funding for 2016/17

JW reported that no formal bid required. £8k is included in the OPdA recurrent grant.

6. Postdoc Representation update (JW)

6.1. The position of postdoc representative on the Personal and Professional Development Committee was advertised to the PdOC ctte and DPCCN membership. One written application was received from Neil Rzechorzek a Research Associate in Biochemistry. Prof Eilis Ferran, Chair of the PPD committee, has accepted Neil's application.

7. Treasurer's Report (LT)

7.1. LT provided a written summary of the PdOC accounts (**2016_02_21 PdOC Accounts Statement.pdf**). The current effective balance currently stands at £5,789.58. This assumes that all tickets for upcoming events are sold.

The format of the new accounts was discussed with only minor changes/corrections to the presentation.

The Hike is now sold out with 2 reserved spaces for leaders. Deadline for final payment is 11 March (after second set of local train tickets are purchased).

7.2. The ctte discussed a proposal to subsidise ticket prices for committee members (**PdOC ctte subsidy Feb 2016**) as there was a significant financial burden for individual committee members who attend the majority of events. It was agreed that ctte members and volunteers 'working' at PdOC family events should not pay to attend family events. It was also agreed that any children of ctte members/volunteers attending the event would not pay.

The PdOC ctte agreed that PdOC dinners and College events should not be subsidized for ctte members.

PdOC ctte members should pay the same ticket price as other postdocs i.e. any subsidy available should be equally applied.

8. 2016 AGM planning

A paper outlining the preparations for and decisions required to hold the 2016 AGM was circulated to all ctte members (**PdOC 2016 AGM planning**). The date and format of the AGM was discussed with the aim of

achieving an efficient handover to a new ctte and increasing the attendance at the AGM.

It was agreed that

- there should be a handover period after the AGM before the retiring ctte step down. During this time there will be one full ctte meeting at which both the old and new cttes will attend.
- a ctte member would not step down until hand over was complete (around 4 weeks after the AGM).
- the AGM and post AGM event should be held in the same venue. If there is a charge to attend the post AGM event it was agreed that it should be free for all postdoc already attending the AGM. Suggestion of holding the AGM plus event in a department where we could supply our own food.
- preferred date was around w/b 20 June

Action: JW to doodle poll the ctte for suitable AGM dates

Action: SK and events team to consider event ideas.

9. PdOC Code of Conduct

MC presented a draft PdOC code of conduct (**Working_draft_Code_of_conduct_160218**), written by MC, AF and AJ based on the Nolan principles of public life. These principles are used by other University bodies e.g. University Council, research integrity.

The principles have been adapted to reflect the activities of the PdOC society. It is proposed that the code of conduct should not be added to the Constitution, but a reference to it should be added as point 4g in section titled 'Officers of the Society'. A constitutional amendment will be required at the 2016 AGM to include the reference to the Code of Conduct. It was noted that the Code of Conduct applies to all activities carried out by members on behalf of the PdOC Society.

The ctte agreed to reword the section on 'selflessness' to alleviate any perceived implications on event choices.

Actions: Any ctte member with suggestions on updates to contact MC

10. Welfare Survey

SL and CS outlined a proposal for questions to be included in a postdoc welfare survey (**Welfare Survey draft 2016_02_25.docx**).

The ctte made suggestions re. content, method of response collection, confidentiality of responses and ideas on how to maximise participation. It was noted that there is some overlap with the CROS 2015 survey.

Action: Any ctte member with suggested edits or refinements please contact SL/CS directly.

11. Events Report

SK gave a verbal update on PdOC events. Points to note

- Addenbrookes pub night is moving to a Tuesday with a new rota of hosts.
- Tuesday PdOC lunch is now being regularly covered.
- End of the month pub night is moving away from The Bath. Clear communication of the venue will be required.
- CS reported that Prof Chris Howe had agreed to give the next PdOC interdisciplinary lecture.

Action: CS to liaise with Prof Howe re. topic, date and potential venue.

12. AOB

12.1. The use and management of incoming emails to the PdOC subscribers and PdOC committee mailing list was discussed and clarified. All members of the PdOC ctte should be able to email the PdOC committee mailing list without moderation. Messages to the PdOC subscribers mailing list are moderated. PC/SM manage these incoming emails.

12.2. The ctte discussed if there was an appropriate/effective PdOC Society action relating to the upcoming UK referendum on EU membership.

Action: JW to email whole ctte to find a PdOC ctte member to lead on this issue.

Action: AF to find out if there will be a response from UKRSA

13. Date of future meetings –Tue 22 March, Thurs 21 April, Wed 18 May, Wed 15 June