

PdOC Society

Minutes 22 March 2016

Minutes of the meeting held at The Postdoc Centre, 16 Mill Lane at 6pm on Tuesday 22 March

Present: Maya Ghossaini (President) **MG**, Adina Feldman **AF** (Vice-President), Paul Bennett **PB**, Marta Costa **MC**, Paul Coxon **PC**, Arne Jungwirth **AJ**, Antonis Kanellopoulos **AK**, Susanne Leger **SL**, Ewa Marek **EM**, Tariq Masood **TM**, Clare Simpson **CS**, Lori Turner **LT** (Treasurer), Hannah West **HW**, Joy Warde **JW** (Secretary)

In attendance: Ghina Halabi (**GH**), Rob Wallach (**RW**)

1. Apologies: Alice Hutchings **AH**, Aamir Mukadam **AM**, Stephen Kell **SK**, Severine Mollard **SM**, Nicky Blanning **NB**

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February (**2015_02_25 minutes**) were approved as an accurate record subject to the approval of Chad Allan GU president (item 4).

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Discussion with Rob Wallach, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs

MG welcomed Rob Wallach, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, to the meeting. Rob summarized his priorities for his time as Director.

- Achieve long term sustainable funding for OPdA. RW is working closely with the University and CUDAR to secure funding for the ongoing day to day costs of the OPdA.
- Open additional postdoc centres at Biomedical Campus (Sept 2016) and NW Cambridge (summer 2017). The Biomedical Campus postdoc centre is in the old LMB building, offers similar space to 16 Mill Lane and is available for 3-5 years. The first residents will be moving into NW Cambridge around December 2016, it is anticipated that the OPdA will have a temporary home at the NWC community centre to welcome new residents.
- The governance of the OPdA is still under consideration. The most likely interim solution is the formation of a Postdoc Committee which reports to Council and the General Board.
- A 1 million euro Erasmus Plus bid has been submitted. Involves a partnership with 5 HE Institutes and a number of Enterprises (companies). This will promote postdoc activities across the EU.
- Researchers '14 has been established to bring together practitioners from 14 Russell group Universities. The focus is solely on postdoctoral researchers.
- A mentoring pilot is now underway. The Clinical School, Vet School and Physics are participating in the initial phase.
- OPdA is working with EPOC to develop internship programs for postdocs.
- Collection and analysis of destination data for Cambridge postdocs.

There followed a Q&A session with the PdOC committee. Topics discussed included

- Mentoring. It was noted that there was a low take up from postdocs who were offered mentoring in one department; it is important to inform postdocs and encourage participation. The importance of training (mentor and mentee) and evaluation of the mentoring scheme was shared by RW. Use of external mentors was also thought to be useful.
- Members of the ctte reported that there is an information gap between an individual postdoc and University policies.

- Funding for individual departmental postdoc committees was discussed. RW reported that this funding was more likely to come from the department (and not via central funds). It was noted that RD funding is available from individual departments. RW report that he was focusing on targeting departments where there was no postdoc committee.
- How will funding affect the development of 3 postdoc centres? RW agreed that sustainable funding was required to operate all 3 centres in the longer term. The offering in NW Cambridge was under discussion and any ideas were welcome.
- The importance of liaison between PdOC and the OPdA was discussed. It was noted that it is crucial that PdOC/OPdA work together. The ctte agreed that PdOC presence on the OPdA Management ctte was welcome. The PdOC ctte was keen to contribute to future decision making and longer term strategy. The PdOC committee would like to have more regular meetings with the Director and Head of Office. Likewise, RW was keen to keep in touch with postdocs and understand the challenges faced.
- RW noted that Researchers '14 were working to update the Concordat and add an eighth principle of PI responsibility. Members indicated that there was an inherent conflict of interest between a PIs research outputs and the career progression of an individual researcher. How the concordat is implemented and monitored in Cambridge was a live issue for the PdOC ctte and DPCCN.

5. President's Report (MG)

- 5.1. AF reported that she had met Waseem Yaqoob (researcher rep for UCU). AF will act as PdOC liaison with UCU. Any ideas for collaboration with UCU to AF.
- 5.2. PdOC has accepted an invitation to join a Europe wide network of postdocs as a result of her contribution to the University of Coimbra event (includes Lausanne, Coimbra, Cambridge). Ctte members mentioned that several Europe wide postdoc groups exist – Voice of the Researcher and iCORSA. (consortium of Research Staff Associations).
- 5.3. MG reported briefly that the Future Visions group had met and SK would give a fuller report in due course. The main outcome was a desire to have more regular meetings with the Director of Postdoctoral Affairs
- 5.4. AH will lead on liaison between PdOC and the GU.

6. Co-option of additional marketing officer

Ghina Halabi has approached the PdOC ctte to offer her services as an additional Marketing officer. Ghina was co-opted on to the PdOC committee. Proposed: PB, Seconded: TM. The members welcomed Ghina to the committee.

7. Postdoc Representation Vacancies (JW)

- 7.1. A vacancy is being advertised for a postdoc rep on the Humanities and Social Science research committee. Details are included in the PdOC newsletter.
- 7.2. The term of the current postdoc reps on the Researcher Development ctte has ended. The RDC will be recruiting new postdoc reps at the end of April. The RDC has evolved into a consultative group for the Researcher Development Executive (RDX). The exact number of postdoc reps has yet to be determined but it is hoped that there will be a strong postdoc voice on the RDC.

8. Treasurer's Report (LT)

- 8.1. LT provided a written summary of the PdOC accounts (**2016_03_20 PdOC Accounts Statement.pdf**). The current effective balance currently stands at £5,828.27.
Deadline for Hike payments is end March (anticipated to be fully booked).

8.2. Minutes of PdOC finance sub-ctte were circulated (**PdOC finances sub-ctte minutes 16-02-29**)

9. 2016 AGM planning (MC)

An updated paper outlining the preparations for and decisions required to hold the 2016 AGM was circulated to all ctte members (**PdOC 2016 AGM planning March 2016**).

Action: The events sub-ctte to consider the venue and post AGM event. Doodle poll indicates that 13/14 June are the most popular dates.

The ctte discussed two possible voting mechanisms. It was agreed to use a paper ballot rather than a show of hands. The format and content of the ballot paper will be agreed at the April ctte meeting.

The content of the AGM was not discussed.

JW informed the ctte that the ctte role descriptions need to be updated by each member of the ctte.

Action: JW to send individual role description to each member of the ctte to be reviewed.

10. Events Report

Martin Sewell has left the PdOC events sub-ctte. PB is now updating the facebook listing of events.

The venue has changed for both the Addenbrookes pub night and the end of the month pub night.

Action: HW to follow up with CS re. the next PdOC Interdisciplinary lecture

Action: HW to follow up with events sub-ctte about the possibility of a PdOC garden party.

11. OPdA College Affiliations fund

The College affiliations report and details of the RDC funded College affiliation scheme were circulated. These have been circulated to all Heads of Houses by Kristen Klebba.

12. AOB

12.1. The ctte agreed to subsidise a family event at Murray Edwards by £200. This is estimated to bring the ticket priced down to that charged at previous family events and cover the costs of 4 volunteers.

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