

LFCS Research Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 3rd December 2012 in IF 4.31/33

Opening:

The regular meeting of the LFCS Research Committee was called to order at 09:30 by Jane Hillston.

Present:

Jane Hillston (Chair) (JH)

David Aspinall (DA), Chris Banks (CB), Julian Bradfield (JB), Peter Buneman (PB), Mary Cryan (MC), Vashti Galpin (VG), Stephen Gilmore (SG), Katey Lee (KL), Joanne Pennie (JP), Don Sannella (DS), Rik Sarkar (RS), Alex Simpson (AS), Perdita Stevens (PS), Stratis Viglas (SV)

Apologies:

Stuart Anderson, James Cheney, Vincent Danos, Ilias Diakonikolas, Andy Gordon, Paul Jackson, Elham Kashefi, Fiona Lees, Leonid Libkin, John Longley, Rahul Santhanam, Ian Stark, Philip Wadler

Opening Remarks:

JH welcomed Katey Lee, Magdalena's maternity cover. New staff members Rik Sarkar and Ilias Diakonikolas were also welcomed. It was noted that Ilias had not been added to the Research Committee distributions list and that Level 4 Admin should add all new staff to this list and update the list accordingly.

ACTION: Level 4 Admin

1. Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Most of the actions had been completed however one notable exception was the one minute research videos. There were a number of people who still need to contact Siri Rodnes to organise their filming. JH suggested booking Siri for one day however this may not work with people's schedules. It was suggested that slides could also be added to the videos and that Iain Murray's video was a good example to watch before filming. Bob Fisher has said that anyone wishing to make a short video about a research project can also book Siri for that.

ACTION: All those who have not made a video to contact Siri

2. Teaching of LFCS topics in honours and MSc courses

The ITO has recently culled some LFCS courses and those that are culled cannot be reinstated unless they are approved again by the Board of Studies. DA suggested LFCS should have a strategic view on what courses are considered essential in case they are targeted for future culling. It was decided that a small working group should be set up to review the current course portfolio and identify which courses are reflective of the institute's needs for PhD courses and if there are any gaps, as well look at student numbers on LFCS courses, to have an informed discussion at the next Research Committee meeting.

ACTION: DA and JH to set up working group, Level 4 Admin to look at registration of LFCS courses

3. Financial Report and Grant Portfolio

JP gave an update on the income and expenses for the coming financial year. The portfolio has increased in this year due to LFCS attracting new grants, some of which will last several years.

The grant total comes to £8.8 million. This includes some grants which are split with CISA whose income is yet to be determined so the figure for LFCS is somewhere between this and £7.5 million. There are also 11 outstanding grants that have been submitted, with 6 in the queue to submit.

The budget figure of £23,939 is a carry forward from the last financial year. This will be the last year a carry forward is allowed so in future these balances will be budgeted into spends. The balance is currently at £27,138.26 with some expenses still to come. Staff travel is at £1,100 of which half has been spent. This can be increased and used if anyone needs money to travel and is unable to source it elsewhere.

PS mentioned an email stating that EPSRC are scrapping the National Importance Fund. This was related to an article in the Times Higher, and a link will be placed on the LFCS research funding web pages.

ACTION: Level 4 Admin

4. Funding Opportunities

JP mentioned that there had been quite a few emails for EPSRC mathematics fellowships and this is one of the areas where they are undersubscribed.

Responsive mode grants have had a reduction but they should still be applied for.

The EU call for grants include FET-Open, which are purely research grants and open until the end of March next year.

Xtrack grant calls (also FET) are asking for a 9 page anonymous proposal, similar to an EPSRC proposal with background, motivation, work plan and expected impact, and the deadline is the end of January 2013.

EPSRC have published the priority areas for the 2013 CDT competition. The priorities for ICT are: Data to Knowledge, High Performance Embedded and Distributed Systems, ICT for Manufacturing, Integrative Technologies, Next Generation Interaction Technologies, Underpinning Communication and Computer Science Training. There are other priority areas where computer science could fit, i.e. Digital Economy and Healthcare Technology. There has been a pre-CDT exercise to discuss which topics might make good CDT's. There are 6 under discussion currently, JH has emphasised that the School view is that no CDT's should not be solely centred on one institute, and she is trying to ensure that there is an LFCS aspect wherever feasible.

DA spoke about a joint CDT proposal on cyber security with Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews. The institutions would take in students at different universities at different years so the cross-institution bar would not apply.

DS mentioned a proposal put together with Bjorn Franke under a general computer science topic in the previous DTC round which had done well. The same proposal could be submitted again. JH will take this to the next Research Committee meeting.

ACTION: JH

5. PG Matters

CB met with PhD students and discussed the possibility of a reading group that would invite supervisors to suggest papers and then give a short tutorial. There was a general discussion on how PhD students could broaden their knowledge by attending MSc courses, Lab Lunches and Hamming Seminars. There were several suggestions for running the reading group, including incorporating Lab Lunches to minimise the extra tutorial preparation. As many of the future Lab Lunches will have research speakers they could also be included. Additionally some teaching staff already have material from participating in short courses and summer schools organised elsewhere that could be used. PhD student commitment to attending a reading group session was also discussed, and it was decided that a few sessions would be arranged with research staff on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to gauge attendance levels. VG will put CB into contact with some research staff to start these sessions.

ACTION: VG and CB

KE discussed the PhD Application web pages and how these should be more broadly representative of LFCS. Alternative wording suggestions were discussed and KE needs to draw up a proposal for any changes and consult with the IGS on any wording constraints. KE brought this to Lab Lunch on 4 December and changes to the wording were discussed. These are now being passed to the IGS for incorporation in the web pages. At the next research committee meeting we will take stock of these changes.

ACTION: KE

RS is still working on the LFCS PhD recruitment web pages.

ACTION: RS

A research briefing for potential PhD students will be held with supervisors presenting for 5 minutes on research topics. We will also discuss whether this seemed worthwhile at the next research committee meeting.

Barbara Webb has recently circulated information about a new way of allocating DTA funding within the school, via an internal funding competition. Members of staff can bid for funding based on a proposed PhD project with expectations that supervisors will obtain some matching funding to be detailed when bidding. The LFCS will be able to offer co-funding for up to two projects. This application process is intended to make arrangements transparent. One application per staff member per year is permitted. A specific student does not need to be included in the proposal however the student will be required to be from the UK or a member state of the EU. The deadline to IGS is 25 January and the details are online.

6. Another other business

VG reported an application has been submitted to the Researcher-Led Initiative Fund to re-establish the Informatics Research Staff Society, to re-formalise the society and make it sustainable.

The LFCS Christmas party is being held on 18 December, with partners and children welcome. Offers of food are very welcome, particularly national dishes and Level 4 Admin should be informed so that they can plan accordingly.

An away day for LFCS will be held on either 3/4/5 April. There will be a speaker from industry and one from academia. The second year PhD poster session will be incorporated into the event.

The new Lab Lunch schedule is on the webpage and it is the responsibility of the speaker to check whether they can make the date assigned to them.

ACTION: All

7. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held during the first week of May 2013, date and time to be organised nearer the time.

ACTION: Level 4 Admin