OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR GRADUATES

Meeting held on Wednesday, 1st November at 12.30pm, Room 278

MINUTES

Present:  David Kay (chair), Julie Sheppard, Sarah Retz-Jones, Shoshannah Holdom, Ralph Abboud, Nitin Agrawal, Temitope Ajileye, Martin Dehnel-Wild, Vojta Havlincek, Max Hofer, Ulrik Lyngs, Anuj Mahajan, Rhiannon Michelmore, Alina Petrova, Arianna Schuler Scott, Jaclyn Smith, Matt Smith, David Tena Cucala, Yuan Zhou

Apologies:  Daniel Kroening, Prince Abudu, Freddie Barr-Smith, Ahmet Kucuk, Katriel Cohn-Gordon, Romy Minko, Andrea Patane

The Committee introduced themselves and explained their role or student status within the department.

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 17th May 2017
The minutes were accepted.

Matters Arising
Integrated Theses – this was moving along and rules were being formulated to enable students to submit a number of papers rather than a thesis. Our department does not currently allow this. If this is approved then students would have to decide whether this is what they are going to do pre-confirmation.

Suspensions – there were new rules which were being taken to Faculty. Students would only be allowed one retrospective suspension throughout their studies.

Welfare Support for Graduate Students – A training course is being run on 23rd November: “Mental Health Champion in Higher Education” and volunteers had been requested to attend. CoGS representatives were very grateful for the Department taking this on.

2. JCCG Terms of References to review
The Committee’s terms of reference were reviewed and accepted.

3. Matters Raised by Graduate Representatives/CoGS Report
Alina Petrova asked about rooms that could be used for private telephone or skype calls. She had recently become aware of Room 151 but further enquiries after the meeting discovered that this room is actually IT’s meeting room and is not for general use. Students were advised that they could look at the room booking on the web pages and email rooms@cs.ox.ac.uk to book a room.
Suspensions had come up in the MPLS meeting. There was discussion about internships and how they are viewed across departments. Although Computer Science encourage internships this is not the case in all departments and causes some confusion over the resulting suspension.

The students asked about the concern with completion rates and why – they felt a shorter UK doctoral degree was not as competitive as a longer European or US degree.

REF was discussed, and it was explained to the committee that this is how departments get research money from the Government. Environment and impact would play a big role in the next REF exercise.

Concerns were raised about inadequate office chairs in DPhil offices not providing good back support. This would be brought up at the safety committee and display screen assessments for DPhil students would be investigated.

**ACTION:** Julie Sheppard

CoGS had their first meeting with an enthusiastic group of representatives. The new committee was as follows:

- **President:** Ulrik Lyngs
- **Secretary:** Jaclyn Smith
- **Social Secretary:** Rhiannon Michelmore
- **Health, Safety & IT Security:** Dennis Jackson
- **Treasurer:** Ahmet Kucuk

A variety of different people had been organised to run the events and they were focusing on communication and engagement. They asked that students be provided with a checklist of useful information and deadlines (e.g. where to get keys, deadlines for forms etc.) during induction week. They also asked to receive the feedback from the induction week questionnaire.

**ACTION:** JULIE SHEPPARD & SARAH RETZ-JONES

CoGS representatives would put a case together for more funds and David Kay would then discuss this with Sharon Lloyd.

**ACTION:** CoGS REPS & DAVID KAY

The integration between CS Security and CDT Security students was discussed as it was felt that there was no uniformity across supervisors. It was also noted that CS students do not get invited to CDT events. CDT students should be encouraged to attend departmental events and CoGS events.

David Kay, Martin Dehnel-Wild and Arianna Schuler-Scott will talk to Andrew Martin

**ACTION:** DAVID KAY, MARTIN DEHNEL-WILD & ARIANNA SCHULER-SCOTT

4. **Owning your DPhil/Transfer Workshop 2018**

Ulrik Lyngs will liaise with David Kay to find a date in Hilary Term, most likely in week 5 or 6. The 2017 event took place on Tuesday 14th March in week 9.

**ACTION:** ULRIK LYNGS & DAVID KAY
5. **Director of Graduate Studies Report**  
With little to report David Kay asked for questions from the committee.

Matt Smith asked about the GSS overhaul – some departments were asked to take part in a trial run of the new system with 4 reporting windows. There would also be more overlap with the students, supervisor and DGS. David Kay announced he was meeting with all first year DPhils individually at the end of November and they had been asked to bring their GSS reports with them.

David Kay asked students about their expectations from supervisors and the response varied considerably especially across the years.

Ari Schuler Scott asked if supervisors received any training in counselling etc. so that they knew how to point a student in the right direction if they were having mental health issues. Shoshannah Holdom advised that several academics have signed up for the one day training course.

**Student Conference 2018**  
A date had been fixed for Friday 8th June 2018 and a conference committee had been set up. Each theme should be represented at the conference. This year had seen more submissions than ever before and it was hoped this would continue. It was also thought there should be more posters. Supervisors often discourage students from taking part and so it was thought that strong encouragement should come from the DGS or Head of Department to supervisors and students.  

**ACTION: DAVID KAY**

**Any Other Business**  
The MSc reps felt that the social aspect had been too little in induction week. It was hoped that CoGS may be able to do something more next year as the party will be moved from the Tuesday to the Thursday freeing up Tuesday evening.

MSc students were disappointed Machine Learning was not being held this year but the likelihood of it being reinstated was low.