

“Polish Chapter 3rd Meeting and Presentation skills workshop”

The spring meeting of the Polish Chapter was organized on 11th of May at the Institute of History, of the Polish Academy of Sciences located in the old market square of the old town of Warsaw. The venue was available for the meeting thanks to Dr Anna Orłowska and her team. In the previous meeting of the Polish Chapter, held in September 2017, it was identified, that the Chapter meetings should be clubbed together with trainings for the participants, to make it more attractive for the new members. In the previous meeting the presentation skills workshop was chosen by popular vote. Hence the second half of the day was allotted for a presentation skills workshop. After the workshop a networking dinner was organized to have an informal atmosphere and more opportunity to talk with the workshop instructors as well as other participants.

The meeting was successful and was attended by 18 people. The agenda of the meeting centered on the growth of the chapter and increasing the visibility and impact of the chapter through more activities. The areas identified for the growth in the chapter membership was through finding researchers who were MC fellows in the earlier calls (FP5, FP6 etc.). Also more participation of Cofund fellows was sought, the recruitment will be most effective by attending one of their training events, the next of which is scheduled for 11th of June 2018.

Several opportunities for outreach activities were discussed and the members were encouraged to use the resources at their disposal for making a greater impact. The topic for the planning of the next meeting and the training to be arranged was met with great interest and a very constructive discussion. Several different trainings were discussed including, Improv acting, Multi-disciplinarity training, Training for career progression in the Industrial sector, Research Integrity as well as sessions with psychologists were suggested. No consensus was achieved during the time available and discussions through online platforms was marked as the way ahead.

The communication between the members was again an issue which was discussed and formation of a google group with voluntary membership was decided as the way ahead. The meeting ended with a short discussion on the venue for the next meeting and the Dr Anna Orłowska offered the venue of Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, again and was marked as plan B, as more interest from other parts of Poland are expected. The decision on the venue will be taken in the near future. The next meeting will be organized in October, provided it is approved by the ex-com.

Followed by the meeting, a course on presentation skills was organized. After the welcome formalities, two MCAA fellows gave talks about their research to the audience. The topics of the presentations were quite different with Dr Hellwing presenting his study of Astronomy, and Dr Pszczoła presenting his work on Methane emissions from cows and the role genetics plays in it. The presentations were recorded and later replayed in order to the best practices for presentations, the design as well as the rendition.

In the middle session, there were presentations about the presentation skills from the 3 speakers. The first presentation dealt with the idea of the presentation and how to design the talk to ensure that the audience is captivated. It also proposed the style of presentation and the organization of the presentation which will allow maximum impact.. The second presentation was about design of the slides

including the background, the font selection, the structure of each slide and text in general. The last presentation covered presentation for outreach activities in front of non-experts. The presentation identified the common mistakes people make while presenting which are off-putting to the audience. They also suggested solutions for overcoming these mistakes.

As mentioned, the last session was for the critiquing of the MCAA fellows presentations from the first part of the day. The presentations were replayed and thoroughly studied. Comments were made by the experienced course instructors as well as other MCAA members, which gave a perspective to the participants from a diverse crowd, from different areas.

After the meeting a group of 12 participants, including Michał Karpiński (Chapter Vice Chair) and Maria Górna (MCAA Board Member), headed for an informal meal and drinks at the nearby Barbakan restaurant. Vivid discussions were held long into the night on topics ranging from careers in and outside of science, research funding, work-life-balance to non-science-related matters. The dinner meeting was also a good opportunity to answer detailed questions about MCAA and the Polish Chapter from new Chapter members.

The presentation skills workshop was outsourced to a local company from Warsaw. The workshop was well received by the participants. It was a great learning experience. The workshop was open for the public, with a meager fee of 25PLN to cover for the catering, and coffee breaks. It attracted 3 external participants. The organized meeting and workshop serve as ideal template for further meetings which should be repeated although more participation will be targeted.



