

Post-visit report
Prof Mari Ostendorf (University of Washington)
SICSA Distinguished Visiting Fellow (19-30 Nov 2012).

Prof Mari Ostendorf of the University of Washington visited us as a SICSA distinguished fellow during the last two weeks of November 2012, hosted by Prof Steve Renals (University of Edinburgh).

Summary of visit

The visit consisted of a number of seminars and a masterclass (see below). Prof Ostendorf was based in the School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh during her visit, also visiting the University of Glasgow (Host: Dr Alessandro Vinciarelli) and the University of St Andrews (Host: Dr Per Ola Kristensson). In addition to giving seminars, Prof Ostendorf also had a large number of one-to-one meetings with PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty. These meetings were typically of 1 hour duration. Prof Ostendorf's personal research interests match very well to ILCC at Edinburgh, in particular, and it required a reasonably detailed schedule to ensure that everyone who wanted to meet her could. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that virtually of Prof Ostendorf's time in Scotland was scheduled for seminars and one-to-one meetings.

Overall we received exceptionally positive feedback from researchers regarding Prof Ostendorf's visit.

Presentations and visits:

Prof Ostendorf gave 3 seminars and a masterclass (3 hour duration) during her visit.

19 Nov 2012: Parsing Spoken Language (seminar), University of Edinburgh

22 Nov 2012: Representations of Prosody in Computational Models for Language Processing (seminar), University of Glasgow

27 Nov 2012: Rich Speech Transcription for Spoken Document Processing (seminar), University of St Andrews

28 Nov 2012: Extraction of Social Meaning from Language (masterclass), University of Edinburgh

Ongoing collaborations:

The main area of collaboration is in the area of using syntactic information for speech processing, with Prof Mark Steedman (Edinburgh). Prof Ostendorf has recently published work with Prof Steedman's recent PhD graduate (Dr Tom Kwiatkowski) and his former postdoc (Prof Luke Zettlemoyer). This work is ongoing.

A tangible outcome facilitated by the visit was the merger of the two leading journals in the field of speech and language processing, the ACM Transactions on Speech and Language Processing, and the IEEE Transactions on Audio, Speech, and Language Processing. As of 1 January 2014, these will merge into a single transactions, the IEEE/ACM Transactions on Audio, Speech, and Language Processing. The merger was rather complicated and greatly facilitated by discussions during the visit between Prof Ostendorf (VP Publications, IEEE Signal Processing Society) and Prof Renals (Editor-in-Chief, ACM Trans SLP).