

Newsletter Spring 2016

Editorial We are fast approaching the first anniversary the new phase of SICSA - the largest and most inclusive of the SFC research pools. The coming summer promises a number of exciting changes within the pool. Firstly, we will be refreshing the Directorate from August – the SICSA Director and SICSA Graduate Academy Director roles are currently out for advert and the new recruitment process, agreed by the SICSA committee, will be open and transparent. This will be a rolling process over the next six to eight months, with the SICSA Knowledge Exchange Director and Education Director roles also rotated by Christmas 2016.

One of the most significant developments since our establishment in 2008 is the review of the SICSA Research Themes, happening currently. There have been many changes in the research and funding landscape since the early days of the pool and we must evolve to reflect this. In restructuring the themes, we hope to continue to develop and maintain strong and coherent research communities across SICSA. We expect to announce the new structure over the summer and at that time we will also be recruiting new theme leaders.

With the departure of Professor Paul Hagan among other senior individuals, SFC is undergoing significant change at the moment. However, we are aware that the research pools remain a key area in their strategy. We're pleased to announce that SFC has demonstrated continuing support for the Pools Engagement in European Research and Postdoctoral Early Career Researcher Exchange programmes by recently awarding us a further £30K. We encourage you to discover more about these funding opportunities, as well as the other programmes in the SICSA portfolio – there are funds for researchers working at all levels across Scottish institutions.

Finally, the introduction of the SICSA Research Challenges has been a positive development within the pool. Three of the 2015 Challenges are now complete and we look forward to evaluating the outcomes over the coming months. Our Future Cities Research Challenge is funded to the end of 2017 and we expect to announce the successful proposals for the remaining 2016 Challenges in the next few weeks.



Professor Stuart Anderson,
SICSA Director

SICSA Elevate Programme Success Story

Aileen Orr



Omar Tufyal applied to the 2015 SICSA Elevate programme for funding to turn an idea into a business opportunity. Here he tells us about the opportunities the funding has given him and the team.

Applying to the SICSA Elevate Business Accelerator Programme in 2015 was perhaps one of the best decisions I've made while studying Computing Science at the University of Glasgow. It was during my time in second year that I, along with a group of friends proposed an app called Nom Yap to help connect everyone on campus, bringing together students and staff from different backgrounds and subject areas, on one platform to be able to reach out to others more easily for networking, friendship or mentoring. Gaining entry to the SICSA Elevate programme, receiving funding, attending the weekly workshops, seminars and consultations, took our initial idea from a simple wireframe prototype to one where we had the potential and skills needed to turn it into a real world business.

Being from a computing background, but having a passion for entrepreneurship, the sessions really helped bring alive what had up until then been mostly a theoretical understanding of that side of things. Subjects such as marketing, product development, finance and accounting, pitching, areas of legal concern such as intellectual property and much more were more deeply understood on a practical level during the twelve week program.

At the end, there was a dragon's den style competition where we were up against other teams, and being judged by a panel of entrepreneurs and experts. Winning the competition was an amazing confidence and motivation boost to take the idea and what we had learnt to the next level.

We've since been invited to the Scottish Parliament to present our ideas to MSPs and investors, spoken at events to promote entrepreneurship with people such as David Sibbald, who sold his company to Cisco for £114m and who awarded us first prize in another pitching competition. We've also been heavily supported by the Vice Principal of The University of Glasgow, Professor Jon Cooper, who has been supporting us since the SICSA Elevate programme.

Recently we also had the opportunity to present our experiences of being student entrepreneurs to key stakeholders in The University of Glasgow and policy makers including Professor Muffy Calder, previous Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland; James Muldoon, Head of Entrepreneurship and Co-operative Business Models; Scottish Government; and Stuart Fancey, Interim Director Research & Innovation, Scottish Funding Council.

We've just officially launched our app at The University of Glasgow with an exclusive partnership with Dominos to provide students with free pizza, which went down very well not surprisingly, with a record 300 signups for our app at the end of the day. And that's just one campus. We're now planning on continuing to improve the app and roll-out out right across Scotland.

There are currently twelve people working on the project, from development of the app, marketing and business strategy to vision implementation and execution, we're looking forward to building on the phenomenal success we've already achieved. And this is just the beginning, we're only getting started. Nom Yap can be downloaded for free on both iOS and Android, and is currently piloting for staff and students at The University of Glasgow.



sicsa*

The Scottish Informatics & Computer Science Alliance

SICSA PhD Conference 2016

Aileen Orr

The SICSA PhD Conference 2016 is taking place on 27 & 28 June at the Technology & Innovation Centre at the University of Strathclyde.

The PhD Conference is one of the highlights of the SICSA events calendar and continues to grow in popularity with registration selling out within days of opening.

As with previous years, the members of the Conference Committee have worked extremely hard to ensure the programme of workshops and events are interesting, engaging, inspiring and thought provoking.

The programme this year has an exciting variety of workshops including: Thesis Statement Workshop; Impact Through Engagement; Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Career Planning

Panel Session; Reproducible Research Workshop; Pitching Workshop as well as Keynote talks from Emmanuel Mogenet, Head of the Google European Research Lab and Professor Jon Timmis, University of York. For the first time we are having technology demos on show as well as posters.

The Civic Reception at the stunning Glasgow City Chambers was so popular last year with the delegates, the Committee have arranged this again and we have been fortunate to have the assistance of the Glasgow City Marketing Bureau to help secure the venue and make it a night to remember. Following on from this, the delegates will have an opportunity to continue the social festivities with either joining colleagues at a local pub, which has been reserved for our delegates or alternatively they can take part in a cinema trip to the close-by Cineworld Glasgow.

The Conference tickets sold out in just over a week from registration opening which reaffirms the popularity of this particular SICSA event.

We look forward to seeing everyone on 27 June!

The SICSA PhD Conference 2016 is being sponsored by:



Thanks to our partners Glasgow City Marketing Bureau for their organisational support



www.sicsa.ac.uk

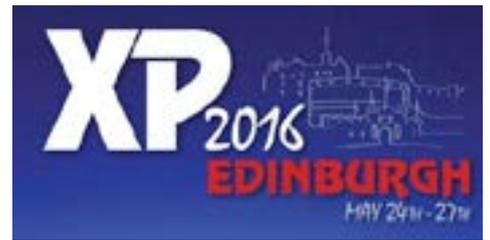
admin@sicsa.ac.uk

SICSA Sponsored Conferences

SICSA provides funding for many events and activities with the main focus being to increase collaboration in Scottish Universities to assist in developing and extending Scotland's position as a world leader in Informatics and Computer Science research and education. One such funding opportunity is sponsorship for major international conferences held in Scotland. The funding is used to provide a number of free places for Computing Science PhD students studying in Scotland to allow them to attend and gain experience of such prestigious Conferences. Here you can see information on forthcoming conferences which have been supported by SICSA funds.

The 17th International Conference on Agile Software Development will take place at the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls, Edinburgh 24-27 May 2016

Dr Bruce Scharlau, University of Aberdeen was awarded SICSA funds in September 2015.



The mission of the XP2016 conference is to further the state of agile and lean software development by providing a forum at which an international group of experts and novices from both industry and academia can meet and learn from each other.

This Conference provides a full programme of workshops along with keynote and invited speakers, along with a variety of social events and Ice Breakers.

XP2016 provides an opportunity for agile orientated PhD students and researchers to get involved and build their industrial contacts. The Empirical Studies track also gives researchers a new channel through which to gather data to support their research hypotheses

QPL2016

6-11 June 2016, University of Strathclyde

Dr Ross Duncan, University of Strathclyde applied for SICSA Conference Sponsorship funding in December 2015.

"This summer Strathclyde University is playing host to the 13th International Conference on Quantum Physics and Logic. QPL is an interdisciplinary affair that brings together leading researchers in computer science, physics, and mathematics to discuss recent work on the theory of quantum computation with a focus on structural perspectives and logical tools. The conference will last for five days and will feature tutorial lectures aimed at graduate students, and 4 invited speakers.

This is the first time that QPL has been in Scotland and the meeting has been generously supported by SICSA event sponsorship. This financial support has allowed to make the conference open to all PhD students who wish to attend for no fee whatsoever. (For non-students it's still very cheap!). The process for applying for SICSA sponsorship is very easy: it requires filling in one form. We had a positive reply with 4 days of sending it in. I wish all funding applications were so straightforward!

Furthermore, one of the invited speakers, Krysta Svore from Microsoft's Quantum Architectures group in Seattle, is visiting Scotland as SICSA DVF. Dr Svore will be visiting Edinburgh and Glasgow the week after QPL and you can find her schedule on the SICSA web-ste. The application process for this funding was similarly quick and light weight.

To register for QPL2016 visit the website at <http://qpl2016.cis.strath.ac.uk>

EANN 2016

www.eann.org.uk/eann2016

17th International Conference on Engineering Applications of Neural Networks



Professor Chrisina Jayne, RGU was awarded SICSA funding for the EANN 2016 Conference on 2 - 5 September. EANN promotes neural networks and associated techniques and the significant benefits that can be derived from their use. The conference is not only for reporting advances, but also for showing how neural networks provide practical solutions in a wide range of application.

The EANN 2016 conference is of interest for engineers, researchers, academics and managers from universities, research centres and industry. Papers are presented orally and not more than two sessions are held simultaneously in order to offer a real forum for discussion.

Submissions are welcome from all fields of informatics and engineering and some special sessions, dedicated to these different fields, are organised.

Keynote Speakers are:

- Professor Nikola Kasabov, Director and Founder, Knowledge Engineering and Discovery Research Institute (KEDRI), Chair of Knowledge Engineering, Auckland University of Technology, Institute for Neuroinformatics - ETH and University of Zurich
- Professor Plamen Angelov, Chair in Intelligent Systems, Lancaster University
- Professor John MacIntyre, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Sunderland
- Professor Marley Vellasco, Pontificia Universidade Catolica, Head of Applied Computational Intelligence Laboratory, Brasil.

Forthcoming SICSA events

In addition to these Conferences, SICSA has many more interesting and engaging events coming up:

10 May: The Post Graduate Cyber Security (PGCS) symposium, Edinburgh Napier

11 May: SICSA Workshop on Probabilistic Modelling of Urban Transportation Systems, Informatics Forum

26 May: SICSA HCI Theme Event: Defining the Future of TV Accessibility, Robert Gordon University

15 June: SICSA Education Workshop: "Student transitions within Computing" Robert Gordon University

23 June: SICSA HCI All Hands 2016, Robert Gordon University

27-28 June: SICSA PhD Conference 2016, Technology & Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde

29 June: SICSA HCI Theme: Doctoral Consortium, University of Strathclyde

Please visit the SICSA Events calendar to find out more about the forthcoming events. Our Twitter and Facebook feeds will continually keep you updated on events.

..... and finally some words from our current SICSA Directorate



Professor Stuart Anderson,
SICSA Director

Over the past year we have seen the transition from the original SICSA programme to SICSA-2. Although we have made the transition to a reduced budget, many of the SICSA activities continue to develop and support the Scottish community. All the Directors have maintained a high level of activity and continue to develop activities in support of the community. As SICSA commences the recruitment process for its next Directorate it's a good time to reflect on the last couple of years. In that time we have seen the successful performance of the Scottish Universities in the REF process. The introduction of the Innovation Centres and their inclusion on the SICSA advisory board. The review and restructuring of the research themes and the introduction of short research challenge activities keep SICSA aligned with the needs of its constituent Schools. The new processes associated with SICSA-2 will see a more open and transparent approach to the choice of the new directorate and will allow a phased transition to a new directorate over the next year or so. I feel sure that SICSA will go from strength to strength under the new directorate. As I step down I'd like to thank all of the directorate for their commitment and expertise in steering SICSA's component activities, the SICSA committee and Advisory Board for their active role in guiding the directorate, and most of all to Steven and Aileen in the SICSA office for keeping the wheels on.



Professor Iadh Ounis
SICSA KE Director

The knowledge exchange landscape around SICSA has markedly changed since I took my role as KE Director. The reduced level of funding available to SICSA-2 and the changing Scottish landscape with the advent of the SFC Innovation Centres have raised challenges and opportunities. In terms of opportunities, there is now an unprecedented wealth of channels through which academics could interact with industry and the public sector. As KE Director, I was fortunate to be involved in the inception, operationalisation, and governance of The Data Lab. SICSA has now forged strong links with The Data Lab. However, the reduced level of funding means that we can no longer support the postgraduate internship or entrepreneurial training programs.

Looking back at my time as SICSA KE Director, I'm particularly happy that I oversaw the successful completion of our SICSA-1 KE programs, which have particularly helped postgraduate students and ECRs to work with industry. In addition, the Elevate program and the AspeKT program at Informatics Ventures have also instilled SICSA research students with entrepreneurship skills. DEMOFest is now a flagship annual KE event within Scotland attracting over 300 delegates from across academia, industry and the public sector.



Professor Ian Miguel
SICSA Graduate Academy Director

It is a busy time for the Graduate Academy. There is very healthy demand for our various funding schemes and preparations are well under way for the eighth annual SICSA PhD conference, to be held at the Technology and Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde in June. This is a highlight of the SICSA and Graduate Academy calendar, offering an opportunity for students from all SICSA institutions to network, present their work in the form of the poster, participate in a high-quality workshop programme, and listen to keynote talks by world-class speakers.

In July 2016 my time as Director of the SICSA Graduate Academy will end. The SGA Director role is both challenging and enjoyable. Through it I have had the opportunity to get involved in the running of SICSA, the governance of the Data Lab, and the organisation of great events like the PhD Conference. The role for SGA Director is now open for application and if you are eligible, and want to contribute to SICSA, I hope you will consider applying.

I have been the SICSA Education Director for over 2 years now. The responsibility of representing SICSA on all the Scottish Computing Departments and Schools as well as the wider world, in particular Scottish Government, Education Scotland, SQA & Scotlands Colleges can be challenging but it can also be extremely rewarding at times. The achievement I am most proud of throughout my directorship is the Education Conference which we held jointly with Computing at Schools in November 2015. This was the first time everyone in an education role, from nursery teachers to HE lecturers interested in Computing education, attended one event. I was delighted to see the amount of interaction and discussions that took place and it gave me hope that this will continue.



Dr Karen Petrie
SICSA Education Director

I have been the SICSA Education Director for over 2 years now. The responsibility of representing SICSA on all the Scottish Computing Departments and Schools as well as the wider world, in particular Scottish Government, Education Scotland, SQA & Scotlands Colleges can be challenging but it can also be extremely rewarding at times. The achievement I am most proud of throughout my directorship is the Education Conference which we held jointly with Computing at Schools in November 2015. This was the first time everyone in an education role, from nursery teachers to HE lecturers interested in Computing education, attended one event. I was delighted to see the amount of interaction and discussions that took place and it gave me hope that this will continue.

It has been a pleasure working with everyone in SICSA. Thank you all for your support and friendship.