

SICSA 2023 Distinguished Visiting Fellow Report

Richard G. Freedman

2023 March 09 to 2023 March 29

Dr. Richard G. Freedman visited Scotland as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow (DVF) from March 9 to March 29 in 2023. During his visit, Dr. Freedman presented several talks, engaged with familiar and new colleagues to establish potential research and teaching collaborations, and participated in an event related to an undergraduate course to which he has been contributing. These activities spanned Heriot-Watt University, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Aberdeen. Dr. Freedman's SICSA DVF hosts were Prof. Ron Petrick (Heriot-Watt University) and Dr. Mary Ellen Foster (University of Glasgow), and Prof. Felipe Meneguzzi kindly served as a host during his time at the University of Aberdeen.

At the University of Aberdeen, Dr. Freedman presented an overview of his research titled "Towards Closed-Loop Interactive Systems: Understanding People and their Impacts on Decision Making." He had meetings with Prof. Felipe Meneguzzi, Dr. Rafael Cardoso, Dr. Arabella Sinclair, Dr. Ana Ciocarlan, and Prof. Nir Oren about potential collaborations based on their research interests and upcoming projects. Dr. Freedman also spoke with Dr. Bruce Scharlau about teaching practices and courses taught at the University of Aberdeen. These discussions were very fruitful, and Dr. Freedman is investigating funding pursuits that can support some of the identified collaborations.

At the University of Glasgow, Dr. Freedman presented an overview of his research titled "Towards Closed-Loop Interactive Systems: Understanding People and their Impacts on Decision Making" and ran a workshop covering an introduction to game design (hosted by the Games and Gaming Lab). He had meetings with Dr. Mary Ellen Foster, Dr. Emma Li, and Dr. Paul Siebert about their research interests and potential applications. Dr. Freedman spoke with Dr. Matthew Barr about a variety of topics spanning game design, the potential for games in education, introducing STEM fields to underrepresented minorities, and helping students discover their passions. He also met briefly with Dr. Tim Peacock and Ph.D. candidate Giuseppe Celico to discuss creating a course teaching game design. The interactions were beneficial to both Dr. Freedman and some of the professors at the University of Glasgow, and they will continue to keep in touch looking for potential opportunities to work together.

At Heriot-Watt University, Dr. Freedman presented an overview of his research titled "Towards Closed-Loop Interactive Systems: Understanding People and their Impacts on Decision Making," ran a workshop covering an introduction to game design, gave a talk introducing the world of research careers and the Educational Advances in Artificial Intelligence (EAAI) Mentored Undergraduate Research Challenge to undergraduate students, and attended the third-year software project exposition event where students presented their year-long efforts to him as the customer. He had many discussions with Prof. Ron Petrick about research directions, teaching experiences, comparisons between the United States and Scottish academic systems, and future research endeavors. Throughout these discussions, Dr. Freedman also had the opportunity to talk about common research interests with two of Prof. Petrick's current Ph.D. advisees, Emanuele De Pellegrin and Gary Smith, and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Alan Lindsay. Additional activities together included a tour of the National Robotarium and meeting many of the graduate students presenting the National Robotarium's robots to the public at the National Museum of Scotland as part of its Science Saturday event on March 18. At the exposition event, Dr. Freedman had the opportunity to also speak briefly with a number of the professors who managed teams of students including Dr. Alistair McConnell, Dr. Jessica Chen-Burger, and Prof. Andrew Ireland. The discussions were very productive, and Dr. Freedman and Prof. Petrick are continuing discussions virtually since his return to the United States. Dr. Freedman is also beginning to work with Dr. McConnell to develop customer specifications for next year's third-year software project course.

Overall, the SICSA DVF was a wonderful opportunity to connect Dr. Freedman with many researchers throughout the visited Scottish universities. The introductions made it possible to identify potential collab-

orations both in research and educational activities, and these interactions will hopefully continue to yield long-term partnerships.