

Welcome to the April issue of the OFEA faculty newsletter. April focused on expanding faculty engagement initiatives and preparing for key institutional milestones. This issue highlights new colleagues, recent activity, and upcoming opportunities across the University.

## Welcome to our new faculty



**Yanding Zhao**

[Full bio](#)



**Lena Maier-Hein**

[Full bio](#)



**Klaus Maier-Hein**

[Full bio](#)



**Cedric Notredame**

[Full bio](#)



**David Paez-Espino**

[Full bio](#)

**Congratulations and  
welcome to our new  
colleagues!**

David's biography will be  
updated shortly.

## Faculty achievements and highlights

**Across April, faculty contributions included:**

- 1 best paper award
- 62 major publications
- 3 major external grant awards

- 19 conference organization, leadership roles, and keynotes

These milestones reflect continued research output, leadership, and global engagement across the University.

## Commencement



## Commencement

Preparations are well underway for this year's Commencement, with a Three Minute Thesis event taking place on Wednesday, 6 May, and our Commencement ceremony and celebrations on Thursday, 7 May.

You can find all the latest program and information on our website.

[Commencement Information](#)

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## Upcoming events

### Women Faculty Lunch Session: Effective Public Communication

30 April | 12:00–13:00 | Classroom 6

This session will focus on practical strategies for structuring talks, engaging diverse audiences, and communicating complex ideas clearly across academic and public settings.

Led by Nancy Gleason. Lunch will be provided.

RSVP required for in-person attendance. A Zoom option will be made available.

## OFEA in action

### New OFEA website launched

The new OFEA website is now live!

The site serves as a central hub for faculty policies, resources, and updates, including a calendar of events and key initiatives.



Faculty are always welcome to share ideas, suggestions, or announcements for our website.

[OFEA website](#)

## Faculty Mentoring Session

OFEA hosted a faculty mentoring session led by Vice Provost of Faculty Excellence and Advancement Thamar Solorio on April 7. It focused on approaches to effective mentorship for senior faculty. A complementary session for mentees will follow.



## RAIS Postdoctoral Fellowship – Information Session

OFEA held a session on 27 April to provide an overview of the RAIS program, eligibility, and application process. Faculty are encouraged to share this opportunity within their networks.

[Learn more about RAIS](#)

## Faculty Excellence Career Progression

(Monthly: last Wednesday of the month)

April 29 saw the launch of our new monthly series - offering small-group, focused discussions for early and mid-career faculty to clarify tenure and promotion expectations, strengthen research performance, and support continued academic advancement.

## Meet the OFEA team



### Professor Thamar Solorio

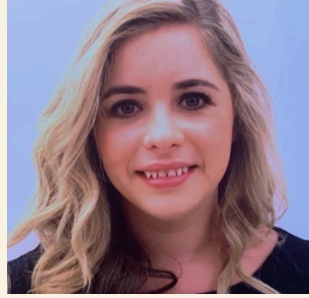
Vice Provost of Faculty Excellence and Advancement, Professor of Natural Language Processing

*"OFEA serves as MBZUAI's central hub for faculty lifecycle support and institutional excellence. Our mission is to support faculty at every stage of their careers, promote high standards across academic practices, and foster a strong sense of community and belonging."*



**Luisa Vallory**

Associate Director for  
Faculty Excellence and  
Advancement



**Felicity Harding**

Faculty Review Specialist



**Sharon Cavlovich**

Faculty Review Specialist



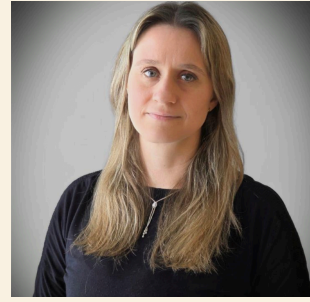
**Ana Blatnik**

Policy Development Officer



**Iman Farah**

Program Manager –  
Strategic Pipelines &  
Academic Development



**Maria Takacova**

Consultant for the Faculty  
Spouse and Family  
Program

## Looking ahead and getting in touch

Faculty are always welcome to share ideas, suggestions or questions by reaching out to any member of the OFEA team or by contacting [OFEA@mbzuai.ac.ae](mailto:OFEA@mbzuai.ac.ae).

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