

The University of Sheffield
Department of Computer Science

Minutes for the Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
1.00 pm, 4 November 1998 in G22

Present: Steve Maddock (Chairman), Tony Chilton, George Wilson, Emma Burnley, Guy Brown, Steve Renals, Martin Cooke, Yorick Wilks, Gordon Manson, Alex Collins (1st year Computer Science Rep), Nick Farrell (1st year Software Engineering rep), Steve Eaton (2nd year Computer Science rep), Mark Greenwood (2nd year Software Engineering rep), Jim Lyall (3rd year Computer Systems Engineering rep), Mark Hunt (3rd year Cognitive Science rep), Peter Edwards (3rd year Computer Science rep), Sam Chapman (3rd year Software Engineering rep), Tim Eavery (MSc Software Systems Technology rep), Dimitrios Kourkoulis (MSc Data Communications rep), Edgar Rivera-Ramon (MSc Telematics rep), Graziella Li-Ship (MSc Information Systems rep)

Minutes: Vanessa Allsop

1.
Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with an amendment to item 3
(Report suggestions about Intro week) which should read:

should read " Many representatives of the Departments were not in the Octagon and finding modules that did not clash with Department courses was almost impossible".

Action

2.
Matters arising from minutes

No matters were arising from the last minutes.

3.
Chairman's statement

Steve Maddock emphasised that SSLCOM reps make sure that any complaints regarding modules have been taken up with the Lecturer concerned BEFORE they go before the committee.

He also stated that if any of the committee wanted to contribute to the SSLCOM

web pages, they were more than welcome and should send any contributions via email to Steve Maddock.

4.
Representatives on Dept Board and Faculty of Engineering

Nick Farrell and Janek Mikulkin are Faculty of Engineering undergraduate reps. Faculty of Engineering postgraduate rep is Edgar Rivera-Ramon. Nick Farrell and Dimitrios Kourkoulis are undergraduate and postgraduate reps for the Departmental Board.

5.
Usage of the Dept network

Steve Maddock asked the reps the students' views on the intro week training session on the Department network, to see if sufficient information was given.

More detailed information on the NT network would have been beneficial to second and third years, because the system was new to them.

Steve Maddock asked the reps to canvas student opinion on what they thought of the network guide and what they would like to see in it. The reps should report back at the next meeting.

George Wilson also encouraged the reps to get students to email sysadmin if they were experiencing any problems or queries regarding the network.

ALL
REPS

6.
Printing Facilities

Steve Maddock explained that because of lack of resources (manpower and

money) the Department was unable to provide its own printing facilities. Thus, students had to use the CICS printing facilities in the same way that all other students of the University did.

George Wilson will investigate why there is a problem when printing out ghostview and postscript files

GW

7.
Lecture notes/CD-Rom

The opinion from students is that the CD-Rom is a very good idea, and very helpful to them.

George Wilson will send an email informing the students that the CD-Rom is now also available via the web.

Steve Maddock asked Mark Greenwood to find out if students would benefit from Unix utilities on the CD-Rom and report back at the next meeting.

GW

MG

8.
Room booking by students

Room G12c is officially available for student use. Other Department rooms are in high demand for Tutorials etc. and cannot be made available for student bookings. The students on the committee felt that a room booking system for G12c would not be necessary.

9.

Prerequisites for modules

Students on the COM325 module were not expecting such a high level of Maths when they registered for the module. Martin Cooke, who lectures this module, recognised the problem and was quite happy to give an additional lecture to go through the Maths content of the course.

Steve Maddock suggested this matter should be discussed at Teachcom to see if a stronger statement was required for the prerequisites of this module.

Teach
com
(MPC)

10.

Module Clash

Steve Maddock apologised that there was a clash of modules for dual Computer Science and Maths students but it was impossible to re-schedule COM233. A request was made to swap the module with Martin Cooke's tutorial but Martin was not prepared to do that on academic grounds.

Steve Maddock emphasised the importance of attending Tutorials, which were a good basis to discuss any problems with work etc.

11.

Assignment marking/feedback

Students on the committee agreed with Stephen Eaton that there was inadequate feedback on assignments particularly COM237. Gordon Manson, who lectures this module, agreed, but explained that it was a new course and he would improve his feedback on the next assignment.

Students said it would be very useful to have assignment marking guidelines.

There was concern over inconsistencies in marking of assignments where demonstrators were used. This should be discussed at Teachcom.

Some students felt that some assignments were vague in what they were asking.

Steve Maddock suggested if this was the case then they should speak to the relevant lecturers.

Teach
com
(MPC)

12.
Student evaluation questionnaire

The questionnaire will be handed out to students during week 9. This will be during their lectures.

The committee discussed ideas in regard to improving the return rate of the questionnaire. This included keeping it as short as possible, publishing the results and distributing the questionnaire via the first and second year tutorial system. A request was also made to include a question regarding demonstrators.

These issues will be discussed further at the next meeting.

13.
Out of hours work times

Yorick Wilks informed the committee that due to University cut backs a proposal has been put forward to reduce the portering hours, which would mean the Lewin

lab closing at 7pm. He has written to object to this and at the moment the proposal is on hold. However, he asks the committee reps to find out from students if this would be a problem and if it would be useful to have 24 hour access to the Lewin Lab.

Yorick Wilks asked if they could investigate via friends what other Universities/Colleges have who do enable 24 hour access to their labs.

The reps should report back at the next SSLCOM meeting.

ALL
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14.
Any other business

Dimitrios Kourkoulis asked if there was an SSLCOM meeting in the Electrical Engineering Department because the Data Communications MSc degree is run by Departments. The committee was not sure and suggested that he get in contact with Peter Parbrook. However, as Guy Brown the MSc course Director was on the Computer Science SSLCOM, any problems could be raised at this committee.

15.
Date of next meeting

16 December 1998, 1.30-4 pm, in G22