Minutes for the Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting

12.30pm, 15 March 2000 in G22

Present: Steve Maddock (Chairman), George Wilson, Guy Brown, Emma Burnley, Matt Fairtlough, Tony Chilton, Kasper Hunt (1st year Software Engineering Rep), Ed Smith (1st year Computer Science Rep), Mark Tice (1st year Artificial Intelligence Rep), Simon Payne (2nd year Software Engineering Rep), Ewan McEachran (MSc SST Rep), Robin Warren (3rd year Computer Systems Engineering Rep), Phil McMinn (4th year MEng Rep), Nyree Musgrave (MSc Information Systems Rep), Steven Eaton (3rd year Software Engineering Rep).

Apologies: Julian Briggs

Minutes: Linda Perna

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with comments made under matters arising from minutes.

2. Matters arising from minutes

Opening Times of the Lewin Lab

Tony Chilton spoke to the porters about the issue of asking students to leave or pack up 20 minutes before closing time. The porters denied this however, there are sometimes temporary porters assigned to the building who may not be aware of the issue. Tony will raise this issue in the Estates Liaison Committee so that this can be recorded in the Portering Manual. The students were asked to record any times that this occurs.

TJC

2.9 COM321/6410 Computer & Data Networks (Srba Cvetkovic)

The comments and complaints raised are being considered as part of wider range discussions concerning changes to the Department's degree programmes over the next few years.

Password protected websites

George Wilson will make the procedure available in the Network Guide.

GAW

COM305 Advanced Object Oriented Design (Tony Simons)

Tony Simons is taking the comments on board that the assignments set for this subject were quite time consuming. He will take this into consideration for next year.

COM606 Introduction to Data & Computer Networks (Srba Cvetkovic)

According to Srba Cvetkovic, it appears that despite the problems with the module, no one suffered in their degree as average marks were high.

Regarding the point that the assignment took many students more than 20 hours to complete, Steve raised the point that action can only be taken if an issue is raised. The cut off section on the Assignment Cover Sheet requesting students to fill in the time taken for particular assignments must be filled in. The Department needs accurate information so that if an assignment is taking too long, then something can be done about it.

2.10 Undergraduate Dissertations

The problems with feedback after the first interim report have been raised at the Departmental Board meeting. Any students who have still not received feedback were asked to see their tutor.

Vending Machine

Ed Smith has looked into the issue of having a vending machine in the Student Retreat. He has been asked to put forward a proposal and liaise with Tony Chilton regarding requirements such as power points.

Ed Smith

3. Chairman's Statement

Steve Maddock welcomed two new members, Simon Payne (2nd year Software Engineering) and Ewan McEachran (MSc Software Systems Technology).

4. Report from Computer Science Society - Ed Smith

Ed reported that the website has been updated. The Computer Science Society's site was a separate entity from Student Society site run by Mark Tice, which concentrated on different areas.

Steve suggested the site be a team effort rather than two separate sites. A homepage is to be set up to unite the two sites so that students would have one site to find information on. All reps were actioned to look at the current sites and send feedback to Ed and Mark so that improvements could be made.

All Reps

Ed also reported that the recent Paintball Excursion was a success. Ed spoke with Yorick Wilks who has indicated his support to the society. A football team is also being started.

5. COM240/COM6540: HCI and Computer Graphics - Simon Payne & Ewan McEachran

Simon and Ewan raised the issues that the teaching of this course by Dr Joab Winkler was not of a "high standard". Academic quality, teaching style and lecture preparation were criticised.

A letter is being sent to the Head of Department concerning the teaching standard of Dr Joab Winkler over weeks 1-4.

The Committee would like to address their concerns by asking reassurance from Joab that past exam papers would be a good reflection of this year's exam. If this is not the case, the Committee asks that a mock exam be set with skeleton solutions.

SCM

The Committee also wanted to state that they felt it inappropriate that a technician was asked to give a 10 minute lecture on material that was irrelevant to their course multiple times throughout the week to different sets of students.

In order to deal with problems such as this, the committee asks that a second lecturer sits in on some lectures and provides feedback to a lecturer if students raise concerns about a module. A concrete example of this practice was for COM108. During the first three weeks of this course, Joab was shadowed by Dr Gordon Manson. Gordon then took over the module from week 3 and the course was said to have improved drastically.

The Committee supports the suggestions that a mentor must sit in on some of the lectures of any new course module or any new lecturer's modules. The new lecturer should also be asked to attend the mentor's lectures.

The Committee feels that feedback for a module would be better if a questionnaire was given half way through the module.

Some reps complained that they had not been invited to attend Departmental Board Meetings. Emma has been asked to make sure the reps are contacted for all future meetings.

Emma

6. MSc Project Allocation - Ewan McEachran

Ewan presented concerns by a couple of students who had applied for external projects and then didn't get the project they were after. By this time, most of the internal projects were allocated. Guy Brown explained that external projects take time and effort to organise and were not as easy to

control. Generally, most students were happy with the project allocation and only 2 people were affected where clients withdrew their support.

A disclaimer has been suggested to stress that if a student chooses an external project, there may be some risk that the project is not allocated to them.

7. Survey of Teaching Equipment in Computer Science

George Wilson will circulate these surveys to determine how to target resources for the most student benefit. All reps are asked to provide feedback by Friday.

All Reps

8. Late arrivals at lectures

Steve raised the issue that if a student is persistently late for lectures, then the student could be subject to the same procedure as non attendance at a lecture. i.e. a letter will be sent to the student from the Faculty Board. There was dissent from the students as to whether this was appropriate as there may be a valid reason for the student being late.

9. Other Business

In view of the complaints about COM6060, Nyree Musgrave wanted to know if any changes had been made to this module. At this stage, no definite changes have been made but discussions about the course are taking place. Multiple choice exams are being discussed which may only be used if they can be justified.

10. Date of next meeting

Week 10/11 after Easter.