

# **Minutes for the Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting**

**2.00pm, 18 October, 2000**

**Present:** Steve Maddock (Chairman), Tony Simons, Guy Brown, Tony Chilton, Julian Briggs, Steve Renals, Simon Martin (MSc SST Rep), Simon Payne (3<sup>rd</sup> year Software Engineering Rep), David Gibson (4<sup>th</sup> year Software Engineering Rep), Mark Tice (2<sup>nd</sup> year Artificial Intelligence Rep), Steve Morris (2<sup>nd</sup> year Aerospace Rep), Stuart Mc Nully (1<sup>st</sup> year Computer Science Rep), Nathaniel Van Gulck (MSc ASE Rep).

**Apologies:** Yorick Wilks, Michael Mendler, George Wilson, Emma Burnley, Glen Chung, Paul Breckany.

**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**

### **Vending Machine**

Ed Smith's proposal regarding the vending machine was brought up at the last Departmental Board by Steve. The Board accepted the initial proposal, and asked Ed to finalise the details.

### **2.7 Survey of Teaching Equipment in Computer Science**

Extra printers have now been placed in the Lewin Lab. Students were asked to provide feedback on how this working out.

All Reps

## **7.2 Personal Tutorial System**

In response to concerns about the benefits of the Personal Tutorial Systems, there will now be review papers handed out during the semester to rate the value of this system. Action will be taken based on the results of these reviews.

## **3. Chairman's Statement**

Steve stressed that if a problem occurs with a particular module, the relevant representative/s should try to resolve it with the module lecturer first before taking the issue to SSLCOM. The sslcom email

alias should be used as a discussion forum to help resolve issues before a meeting. As there are only two meetings per semester, issues can be dealt with far more quickly using the sslcom email alias.

#### **4. Representatives on Dept. Board**

Simon Martin volunteered to be the postgraduate representative for Dept. Board meetings.

#### **5. Representatives on Faculty of Engineering**

Nathaniel Van Gulck and Simon Payne volunteered to be the postgraduate representative and undergraduate representatives respectively, for the Faculty of Engineering SSLCOM.

#### **6. Report from Computer Science Society**

Due to Ed Smith's absence, there was no report from the Computer Science Society.

#### **7. Undergraduate dissertation projects**

As Alex Collins was not present at the meeting, the question of whether there was enough guidance was put to the committee. The general consensus was that the information from tutors and the web was sufficient. Steve will follow up with Alex to find out the specific problems.

SCM

In response to previous year's concerns, the second year tutorial system, in the second semester will involve discussions about the dissertation project so that students know what to expect.

#### **8. Faculty of Engineering Issues**

Our new representatives for the Faculty of Engineering SSLCOM were asked to put forward the following issues at the next meeting:

- High numbers of people smoking outside the entrance to the Mappin Building were obstructing entrance or exit to the building posing a health and safety hazard.
- The constant re-naming of lecture theatres was causing confusion to most students and staff. For instance, the SG prefixed in front of lecture theatre numbers caused some people to assume the lecture would be found in St George's Church rather than in the Mappin Building. A map in the foyer of the building may be helpful.
- Some lecture theatres in the Mappin Building such as lecture theatre 14 were far too hot and windows were painted shut.
- In some cases, lecture rooms have been locked and it has taken up to 40 minutes to find a porter to unlock them despite paging them.
- In the event of overhead projectors being broken, a spare should be kept in the porter's lodge.

## **9. Any Other Business**

### **9.1 New Lecturers**

MSc students raised the concerns that three of their five lecturers are newly appointed to the Department. Of the three lecturers, KEB has had good reports, but there are concerns about YG and MG though both lecturers are committed to the course, are taking advice and working hard.

Software Analysis and Design lectures taught by MG are considered to be difficult to understand. The practical exercises are not seen as worthwhile. The lecturer reads his notes and there are concerns about language problems. Tony Simons will follow up with Simon Martin to discuss specific problems.

AJHS

The committee suggests that peer observation be introduced in the Department. Tony Simons is keen on this strategy though some lecturers in the Department appear to have reservations. The committee suggests that lecturers given new courses to teach should be observed for the first few weeks to identify any problems early so that they can be dealt with straightaway.

### **9.2 Number of demonstrators in Java and Databases courses**

There are not enough demonstrators in the Java and Databases courses where there are very large tutorial groups. Guy will try to increase the number of demonstrators for his Java course and will speak to Siobhan about increasing the number in her Databases course. However, there are limited funds allocated for demonstrators.

GJB

### **9.3 Maxi Project**

Problems have been experienced with the Maxi Project this year, with some students not having a project until the third week. This was due to a client that backed out of the projects in week two causing major problems. By week three however, a new client was found for the project. It was recognised that Guy Brown had worked very hard to resolve the problems, and that the problems were not due to lack of organisation, but were beyond the Department's control.

### **9.4 Other Issues**

Some students in the Networks lecture taught by SW have little computer science knowledge and are asking basic questions, leaving ASE students to listen to basic information that they already know. This is most likely due to Data Communications students in the course, which have an electrical

engineering background rather than a computer science background.

There is no clock in the St George's Church lecture theatre and some lectures are over-running. Tony Chilton will raise this at the next Estates meeting.

TJC

There are problems hearing some lecturers, especially JRW in the Mappin, lecture theatre 3. Steve will speak to JRW about possibly using a microphone in that lecture room.

SCM

## **9.5 Support feedback**

Julian requested feedback on support issues. Students commented positively on the network running faster this year and network problems being fixed very quickly.

A complaint was put forward referring to the printers jamming. To prevent this, a note will be put up to specify that no bulk printing should be done in the Lewin Lab. Unlike CICS, the support team cannot supply a 'full printing service'. Despite the problems, the students appreciate the use of the printers in the lab.

## **9.6 Language difficulties**

There are four Chinese students on the ASE course that are having some language difficulties. The ASE students are intending to hold meetings to discuss the subjects with them. English courses are also available from the English Language Centre and personal tutorial systems should be utilised to discuss any problems.

## **10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th December at 2.00pm.