

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 12th March 2008
G22 -2.15pm

MINUTES

Present: Mike Holcombe (chair) Guy Brown (Year 1 Tutor) Richard Clayton (Director of Teaching), Jonathan Blower (UG Year 3), Rob Gaizauskas (2nd Year Tutor) Scott Bentham (UG Year 2), Stuart Clift (UG Year 2) Steve Maddock (3rd Year Tutor) James Almond (UG Year 3), James Gregory (UG Year 3), Thomas Parkes (UG Year 3), Andrew Hughes (PhD), Mesude Bicak (PhD), Sam Flower (Union Link), George Wilson (Senior Programmer) Dave Abbot (Acting Technical Support Manager), Zoe Fletcher (Departmental Adminsitrator) , Sara North (SSLCOM Secretary) – minutes

Apologies: Jon Barker (MSc Director)

1. Welcome and apologies

Mike welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

5. Computer Society Report

Stuart Clift & Jonathan Blower confirm they have set up a committee of 7 people, a jointly organised Christmas party with the Students Union, this did poorly and there has been a general lack of interest from the students. They have developed a strategy to target 1st years next year by possibly organising guest lectures and becoming involved with other departments for example Departmental football game. WMLH mentioned that he is often approached by Microsoft and other large companies to take part in seminars, but previously there hasn't been any interest from the students. Computer Society to look into.

Action: Comp Society

2. Matters arising from last meeting

The minutes were accepted with the following comments:

Further to comments regarding COM3400, SF submitted letter just before the meeting expressing further concerns about the teaching of COM3400. RHC confirmed that the main recommendation that will be dealt with was the assessment method of COM3400 should change from 100% Exam to a combination of Assignment and Exam,

RHC confirmed that the module would not be taught by the same person next year and Teachcom will address the issue for the next academic year.
RJG confirmed he was still collating comments from the 2nd years on the module.

SF expressed concerns that if the failed students re-sat the exam in the summer, they wouldn't achieve any higher grades because they didn't understand the material initially. RHC confirmed that support would be available. SF asked if it was possible that when the matter has been discussed and dealt with can an academic member of staff email all 2nd years to clarify the action that has been taken. RHC/RJG confirmed.

Action: RHC/RJG

GJB confirms that access to Lego Mindstorm Robots is being dealt with.

Action was taken regarding the COM3410 Module workload being too high. AJHS extended the assignment deadline. SB reiterated that the module was larger than a 10 credit module. SF explained that this was one of the reasons students fell behind in COM3400, due to the demand of COM3410.

Action: RHC to Refer to Teachcom.

AH confirms still problems with eclipse, RHC confirms he did speak to AJC but can't remember outcome.

Action RHC

3. Student Evaluation

Handouts distributed of module tutor replies to Student Evaluation comments.
Discussion regarding lack of completed surveys received, SF said there were too many surveys for students to complete.
SB commented that students aren't enthusiastic because they are not confident the information will be taken seriously.
RHC confirmed that things are taken on board and the more survey's completed the more the information is considered valuable.

SF asked if academic members of staff were viewed by observers on their lecturing skills, RHC confirmed that we subject to Teaching and Quality regulations and peer observation is supposed to be part of it.

Action : RHC to Refer to Teachcom

Action RHC

Comments re: COM1030

SF highlighted the comment;

'Would SSLCOM consider it acceptable to require three copies of some of the stage reports to be handed in? If so, then we could arrange for one stage to be marked while the next one is being worked on'

WMLH confirmed that procedure does work and more copies would be wasteful. An electronic hand-in has worked in the past and could be used again.

SF also said that they didn't receive all the feedback from their projects. AH said this was due to the cross-over between WMHL & AJC, WMLH confirms they need to give feedback straight after practical, need to speak to AJC.

Action WMLH

Lecture Theatre 18 is unusable due to high noise levels from the building work outside. AH confirms this as been raised at the Faculty SSLCOM and noted for room bookings for next year.

JB said there is a discrepancy between the web pages for COM1030 and the handout. WMHL said that the web pages weren't very active.

SF also noted comments about COM3400

JB said that the teaching of COM1100 was very good and Rob Mill was very helpful. Feedback to be given to Rob.

Action: SXN

SB asked if there was any further information about third year choices, it is a big decision for the 2nd years and they would like to have more information about who will be teaching the module and the method of assessment, the deadline for these choices is May, but module information isn't available for the next year.

RHC confirms that the module tutors haven't been allocated for the next academic year yet.

SCM reminded students that they can change their choices by using an Add & Drop form in the first week and were advised to see their personal tutors for careers information.

SF asked why better students get better project, why isn't it the other way around to help the weaker students.

RHC explained that the system of allocating projects was a rational and transparent process that works.

WMLH said that the 2nd years are expected to attend the 3rd year project presentation; this would be a very good opportunity to speak to 3rd year students about the module choices.

4. Matter Arising from Engineering Faculty SSLCOM

AH explained purpose of the Faculty SSLCOM.

Noise levels in Lecture Theatre 18 & 13 will be addressed.

No UG Rep or PGT Rep. James Gregory volunteered for 2008/9.

No Departmental UG Reps. Scott Bentham volunteered.

6. Demonstrating Procedures

A petition with a number of signatures was handed in. Since demonstrating procedures have changed the students do not know how many hours they are allocated to work and will get paid for. This has resulted in several students working more hours than they are being paid for. AH asked that the allocated hours be published somewhere so the students can check.

GJB also added PhD students who would use the demonstrating as valuable teaching experience are not being allowed to work because they are more expensive, because of their national insurance contributions that need to be paid. To be referred to MPC/PDG.

Action WMLH

7. Computer Lab-Rooms being used as Lecture Theatres.

James Almond asked why the computer lab rooms were used for lectures where computers were not required, example was HCI module.

SF said that this has been dealt with and next semester the lectures have been moved to a lecture theatre.

8. Any other business

Thomas Parkes asked if they can have visual studio back on the lab machines GAW said he would look into.

Action GAW

SF announced there was a Union Links night out on the 22nd April 08.

Date of next meeting

23rd April 2008