

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 23rd April 2008
G22 -2.15pm

MINUTES

Present: Mike Holcombe (chair) Guy Brown (Year 1 Tutor), Paul Dilley (UG Year 1), Rob Gaizauskas (2nd Year Tutor) Scott Bentham (UG Year 2), Nick Rutherford (UG Year 2), James Gregory (UG Year 3), Thomas Parkes (UG Year 3), Jon Barker (MSc Director), Thomas Ashton (MSc HLT), Andrew Hughes (PhD), Sam Flower (Union Link), Tony Chilton (Chief Technician- Support Hardware) George Wilson (Senior Programmer) Dave Abbot (Acting Technical Support Manager), Sara North (SSLCOM Secretary) – minutes

Apologies: Steve Maddock (Year 3 Tutor), Zoe C Fletcher (Departmental Administrator), Richard Clayton (Director of Teaching).

1. Welcome and apologies

Mike welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting (check last meeting mins for item order)

No representatives present from Computer Society. WMLH confirms that he has now organised two Microsoft events including a UK Security event and very few people attended, the response rate was approx 5. WMLH not prepared to organise anything else when no one is interested.

Item below still needs to be actioned;

'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'

Item below needs to be actioned/feedback given;

'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.'

In reference to Sam Flowers comments asking 'if academic members of staff were viewed by observers on their lecturing skills' WMLM confirms that Peer Observation of Teaching (POOT) is currently taking place.

Further to Sam Flower's comments below, AH confirms that as markers for this project they have still not received the project for marking from AJC. WMLH to contact AJC.

'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

GAW confirms he will look into matter below;

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

Action GAW'

3. Teaching Related Issues (see attached info)

Nick Rutherford's emails to RHC, WMLH reiterated RHC response, NR clarified that the issue was more about the cost of printing the lecture notes; WMLH explained that this is an ongoing issue that can not be resolved to suit everyone.

SF suggested more printing credits, RJG explained this was being considered at the moment, however, WMLH pointed out that there are financial constraints on the department at the moment.

NR also commented that a lot of the books in the library were out of date; refer to Library Liaison Officer to review provisions for library stock.

Action MAW

Area for group work, TJC suggested that middle room in Lewin Lab to be un-bookable so students can use for group work. Refer to KK to reorganise Lewin Lab.

Action KK

NR suggested possibility of students learning by other methods, for example Podcast of lectures or a bookshelf in the department for students to use. Refer to Teachcom.

Action RHC

Sheffield Management Tool, WMLH confirms that this is work in progress to help students manage projects better, and if it doesn't work then it needs to be mentioned at the Project Meetings. SF commented that there isn't a lot that can actually be done with the Management tool. WMLH to refer to Chris Thompson.

Action WMLH

Differences between Discovery and XP design tool, pros and cons discussed, re: different methodology used by both but students find the use of both confusing. SB suggested easing work load to take the implementation stage out of the assessment or NR suggested having continuous assessment for module. WMLH explained that the more organised the group is the better the group progress. Refer to AJHS.

Action WMLH

NR suggests that 1st Years struggle and to start them on XP and teach them the basics and then introduce more complicated work. PD commented that AJC gives out a lot of information and that MPS style of teaching is better as he explains the concept and students grasp it better.

NR commented that no one knew how to test, suggests a WIKI page where students obtain useful information such as books to read, web pages and information about lecturers and their specialisms. WMLH to refer to Chris Thompson/James Gregory.

Action WMLH

PD commented that COM1080 does not have lab sessions, suggested that there be general lab session for students to do any modules work, like an Open Surgery. Refer to Teachcom that COM1080 hasn't any lab sessions and that the theory behind the module is not explained.

Action RHC

4. Computer Society Report.

No representatives present.

5. AOB

TP has concerns re: distribution of assignment deadline for 3rd year students. Refer to 3rd year tutor (SCM).

Action SCM

WMLH raised concerns that a student of his thought that the 3rd year project consisted of; Interim Report (20 pages approx), Protect Report (40 pages approx), he asked if the guidelines need to be reviewed. Refer to Project Officer/DOT.

Action MPC/RHC

Comments made re: DMR Phd Student not being confident in teaching the module, they did not know the slides and didn't really have an understanding of what they were teaching. Refer to DMR.

Action RHC/WMLH

Date of next meeting

Next academic year.