

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 5 December 2007
G22 -2.15pm

MINUTES

Present: Guy Brown (Year 1 Tutor) Richard Clayton (Director of Teaching) - Chair, Jon Barker (MSc Course Director), Paul Dilley (UG Year 1), Huayi Huang (UG Year 1), Scott Bentham (UG Year 2), Nick Rutherford (UG Year 2). James Almond (UG Year 3), James Gregory (UG Year 3), Thomas Parkes (UG Year 3), Thomas Ashton (MSc HLT), Chih Chung Lin (MSc ASE), Andrew Hughes (PhD), Mahmood Javed (PhD), Sam Flower (Union Link), Tony Chilton (Chief Technician, Support – Hardware), Dave Abbot (Acting Technical Support Manager), Monika Kus (Departmental Secretary) – minutes

Apologies: Sara North (SSLCOM Secretary), Zoe Fletcher (Departmental Administrator), Rob Gaizauskas (Year 2 Tutor), Noel Sharkey (Year 3 Tutor), Alan Watt (Year 4 Tutor), Phil Green (Head of Dept), George Wilson (Senior Programmer, Software and Network).

1. Welcome and apologies

Richard welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

2. Matters arising from last meeting

The minutes were accepted with the following comments:

The suggestion that there should be an opportunity for students to catch up with lecture notes and tutorial sheets for Pattern Processing COM3400 will be investigated.
Action RHC

It was clarified that if a software package is required to be installed on CICS machines, then the lecturer whose module this affects should request (it as in the case of Eclipse IDE).

It was confirmed that the chocolate vending machine in the Lewin lab will not be replaced as the new model is much too noisy for its location.

GNU/Linux on the Lewin lab machines has not been updated.

Problems with COM2010 assignment schedule will be fed back to PDG and considered in the next year module plan.

Action RHC

3. Teaching related issues

In the last year's National Student Survey the Department scored low on learning resources, so Richard asked the committee for their feedback on equipment requirements. It appears that students do use the Information Commons but find it busy and prefer to use the Lewin lab with all the required software available on all the machines. They commented that the meeting rooms in the IC are an excellent facility for groupwork as they are a lot quieter than the Lewin lab.

Students feel that they generally have a good relationship with their lecturers and commended some on their teaching style. On the other hand, they would like earlier feedback on assignments, more time between deadlines and weekly quizzes which would help keeping up with the material. They also objected to lecturers using recycled PowerPoint slides prepared by previous module lecturers.

Richard will feed these comments back to TeachCom.

Action RHC

4. Access to Lego Mindstorm robots

Access to the robots is going to be open to students including those doing their Y3 projects or taking the Adaptive Robotics module. Outside some intensive use periods, the robots should be made available to all students. Guy will announce the system and direct the students to the robots Wiki.

Action GJB

5. Usernames showing in URL of PhD student homepages

Since the introduction of the unified DCS and CICS user names, PhD students' homepages display the CICS user name rather than their initials and surname. PhD students would prefer this to be changed but it is not thought viable by support. Dave will consult George.

Action DJA

6. Any other business

Students feel that the workload on COM3410 **Systems Analysis and Design** is too high for a 10 credit module, which results in students missing lectures just to keep up with assignments. It is too late to make changes this year, but Richard will feed these comments back to the lecturer concerned.

Action RHC

Similarly to usernames in **PhD** homepages, students would prefer their **email addresses** to follow the initial dot surname format. This should be requested from CICS but Dave will check with George if anything can be done locally.

Action DJA

Students would like to be able to submit their **weekly COMFY quizzes** to MOLE after the deadline. This might not be possible and would mean discriminating against those who have submitted on time.

It was requested that the Maths module lecturer explains the more difficult **equations**. Richard agreed to speak to the lecturer concerned Paul Mitchener about this.

Action RHC

Students enquired if it would be possible to **record lectures** and make them available via podcasts. This is unlikely to happen in the near future and might meet with objections from some lecturers.

Problems with running **Eclipse** on the Lewin machines persist as it is often slow or not working at all on some accounts. Students should make the module lecturer aware of the problems and also inform support who could test the problem accounts. Richard will feed these comments to AJC and Tony will check on the MSDNA licence for Microsoft equivalent of Eclipse which was used last year.

Action RHC/TJC

At this point Dave stated that support can provide alternative text editors but need to be told by the lecturers what they need.

Students commented that Eclipse interface is not clear to use and a short explanation in lectures would save a lot of their time.

Date of next meeting

12 March 2008