The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 17 December 2008
G22 -2.15pm

MINUTES

Present:

Mike Holcombe (WMLH)	Chair
Dave Abbott (DA)	Technical Support Manager
Tony Chilton (TC)	Laboratory Superintendent
Zoe C Fletcher (ZCF)	Departmental Administrator
James Gregory (JG)	UG Year 4
James Jefferies (JJ)	UG Year 3
Mariam Kiran (MK)	PhD Student
Steve Maddock (SM)	Year 1 Tutor
Kathryn Roden (KR)	Undergraduate Secretary (Minutes)
Henry Sternberg (HS)	UG Year1
George Wilson (GAW)	Senior Programmer

Apologies:

1. Welcome and apologies

Richard Clayton (lecturer), Jon Barker (lecturer), Yi Hu (MSc HLT)

Noted: WMLH welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

Noted: KR commented that Emily Hardy (DCS receptionist) has not had any further trouble with the posters and notice boards (item 4.3). WMLH commented that careers posters should be kept up until after the event has occurred.
Action: KR to feed back to Emily Hardy to ensure careers posters are not taken down early.

3. Teaching related issues

3.1. Level 1 Student Representative Report

Library and IT:
Noted: HS commented that in the Lewin Lab it can often take along time to log into the computers. GW asked if this was happening to just one students or lots. HS confirmed that it was happening to lots of students.

Noted: GW commented that in the network guide there is information on how to manage profile spaces. Large profile spaces can affect how long it takes to log on. HS then responded that he has a small profile space and still has problems logging on.

Noted: ZF commented that HS should put these comments in to the student evaluation form.

Resources:

Noted: HS commented that there was a lack of on line resources for the MAS1050 module. Most on the notes were written up on the board during the lectures, so people who missed lectures fell behind.

WMLH commented that in the future the Computer Science Department will be teaching the course, so the way the course is delivered will change.

Action: WMLH to look into how the course will be delivered in the future.

Strengths of the course:

Noted: HS commented that the continuous assessment of COM1010 is seen as a positive by the cohort as there is less pressure at the end of the module as the work is more spread out.

3.2. Level 4 Student Representative Report
Course Delivery:

Noted: JG commented that some students felt that there were not enough resources for the VR assignment – half the examples were missing and there rest were in C which the students are not taught. SM commented that students are not expected to do the assignment in C – the examples are just hints, if there had been JAVA examples then the lecturer would have been giving answers away.

Action: WMLH to speak to lecturer regarding this issue.

Noted: Students found the Mainframe Computing ART lectures quite irrelevant whereas the labs were more relevant for the assignment. WMLH commented that the assessment has changed but not the way it is taught.

Action: WMLH to feed back to IBM to make lectures more relevant to the assessment.

Library and IT

Noted: JG commented that there are still a multitude of issues with Windows profiles and home drive mapping problems, which still have not been sorted out by Technical Support.

Noted: GW confirmed that the Technical Support team are still working on these issues. SM asked if students are kept informed of what is being done. GW answered that emails are sent to students which also contain some fixes which they can try. WMLH asked if this information could also be put up on a notice board somewhere.

Action: GW to look at spreading more information on what the Technical Support team are doing.

Resources

Noted: JG commented that students are not allowed to walk, through the main Lewin Lab, to the side labs when Louise Guthrie is teaching.

Action: WMLH to bring this issue up in the next TeachCom/DeptBoard to try and come up with a set of rules, for example could assessments be run in CiCS labs?

Noted: JG reported that some students are having problems with the computers reporting that all of the printers are unavailable, where as other students are having no problems at all – this is going on at the same time. GW commented that they would need to see this problem in action as this is the first they have heard of the problem. JG responded that he would make sure that support will be informed if any future issues.

Strengths of the course and areas for improvement
Noted: JG commented that the beeping noise made by the robots can be off-putting when people are trying to work. GW commented that the side rooms are designated 'quiet spaces'. WMLH suggested that more signs could be put up so students know these are quiet rooms.
Action: Support to put up signs for the quiet rooms and to find out about the function to switch off the robots beeping.

3.3. MSc Student Representative Report
Resources
Noted: Students sometimes find that printers are not available.
Action: Support to ask CiCS if there are any known issues with the printers.

Strengths of the course and areas for improvement
Noted: Some of the students feel that the course is too flexible. WMLH will ask the student to clarify which courses this is relevant to. ZF commented that as part of the curriculum review module choice may be restricted.

3.4. Level 3 Student representative report
Noted: JJ commented that many students didn't feel they were getting much out of the text processing labs. Not much support is given in the labs and as a result students are not turning up.
Action: WMLH to speak to Mark Hepple who is the course lecturer.

Noted: JJ commented that Amanda Sharkey has been really good and has provided really useful feed back on essays.

Noted: Students finished all their lab work for the Theory of Dist Systems in the first 2-3 weeks and would like to have some extra sessions.
Action: WMLH to speak to lecturer

Noted: JJ has spoken to L1 students about Network Architectures. The L1 students complained to JJ that Joab Winker did not know enough about the subject.
Action: WMLH to speak to Joab Winkler

Noted: JJ commented that students are confused by the examination structure of COM3400: pattern processing. The mark scheme changes half way through the assignment.
Action: WMLH to speak to Louise Guthrie

Noted: JJ commented that Tony Cowling did not seem to know much about Plug Ins during the COM1030 Labs.
Action: WMLH to speak to Tony Cowling.

4. Any other Business

Noted: MK asked why PHd students who are working as part time staff cannot be paid for demonstrating in labs or for teaching.
Action: WMLH to look into why.

Noted: ZCF commented that staff do listen to students comments and that all the results from the SSLCOM meetings are on the website
Action: KR requested to put link to SSLCOM page into these minutes:
http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/intranet/general/committees/sslcom.html

Action: Student representatives to ask cohorts to fill out their evaluations.
Noted: If the evaluations are not completed then the University will not be included in the National Student Survey.
Action: ZCF to send a reminder to all students

Date of next meeting: 18 March 2009