

The University of Sheffield  
Department Of Computer Science

**Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 25 March 2009**

John Carr Meeting Room, St Georges Complex

15:15

## **MINUTES**

**Present:**

Mike Holcombe (WMLH)	Chair
Dave Abbott (DA)	Technical Support Manager
Jon Barker (JB)	MSc Director
Scott Bentham (SB)	UG Year 3
John Derrick (JD)	Head of Department
Zoe C Fletcher (ZCF)	Departmental Administrator
James Gregory (JG)	UG Year 4
Steve Maddock (SM)	Year 1 Tutor
Anne Muigai (AM)	Union Link
Siobhan North (SDN)	Director of Teaching
Kathryn Roden (KR)	Undergraduate Secretary (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Noted:** Apologies received from; Daniela Romano (Year 2 Tutor), George Wilson (Senior Programmer), Tony Chilton (Chief Technician).

**Noted:** WMLH welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies. AM was also welcomed as the new Union Link.

**2. Matters arising from the last meeting**

**Item 3.1 Year 1 Report**

**Resources**

**Noted:** In the previous meeting it was commented that there were a lack of resources in the MAS1050 module. WMLH commented that this course will be redesigned for the next academic year.

**Item 3.2 Year 4 Report**

**Course Delivery**

**Noted:** It was noted in the previous meeting that some students felt there were not enough resources for the VR assignment. WMLH commented that there was no further news on this, but it has not been confirmed if this course is running next year.

**Noted:** It was noted in the last meeting that some students found the Mainframe Computing ART lectures quite irrelevant. WMLH commented that this module is being 'tweaked', but mentioned that IBM are people with the best expertise to deliver these lectures.

### **Library and IT**

**Noted:** The technical support team were asked to look at ways to spread information on what they are doing in relation to resolving technical issues. So far there has been no action on this.

**Action:** GW to look at spreading more information on what the technical support team are doing.

### **Resources**

**Noted:** The issue of students not being able to walk through the main Lewin Lab to the side labs during classes was raised at the last meeting. 'Do not Disturb' signs have been made to put on the door if, for example, as assessment is taking place. If staff let Zoe Fletcher (Departmental Administrator) know when booking the lab that it is needed for an exam – she will ensure that it is noted, and highlighted in red, on the room-booking screen outside the door.

**Noted:** WMLH commented that it is hard to give presentations in the Lewin Lab and that it is not suitable to teach large classes. It was suggested that at least two extra data projectors would be needed for full coverage of the lab. WMLH then commented that some Universities have two monitors for each work station in their labs: one monitor for the students work and the other for teaching material and instructions.

**Action:** DA to investigate if it would be cheaper to furnish each workstation with another monitor, or to buy two new data projectors for the Lewin Lab. The costs implications could then be discussed by Exec.

**Action:** WMLH to investigate what facilities are available from CiCS.

### **Item 3.4 Year 3 student report**

**Noted:** Some students felt that they were not getting enough support in the Text Processing Labs. WMLH spoke to the lecturer involved; the labs were not compulsory and support was available – those students who asked for help received it, however not many students turned up.

**Noted:** Students wanted to have some extra sessions on the Theory of Dist Systems Module. WMLH has passed this on to the course lecturer who will take this request into consideration.

**Noted:** Some year 1 students felt that the course lecturer for Network Architectures did not know enough about the subject. WMLH commented that the exam did test the course properly. AM commented that the lecture notes provided for the module were very comprehensive.

**Noted:** Some students commented that the examination structure for COM3400: Pattern Processing was confusing. WMLH has spoken to the course lecturer who has said that they will try and improve the situation.

**Noted:** Some students felt that the course lecturer for COM1030 labs did not know much about PlugIns. WMLH commented that this course is going to be discontinued.

#### **Item 4 Any other business**

**Noted:** The questions as to why PHd students who are working as part time staff cannot be paid for demonstrating in labs or for teaching was raised in the last meeting. WMLH commented that is it because it costs the University as they would have to pay NI contributions.

### **3. New Curriculum Proposals – (please see appendix 1)**

**Noted:** SDN commented that the first year has been completely restructured, and that all changes have now been finalised.

**Noted:** SDN commented that staff members were asked for new suggestions for courses to be offered in the second year (these suggestions are noted in appendix 1).

**Noted:** SDN asked the student representatives for any suggestions.

SB suggested that an Introduction to Graphics, an Introduction to the Internet and Etiquette in the Computing Profession modules would be useful.

**Noted:** SM commented that they plan to run a Genesys Experience in the second year. JG suggested that it could be a better idea to run Software Hut for a full year – doing core basics in the first semester and programming in the second semester. These suggestions will be taken into consideration when redesigning the new level two.

**Noted:** SM asked the students if they felt there were any gaps in their technical knowledge when attending interviews. JG commented that at one of his interviews they would have liked to have seen him have the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

SDN asked if this could be put on the website.

WMLH commented that the careers services have a very good webpage.

### **4. Teaching Matters**

#### **4.1. Year 4 Student Representative Report**

##### **Course Delivery**

**Noted:** JG commented that students still have not received their course work marks for the Virtual Reality ART module – only the combined result. Follow Up: ZCF sent an email to SSLCOM members stating that due to a clerical error these marks were not on the web. This issue has now been rectified and the marks should now be available.

##### **Other**

**Noted:** JG commented that Year 4 students seem apathetic to the SSLCOM process. JG has pointed out the SSLCOM web pages to students, but they feel that nothing has been done about the issues that they have raised in the past.

**Noted:** WMLH commented that issues are being addressed, new curriculum proposals show this. JD also commented that most of the changes that are made are long term ones so they hard to see.

**Noted:** SM commented that the students don't get to see the Teaching Quality Report, however the Annual Reflection Document is on the SSLCOM web page.

**Noted:** JD commented that the Teaching Quality Report could be gone through verbally at the next meeting.

**Action:** KR to add Teaching Quality Report to the next SSLCOM agenda.

**5. Autumn 2008/2009 Module Evaluation**

**Noted:** JG asked if there was any feedback for the ART modules.

**Follow up:** ZCF sent an email to all SSLCOM members explaining that there was an issue with MOLE and that is why no feedback for the ART modules was recorded. The Admin Team are working on rectifying this now, and will sort out the responses asap. ZCF also confirmed in the email that the students who completed the Autumn ART questionnaires will be entered into the next prize draw.

**6. Any other Business**

**Noted:** AM raised the issue of updating the representation page on the Union website to try and get current course representatives to help new students understand the role of a representative. SDN suggested putting those involved with peer mentoring in touch with the Union Link.

**Noted:** AM asked about how exam feedback was given and if old exam papers could be used as examples.

**Action:** WMLH to bring up at TeachCom if it is possible for specimen exam solutions to be released after the exam.

**Noted:** WMLH asked how we could get more student representatives to turn up to the meetings. SB commented that an incentive would be a good idea.

**Noted:** The issue of large numbers of MSC reps was raised.

**Follow up:** WMLH sent an email to all representatives asking them to confirm if they still want to be a representative or not.

**Action:** KR to collate responses and amend membership lists accordingly.

**Noted:** JG commented that it was better doing the Module Evaluation after the exam period.

**7. Date of next meeting:** 29 April 2009

## Appendix 1: New Curriculum Proposals

### Slide 1




# Computer Science at Sheffield



We are going to change it


### Slide 2



## The New First Year

- Six 20 credit modules lasting all year
  - Software Engineering Crossover Project
  - Foundations of Computer Science
  - Java Programming
  - Web and Internet Technology
  - Machines and Intelligence
  - Devices and Networks
- CS/SE can do 20 credits outside the department but don't have to.

### Slide 3




## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Year – starting 2010

The current (negotiable) plan is

- Six 20 credit modules, three per semester
- Back to Exams after Christmas
- No choice


### Slide 4



## Proposed Semester 1

- Programming Models
- Socio-Technical Systems (HCI, Systems Analysis, a bit of Databases)
- Intermediate Maths for Computing


### Slide 5



## Proposed Semester 2

- Languages and logic
- One of
  - Software Hut (for SE + EC)
  - Coding challenge (for CS and CS + AI)
- Professionalism in computing: security, hacking, and ethics.


### Slide 6



## Current Consensus

- Probably
  - Programming Models
  - Socio-Technical Systems
  - Software Hut
  - Machines Languages and logic
- Possibly
  - Intermediate Maths for Computing
  - Coding challenge
  - Professionalism in computing: security, hacking, and ethics

Slide  
7



## Alternative Suggestions


Learning, prediction and sensing

- A module that combines aspects of machine learning, techniques for prediction and dealing with audio and visual inputs would prepare students for research-led modules in L3.

Enterprise systems

- A module that covers the technologies involved in computer systems that support large organisations.


Slide 8



## Alternative Suggestions

- Software design and usability
  - includes object-oriented design and some aspects of HCI.
- Modelling Computer Systems
  - introduces students in a light-weight way to labelled transition systems, a simple process language, bisimulation and bisimulation games, a simple modal logic (Hennessy Milner style) and some principles of concurrency.

Slide  
9



## Alternative Suggestions


Logic

- The module could focus on logics as modelling languages, calculi and proof strategies

Systems analysis and design

- Existing year 2 systems analysis and design module, plus intro to HCI, databases and ethics and legal issues – This module is essentially the start of the Software Hut experience.

Slide 10



## Alternative Suggestions


Numbers, patterns and visualisation

- Maths (e.g. pattern processing, modelling and simulation of natural systems), and visualising data as 'pictures' using Matlab.

Communication with machines

- AI, robotics, anthropometric interfaces

Slide  
11



## Alternative Suggestions

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