

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

**Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 16 March 2011**

G22 Regent Court
13:15

MINUTES

Present:

Tony Simons [AJHS]	Chair	Nick Ross [NR]	Level 1 Enterprise Computing
Kathryn Roden [KMR]	Minutes Secretary	Rob Spick [RS]	Level 1 Software Engineering
Siobhan North [SDN]	Director of Teaching	Tom Crayford [TC]	Level 2 Software Engineering
Richard Clayton [RHC]	MSc Director	Vaclav Hudec [VH]	Level 2 Software Engineering
Steve Maddock [SCM]	Level 1 Tutor	Kyle Milner [KM]	Level 2 Artificial Intelligence
Amanda Sharkey [AJCS]	Level 3 and 4 Tutor	Sina Shamshiri [SS]	Level 2 Enterprise Computing
Dave Abbott [DJA]	Technical Support Manager	Henry Sternberg [HS]	Level 3 Enterprise Computing
George Wilson [GAW]	Senior Programmer	Mihai Glont [MGG]	Level 4 Enterprise Computing
Zoe Fletcher [ZCF]	Departmental Administrator	Tony Mustow [TM]	Level 4 Computer Science
Lex Rigby [LR]	Faculty Librarian	Li Li [LL]	MSc Advanced Software Engineering
		Ruoran Liu [RL]	MSc Advanced Computer Science
		Leon Derzynski [LD]	PhD

Apologies: Carl Clegg (Year 1 Computer Science Student)

1. Welcome and apologies

Noted: AJHS welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

Action carried forward from last meeting: (item 3.1.1. on previous minutes) The L1 ITMB representative commented that some of the ITMB students feel that there is too much emphasis on Java. This comment will be taken to TeachCom.

Noted: (item 3.1.1 on previous minutes) the student representatives felt that the demonstrator for COM1002 was hard to understand and was inexperienced. AJHS commented that after some investigation he also felt the demonstrator was hard to understand. The demonstrator will be replaced next year as they are going to complete their jointly supervised PhD at a partner university.

Noted: (item 3.1.2 on previous minutes) NR clarified that the ITMB students were required to produce an A1 poster. They were given two weeks to complete the assignment however the University Print Services said it would take up to 10 days to process a poster of this size, giving the students only four days to complete the project.

Action: AJHS to feed back to the course leader and suggest giving the brief to students earlier to account for the time it takes to get the posters printed.

Noted (item 3.1.2 on previous minutes) many students complained about the noise levels outside LT17 due to building work. ZCF emailed Room and Parking Services who responded saying that work is now complete and that there should be no further problems.

Noted: SDN commented that LT16 and LT17 could be demolished next year.

Noted: (item 3.1.4 in previous minutes) some students commented that they were feeling a bit overwhelmed by the number of assessments in COM1003. The lecturer provided the following comments:

Programming is a practical skill - you learn to program by writing programs. My experience of teaching programming over many years suggests that regular assessed coursework is the right approach to take, because

- *students get rapid feedback on their progress (as acknowledged)*
- *students that are struggling can be identified quickly and given extra help*
- *the large majority of students will not fully complete exercise sheets unless they are assessed*

Noted: KMR reported that ZCF has sent an email to all academics reminding them that they should make it clear to all students when the reading weeks for their courses are.

Noted (item 3.2.1 on previous minutes) it is standard policy for all teaching material to be on MOLE, or where it is not on MOLE a link should be provided to the material. If students notice any discrepancies to this rule then they should email KMR who will inform the departmental support secretary. ZCF has also emailed all academics to remind them of this policy.

Noted: (item 3.2.2 on previous minutes) LR confirmed that some rooms in the IC can be locked. If they are and the room has been booked for a meeting then the students should ask the concierge to open the room up for them.

Noted: (item 3.3.1 on previous minutes) the lecturer of the aerospace module provided information that quiz answers were returned on 20 Jan and were available until 20 February. MGG commented that feedback needs to be more timely to ensure you can learn from your mistakes and to improve for the future.

Noted: (item 3.5.1 on previous minutes) LL clarified that the demonstrators for the aerospace module don't always have the knowledge about the tools they are using. There are also lots of problems with the flight gear. MGG added that they have to use an old version of the flight gear for the code to work. However there is an explanation sheet which tells you how to set everything up and he hasn't received any complaints about this module.

Noted: (item 3.5.2 on previous minutes) DJA commented that they are still looking into the issues regarding the computers being slow to respond to certain commands. The support team have started a programme of re-cloning the PC's in the Lewin Computer Room.

Noted: (item 3.5.2 on previous minutes) If any students have any problems with the cover sheet (bar code) system then they should email the general departmental email address dept@dcs.shef.ac.uk

Action: KMR to ask the receptionist to put a note on the drop box with the departmental email address and telling students to email if they have had any problems with the system.

Noted: (item 3.5.4. on previous minutes) LL reported that in Software Measurement and Testing there were no instructions on how to run the tool. MGG commented that everything is on MOLE now whereas before some things were just on the lecturer's home page. It was noted that Solaris is used which is no longer supported by the department. DJA responded that the lecturer is aware of this fact, but it shouldn't be too much of an issue as the course might not be running again.

Noted: (item 3.5.5 on previous minutes) SDN commented that if students have any questions about the BCS then they should speak to Tony Cowling as he is currently the departmental contact.

Action carried forward: (item 3.5.5 on previous minutes) DJA to put up a notice in the Lewin Computer Room saying that students are allowed to use the internal phone with a list of useful contacts.

3. Teaching Related Matters

3.1. Level 1

3.1.1. Course delivery

Noted: Students are concerned with the teaching style of the lecturer of COM1002 (from the Department of Maths). RC commented that this issue has been brought up at TeachCom. The long term plan is for all the maths to be taught within the Department of Computer Science. RC stated that last year there was an issue with the lecture notes not being made available to students, and when they were made available they

contained mistakes; this issue was brought to the attention of the lecturer at the time.

Action: L1 and L2 students to get together to compare lecture notes for COM1002 to see if the mistakes have been corrected.

Noted: Some students have complained that they found the design stage of the COM1001 project ambiguous. They would like to see some examples of projects to look at before starting. They also felt two weeks wasn't a very long time to complete the project.

Action: AJHS to suggest to the course lecturers that they sent the assignment spec to him so he can see if there is any way in which it can be changed.

3.1.2. Library and IT

Noted: Students are frustrated about the slowness of the computers when using the DCS network. DJA commented that they are aware of this issue and are looking into it. He also commented that students should log the issue with the help desk when they encounter problems like this. They should include information such as the time/date and which machine they were working on when the problems occur.

3.2. Level 2

3.2.1. Course delivery

Noted: Some students commented that for COM2001 they found it to be unnecessarily complex. AJHS fed back to the students that the lecturer of this course had just received the best set of assignments from group of students he has ever had.

3.2.2. Library and IT

Noted: It was reported that many of the power sockets in the IC don't work.

Action: LR to report this to IC staff.

Noted: SS commented that there was a lack of an SVN client on Linux. DJA responded that there was a command line client available. LD suggested that the students can use MANSVN which has documentation on how to use it.

Noted: Students have reported that when using Google Chrome their browsing history is not saved. DJA commented that this is not an issue with Chrome, but with the size of the student's profiles. However some of the students commented that they have this problem, but do not have large profiles. DJA suggested that students should log these problems with the help desk.

3.2.3. Resources

Noted: It was reported that display messages warning that the projector needs a new lamp and filter replacement show up during lectures in many of the lecture theatres in the Mappin Building.

Action: ZCF to circulate an email to all academics asking that they report any messages like this to AV services.

3.3. Level 3

3.3.1. Course delivery

Noted: HS reported that students would like the deadline for COM4240/6490 to be extended as there are a large number of assignments due in the same week.

Action: ZCF to ask course leader if the deadline can be moved to the end of week 12.

Noted: Students have noticed a lot of overlap between both Java E-Commerce and The Intelligent Web modules.

Action: Students to feedback to AJHS where the overlaps are.

3.4. Level 4

3.4.1. Course delivery

Noted: TM reported that many students are not happy with the Java E-Commerce module. They feel that the teaching is below par and there are often mistakes in the lecture slides. They also commented that the lecturer often struggles to answer questions.

Noted: AJHS responded to these comments; he explained that he took over this course from another lecturer and inherited all the slides in a pdf format which he was not able to update, so he points out the errors during the lecture. He also explained that, as he took over the module, he is not an expert in the area which is why he is unable to answer some questions.

Noted: ZCF commented that Gillian Callaghan in the research office might have a pdf reader so the slides could be updated.

Noted: RC commented that the Java E-Commerce and the Intelligent Web modules could be changing in the next couple of years.

Noted: MGG reported that there have been a number of complaints for Software Measurement and Testing. There have been long delays between handing in work and receiving feedback. It was deduced that this feedback was returned out of the recommended guidelines.

Action: AJHS to feed these comments back to the lecturer and to try and find out why there was such a delay in getting marks back to the students.

Noted: MGG reported that wording the lecturer chooses to use for Software Measurement and Testing can be ambiguous.

Action: AJHS to feed back comment to the lecturer.

Noted: MGG commented that there isn't much freedom to choose which programming languages they can use.

Noted: RC asked if students would like the opportunity to learn different programming languages if the students contributed to this teaching. All student representatives agreed this would be a good idea.

3.5. MSc

3.5.1. Course delivery

Noted: Some students feel that four hours of lectures and one lab sessions for COM6460 is too much.

Action: AJHS to feed comment back to course lecturer.

4. Feedback for COM1002

Noted: In a previous meeting it was noted that for students taking Computer Science with Maths there is lots of overlap of material taught within the Maths Department and COM1002. SDN commented that for next year's intake the students will do the Artificial Intelligence module instead of COM1002.

5. Feedback for PSY101

Noted: In a previous meeting students asked if the regulations could be amended to allow students who were not able to register for PSY101 in their first year to take it in their second year. SDN commented that it is too late to change the regulations now. However the issue which occurred during module enrolment this year should not happen again in the future.

6. Any other business

Noted: DJA has been speaking to the Director of IT (Prof Phil Green) regarding noise levels in the Lewin Computer Room as there have been a number of complaints from students. They are currently working on ways to monitor the noise levels. All the student representatives thought this was a good idea.

7. Date of next meeting

Noted: The next meeting is on Wednesday 16 March 2011.

Action: KMR to try and rearrange the time of the meeting to 13:15 as the 12:15 time clashes with some lectures.