

The University of Sheffield  
Department Of Computer Science

**Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 04 May 2011**

G22 Regent Court

13:15

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

|                          |                            |                                 |  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Tony Simons<br>[AJHS]    | Chair                      | Rob Spick<br>[RS]               | Level 1 Software Engineering   |
| Kathryn Roden<br>[KMR]   | Minutes Secretary          | Adam Petterson<br>[AP]          | Level 1 Artificial Intelligence  |
| Siobhan North<br>[SDN]   | Director of Teaching       | Carl Clegg<br>[CC]              | Level 1 Computer Science   |
| Richard Clayton<br>[RHC] | MSc Director               | Tom Crayford<br>[TC]            | Level 2 Software Engineering   |
| Steve Maddock<br>[SCM]   | Level 1 Tutor              | Kyle Milner<br>[KM]             | Level 2 Artificial Intelligence  |
| Amanda Sharkey<br>[AJCS] | Level 3 and 4 Tutor        | David Elston<br>[DE]            | Level 2 Computer Science   |
| Dave Abbott<br>[DJA]     | Technical Support Manager  | Henry Sternberg<br>[HS]         | Level 3 Enterprise Computing   |
| George Wilson<br>[GAW]   | Senior Programmer          | Mihai Glont<br>[MGG]            | Level 4 Enterprise Computing   |
| Zoe Fletcher<br>[ZCF]    | Departmental Administrator | Li Li<br>[LL]                   | MSc Advanced Software Engineering  |
| Lex Rigby<br>[LR]        | Faculty Librarian          | Madhusudhana Rao<br>Kavilikatta | Software Systems. and Internet Technology<br>International Rep for the Department. |

**Apologies:** Daniela Romano, Leve 2 Tutor

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Noted:** AJHS welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

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

**Noted:** In the meeting, on 24 January 2011, the ITMB representative commented that some students felt that there was too much emphasis on Java. This item was taken to TeachCom. SDN reported back stating that Java is fundamental to teaching, and that

students must be able to write programs if they want to do a degree in our department.

**Noted:** (item 3.2.1 2, 24 January 2011) ITMB students felt that the 2 weeks they were given to produce a poster was not long enough as the print service can take up to 10 days to produce prints. AJHS fed these comments back to the course leader who confirmed that he told the students that they would have to complete the poster in good time due to the length of time the print service can take.

**Noted:** KMR confirmed that there is now a note, on the submission drop box, telling students to email the departmental email address if they encounter problems with the bar code cover sheet system; [dept@dcs.shef.ac.uk](mailto:dept@dcs.shef.ac.uk)

**Noted:** DJA confirmed that there is now a notice up in the Lewin Computer Room saying that the students are allowed to use the internal phone with a list of useful contacts on it.

**Noted:** The L1 and L2 student representatives confirmed that the lecture notes for COM1002 have been updated and the mistakes from last year have been corrected.

**Noted:** AJHS fed back to students that more examples of UML diagrams used in the crossover project will be made available to students as per their request in the last meeting.

**Noted:** LR reported that the power sockets in the IC are going to be replaced fixed over the summer vacation.

**Noted:** ZCF confirmed that an email was circulated to all academics asking that they report any warning messages from projectors in lecture theatres to AV services.

**Noted:** AJHS reported that he met with the student representatives so they could show where they felt the overlaps in Java E-Commerce and The Intelligent Web modules were. AJHS confirmed that the overlap is only in one or two lectures which are critical to both courses. Because it can't be guaranteed that students do both courses, the overlap can't be avoided.

**Noted:** It was confirmed that there is a pdf editor in the department. AJHS has an agreement with the owner that he can send the mistakes though to be corrected for the Java E-Commerce lecture slides.

**Noted:** AJHS reported that he asked the Software Measurement and Testing lecturer why there was such a delay in returning marks back to students. The lecturer agreed that it would have been better to get the marks back sooner to students. However at that time he had a very heavy work load due to an unfortunate combination of modules which all needed marking at the same time.

**Noted:** AJHS confirmed that he had fed back to the lecturer of Software Measurement and Testing that some of the students thought the language he used was a bit ambiguous. AJHS commented that the course will not be the same next year.

**Noted:** AJHS fed back to the lecturer of COM6460 that some of the students felt that four hours of lectures and one lab session per week is too much. He reported that he has had no immediate response yet, but the course will be different next year.

### **3. Teaching Related Matters**

#### **3.1. Level 1**

##### **3.1.1. Course delivery**

**Noted:** COM1002: Students are encouraged to ask questions, but feel discouraged when the lecturer replies saying that he doesn't have time to help and that he should be contacted during office hours. The students felt that this led to students not asking many questions for the duration of the module so far.

**Noted:** SDN commented that the lecturer, Dr Moty Katzman, is very helpful to students if they go and see him.

**Action:** AJHS to feed these comments back to the lecturer.

##### **3.1.2. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement**

**Noted:** The students find the lecturers patient and the module content very interesting for COM1003 and COM1004.

**Action:** AJHS to report comments back to the lecturer

#### **3.2. Level 2**

##### **3.2.1. Course delivery**

**Noted:** Students are concerned as they are very busy with lectures and assignments, and they feel they don't have very much time to prepare for exams. They requested if they could extend the deadline for Noel Sharkey's take home exam. SDN responded that it wouldn't be viable to change the date of the deadline due to the length of time it will take to mark the papers.

**Noted:** Students reported that some of the module descriptions are not on the website yet. SDN responded that it is because some of them have not been written yet.

**Noted:** Some students are not able to see the UG projects list. GAW responded that this could be due to a password problem and that it is better for students to start a VPN connection.

**Noted:** Students commented that if the exam for COM2003 was at the end of the exam period then they would have more time to revise.

**Action:** ZCF to ask if the exam date can be pushed back.

**Noted:** Students reported that there have been delays with the Android teams in Software Hut

**Action:** AJHS to ask lecturer if this can be taken into consideration when marking the project.

### 3.3. Level 4

#### 3.3.1. Course delivery

**Noted:** Students commented that the speed of the computers in the Lewin Computer Room is much faster now. DJA commented that he thinks that this issue is now fixed. He commented that they felt the Novell File System Client was causing the problems. DJA commented that they hope to move all machines in the Lewin Computer Room over to Windows 7.

### 3.4. MSc

#### 3.4.1. Library and IT

**Noted:** The MSc rep reported that students work on group projects, where they need to collaborate. He commented that IDEs are already installed in the lab computers but configuring them to a popular version management system plus providing some space on the departmental server will help students maintain their current version of the project in a central repository. SDN agreed that a subversion plugin for eclipse would be good.

**Action:** DJA to look into this and to feed student comments back to SLAG (DCS Support Liaison Group)

**Noted:** SCM asked if there could be a student wiki on the web pages where they share advice and ideas. DJA confirmed that departmental web pages are available. SDN commented that this could be added to the student handbook.

**Noted:** The students felt this was a good idea.

**Action:** SDN and DJA to discuss.

#### 3.4.2. Resources

**Noted:** Students would like free printing where students bring their own paper. The MSc rep commented that some departments are already doing this. SDN responded that the cost of the toner is too much for this to work. SDN stressed that all the profit made from the printers is fed back to the students. The University does not make any money on printing.

**Noted:** TC suggested that it would be useful to have a sign next to the printer which reminds students that they can top up their print accounts online.

**Action:** TC to produce some wording and send to DJA.

**Action:** DJA to display the sign by the printer in the Lewin Computer Room.

#### 3.4.3. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement

**Noted:** Students would like more flexibility in choosing modules especially in SSIT. RHC commented that due to the nature of the

students coming onto the course and their background the course has to be quite restrictive.

**Noted:** Students have reported that some modules overlap which leaves to redundant learning. Students feel that the Java E-Commerce project is a replica of the Maxi Project. RHC commented that he feels that these are actually very different but the comments will be noted and will be taken into consideration next year.

#### **3.4.4. Other**

**Noted:** Some SSIT students feel that there is no need for them to learn the basics again as they already have some programming experience. They feel there should be more options for the students to choose modules, or to have some flexibility in admitting students to the programmes of their choice. RHC commented that there is a reason why SSIT is offered to certain students. If applicants do not have the right back ground then they are likely to not do very well.

**Action:** RHC will feed back that students want more flexibility.

**Noted:** Some MSc projects clearly state pre requisites, so for SSIT students the choice can be limited. SDN commented that the pre requisites are there for a reason. RC commented that next year they are going to try and make sure that there are more projects available for SSIT students.

#### **4. Student evaluation (Autumn 2011/12)**

**Noted:** The Student Evaluation results can be viewed here:

[https://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/dept/archive/2010\\_2011/studentevaluation/index.html](https://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/dept/archive/2010_2011/studentevaluation/index.html)

**Noted:** SDN stated that the student feedback for Foundation of Computer Science had been sent to the wrong lecturer, who had returned a negative response. These comments will be amended before they go online.

**Noted:** Some students commented that they feel Mainframe Computing is not really essential for Enterprise Computing students.

**Action:** AJHS to ask the Enterprise Computing course leader why Mainframe Computing is part of the degree programme.

#### **5. Assignment hand in procedure**

**Noted:** KMR asked the student representatives what they thought of the new hand in system using the drop box and the bar code system. All agreed that they felt it worked well. SDN asked if the students would want a drop box facility in the new building which is used by the whole faculty. The students felt it was easy enough to use the drop box in Regent Court.

**Noted:** The students asked why the hand in deadline was at 3pm. ZCF clarified that this is to give the receptionist time to scan all the documents.

**Noted:** ZCF told the representatives that any errors with the bar code system should be reported to the departmental receptionist.

#### **6. Any other business**

**Noted:** DJA commented that he has found the key for the suggestions box in the Lewin Computer Room. All the comments in the box were to do with software updates which he will take into consideration. He stated that the box will be emptied before each meeting.

#### **7. Date of next meeting**

**Noted:** This is the last meeting of the academic year. The meetings for 2011/12 will be agreed at the start of Semester 1.