The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 17 October 2012
G22 Regent Court
13:15

MINUTES

Present:

Staff:		Present: P Apologies: Ap Absent: Abs	Software Engineering	Andreas Tsiapalis [AT]	P
Chairman	Mike Stannett [MPS]	P	Computer Science with Maths	Simou Wang [SW]	Abs
Secretary	Kathryn Roden [KMR]	P	Enterprise Computing/ITMB	Oliver Grayson [OG]	P
Dept Administrator	Zoe Fletcher [ZCF]	P	**Undergraduate Year 3**		
Year 1 Tutor	Amanda Sharkey [AJCS]	P	Computer Science	Carl Clegg [CC]	P
Year 2 Tutor	Noel Sharkey [NES]	Ap	Artificial Intelligence	Lianne Meah-Brabbins [LMB]	P
Year 3 and 4 Tutor	Daniela Romano [DMR]	Abs	Software Engineering	Rob Spick [RS]	P
Director of Teaching	Mark Stevenson [RMS]		Computer Science with Maths	Wing Hang Vince Yeung [WHVY]	Ap
MSc Director	Mark Hepple [MRH]	P	Enterprise Computing/ITMB	Yineng Zeng [YZ]	P
Head of Department	John Derrick [JD]	Ap			
Technical Support Manager	Dave Abbott [DJA]	P	**Undergraduate Year 4**		
Senior Programmer	George Wilson [GAW]	Ap	Computer Science	TBC	
Faculty Librarian	Helen Moore [HM]	P	Artificial Intelligence	TBC	
Students:			Software Engineering	Vaclav Hudec [VH]	Ap
Undergraduate Year 1			Computer Science with Maths	TBC	
Computer Science	Andrew Southon [AS]	P	Enterprise Computing/ITMB	TBC	
Artificial Intelligence	Christopher Winward [CW]	Abs			
Software Engineering	Matthew Handisides [MH]	P	**MSc**		
Computer Science with Maths	Joe MacMahon [JM]	P	SSIT	David Steele [DS]	P
Enterprise Computing/ITMB	Macdonald Mtalimanja [MM]	Ap	ASE	Rouran Zhang [RZ]	P
	Andrew Robertson [AR]	Abs	ACS	Wanchun Zhang [WZ]	P
Undergraduate Year 2					
Computer Science	Matthew Shaw [MS]	P	SLP	Alvin Pastore [AP]	P
Artificial Intelligence	Thomas Allen [TA]	P	**PhD**	Sina Shamshiri [SS]	Abs

1. Welcome and apologies

Noted: MPS welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

Noted: MPS introduced himself as the new SSLCOM chair and deputy director of teaching. MPS explained that the role of the SSLCOM chair has now been passed onto the deputy director of teaching as it allows for a better channel between students and matters going to the Teaching Committee (TeachCom).

Noted: MPS pointed out that there are new staff members of SSLCOM: NES, L2 Tutor; DMR, L3 and 4 Tutor, RMS, Director of Teaching, MRH MSc Director.

Noted: All members who were at the meeting introduced themselves.

Noted: The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a fair and accurate record.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

Noted: (item 2 on previous minutes) the action on Tom Crayford to speak to DJA regarding having a student wiki was never completed. This student has now graduated from the University
Action: KMR to find original suggestion from past minutes and circulate at next meeting.

Noted: (item 2 on previous minutes) DJA commented that the support team are trying to introduce a better system for next semester with regards to the Tomcat server. In the past students reported that it would frequently fail and would need to be restarted.

Noted: MPS reminded students to continue to report faulty plug sockets in the library spaces.

Noted: MPS asked the student representatives if they are being asked to use their clickers in lectures as in the last meeting students said they enjoyed using them and would like to use them more. TA confirmed that they are using them for some second year modules and it was confirmed that the L1 students are using them. AS asked when students who were not allocated one during intro week would get their clickers. KMR clarified that she is liaising with Trish Murray in the Faculty of Engineering to try and get these to students as soon as possible.

3. Teaching Related Matters

3.1. Level 1

3.1.1. Course delivery

COM1001

Noted: JM reported that some students felt they would rather be put into groups rather than choosing who they work with. AS also commented that he had received similar feedback. TA responded that it is better to choose your own groups.
Action: L1 students to report at the next SSLCOM meeting how it has been working in groups where they get to pick groups versus ones where they have no choice.

Noted: JM reported that the lectures can be quite slow for COM1001 and that students are unsure what information is required as there is a lot of verbal content for each slide.

COM1003

Noted: JM reported that students would like to see lecture slides in advance of the lecture.
Action: MPS to feed back to COM1003 lecturer (Siobhan North).

3.1.2. Library and IT

Noted: JM reported that students would find it useful to be able to change their passwords on Linux computers. DJA responded that for the time being students who want to change their password need to go to the support office. DJA also confirmed that the support team are currently working on an automated service and will announce when it is ready.

3.1.3. Other

Noted: AS asked if students could have access to the Edgar Allen Computer Suite outside of lecture time. AS also reported that many students are not aware that they can work in the Lewin Computer Room. DJA clarified that the computer suite in Edgar Allen is not open access.
Noted: MS commented that last year he was stopped from working in the Lewin computer room by someone who was not from the Department of Computer Science. DJA commented that only Computer Science staff and students should have access to the Lewin computer room. ZCF asked to be informed if anyone spots this happening again.
Noted: ZCF explained that as all first and second year teaching has been moved over to Edgar Allen this should free up some time in the Lewin for students to go and work. It is possible to see when the Lewin is booked by looking on the intranet:
http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/intranet/teaching/public/timetables/RC.html
Noted: Students are advised that there are also lots of other computer rooms which are managed by CiCS. MRH commented that CiCS machines now run Python and DJA added that they all have Java 5. If students notice that the machines are running old versions of Java they should tell CiCS.
Action: ZCF to email all first years with details of Lewin opening times.

3.2. Level 2

3.2.1. Course delivery

Noted: Noted: A problem concerning the use of the Haskell Platform on the Linux machines for COM2001 was reported. Some students are reporting that it links to the wrong version of an auxiliary component installed on the machines, and consequently Haskell won't run

3.3. MSc

3.3.1. Course delivery

Noted: RZ reported that students find Software Development for Mobile Devices very interesting and that they are pleased with the teaching.

Noted: Some students find 3D computer graphics hard as they struggle to understand the lecturer. They fed back to RZ that there is lots of new terminology which they find hard to understand. They would like more tutorials and guides. The students are impressed with the 3D effect programming.
Action: MPS to feed back comments to lecturer

Noted: Students are enjoying Speech Processing, Text Processing and Object Oriented Programming.

Noted: Some students don't interact much with their teachers. RZ reported that this could be due to politeness, shyness and not being accustomed to speaking to teachers.

3.3.2. Library and IT

Noted: Some students could not log into the DCS machines in the first two weeks. Some students also struggle to find available computers to work on so will bring their laptops in when working in the library.

3.3.3. Resources

Noted: Some students reported problems with finding somewhere to do high quality double sided printing.

3.3.4. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement

Noted: Students felt that the courses for ASE were full of practice where they can gain the abilities of project development and management abilities.

3.3.5. Other

Noted: Some international students feel that the education system is reasonable and fair at Sheffield. Some students reported that they cannot keep up with the progress of their subjects and are worried about the examinations and projects.

Noted: In response to RZ's report MPS replied that will be tutorials on assessment styles and that there are lab classes to help with the technical content of courses. MRH added that if students are having problems they can speak directly to the lecturer.

Noted: MSc representatives reported that they use a discussion thread for their Machine Learning course, but have had no response to any comments which have been posted.
Action: MPS to remind the course lecturer (Neil Lawrence) to check the discussion thread.

4. Election Student Chair

Student Chair: Joe MacMahon

5. Election of DeptBoard and ILB student representatives

Departmental Board representative: Matthew Handisides
Industrial Liaison Board student representative: Andrew Southon

6. Election of Faculty Student Rep

Faculty Board representative: Undergraduate, Andreas Tsiapalis
Action: KMR to email Msc SSLCOM reps to see if any are interested in being the MSc Faculty Board rep.

7. Student Evaluation

Noted: MPS explained that the student feedback is sent to all the academics who are then given the opportunity to comment. All teaching staff are asked to respond to student comments.

Noted: The Spring semester student evaluation results will be viewable from here: http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/intranet/archive/dept/2011_2012/sslcom/index.html

Noted: MPS reported that there is now going to be a new lecturer for the second semester of COM1002 – Paul Mitchener. MPS commented that lots of work has gone into this module and wanted to know how students were finding the module. AS commented that everything is going fine for this semester, but as most of the issues were in the second semester it's hard to see how things have changed. TA added that for his cohort last year opinion was divided on the semester two lecturer, but everyone liked the semester one lecturer (Georg Struth)
Action: MPS to forward comments on to Georg Struth.

Noted: MPS stated that there were lots of comments regarding assignment deadlines. He commented that deadlines can't be made earlier as students haven't done the work yet. MPS suggested the possibility of more exams. AS responded that it would be difficult to examine modules which have lots of assignments. It was noted that year tutors do ask for all the assignment deadlines so they can try and prevent bunching. The student reps suggested it would be useful to have a calendar with all the deadlines on.
Action: ZCF to see if it's possible to have an assignment deadline calendar which students can view.

Noted: MS commented that the Java code used in COM1005 does not match what is taught in COM1003 as it has not been updated.
Action: MPS to feed comments back to the course lecturer (Phil Green).

8. Any other business

Library information:
Noted: HM introduced herself as the Faculty Librarian. She explained that she can be contacted in person at St Georges Library or by email. HM stated that this year there is a new library catalogue. There is an online tutorial for the new system. Students can also see staff in the Skill Suite (level 4, Information Commons) which is open 9:00 – 5:00 Monday – Friday if they need help or are looking for any information.
Noted: HM explained that there is an on-line form where students can request books. She also reminded students if they are struggling to get hold of books they should put in a request for it; if a waiting list builds up then the system will automatically order extra copies of the book..
Noted: HM told the committee that James Marhsall is the departmental library liaison officer.

Student representative pre-meeting
Noted: JM suggested it would be good for all the student representatives to meet up prior to the next SSLCOM meeting. KMR explained that she can book meeting rooms if needed.
Action: JM to set up a meeting with the student representatives.

Emailing lists
Noted: KMR was asked if the reps could email other students on the course.
Noted: KMR to let DJA know rep email addresses so they can be given access to email their year groups. It is worth pointing out that these email aliases should only be used for SSLCOM purposes.

Water Fountain
Noted: MS asked if there was a water fountain which students can use in Regent Court. DJA commented that there is a water fountain in the common room in Regent Court West.
Action: DJA to ask the Space Committee if students are allowed to use the water fountain in the staff kitchen in Regent Court.
Noted: DJA asked students if they still use the vending machine in the Lewin Computer Room. The students replied that they do still use it.

Colour printer
Noted: YZ asked if students can colour print in the Lewin Computer Room. DJA responded that the colour printer has now been moved to Edgar Allen House. Students will need to go to the Information Commons or St Georges library for colour printing.

Second year Tutorials
Noted: OG asked if students have a tutor in their second year and when they are supposed to meet. MS commented that students need to make contact with their tutor (same tutor as in first year). MRH suggested that students look at the tutorial information on the intranet.

Google calendar
Noted: ZCF asked if students are using the google calendar for timetables. The students said they were. ZCF asked students to report any problems to her.

Computer Science Society Mini Lecture
Noted: MPS reported that the CompSoc are going to be hosting some mini lectures this year. He asked the SSLCOM reps to encourage their course mates to go. He stated that James Ridgway is the CompSoc contact if anyone has any questions.

9. Date of next meeting

Noted: The next meeting will be on Wednesday 12 December 2012.