

# Computer Science

## Student Staff Liaison Committee

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Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012, 1pm, 2.19a MVB

### Present:

**Staff** – Ian Holyer (IH, Chair), Lesley Watson (LW, SSLC Co-ordinator), Rob Thomas (RT, IT rep), Hayley Frapwell (HF, School Manager)

### **Students** –

*1<sup>st</sup> Year:* Charlie McNeill (CM)

*2<sup>nd</sup> Year:* Miranda Aperghis (MA), Ved Uttamchandani (VU) (also International Rep), Chris Bainbridge (CB – CSE)

*3<sup>rd</sup> Year:* James Ansell (JA), Rajitha Ratnam (RR), Shyam Balu (SB – CSE)

*4<sup>th</sup> Year:* No Rep present

*MSc:* Barry Laffoy (BL), Long Pham (LP), Tony Xu (TX)

### 1. Minutes

1.1. Many points from previous minutes are ongoing – MSc double badging of units, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year project pages changing to the new style, IH still looking into Opensource software

1.2. Minutes approved.

### 2. Department Matters

From next academic year lectures will start on the hour to allow for the traditional lunch hour to be used.

### 3. 1<sup>st</sup> Year

3.1. **Continuous Maths** unit – the class feels that the content has been taught too fast and those without Further Maths A-level are struggling. Could the unit be taught slower or have less content?

3.2. **High-Tech Enterprise** – a 3 hour lecture is too long for the amount of content covered in it. Could the lecture be shorter or split?

➤ IH to speak with the unit organisers about these points

### 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

4.1. **Would it be possible to have a drop box on lab computers?**

RT commented that the University did not encourage these

4.2. **The time it takes to log-on to Windows is very long and this is disrupting lectures**

RT : this is a known problem which has been passed up to a University wide level to deal with Software Engineering: For the group project, students are finding it difficult to use Android SPX

➤ RT to send instructions to students

4.3. **Would it be possible to be able to use more software, such as Modelsim, at home?**

SB informed the group that students have access to a limited version which they can get from the Modelsim website.

➤ IH: to continue looking into using OpenSource software.

**4.4. 3 wk feedback from assignments** – many lecturers are not sticking to the 3 week timeframe and are late with giving feedback

IH commented that students can email lecturers near the end of the 3 week period, however lecturers should be informing students if feedback will be late.

**4.5. Career Management Skills & Databases** – can these units be moved to 1<sup>st</sup> term as would be useful for getting internships.

IH: Doubtful that CMS could be moved as it is run outwith the dept.

Databases is an important unit for the MSc course and so would be difficult to move.

**4.6. Deadlines** – can they be co-ordinated better as students had many at the same time

IH: this is always an issue and is difficult to tackle, however lecturers can take into account on marking how long students had to complete coursework.

➤ **VU to feedback to Year Tutor, Tilo Burghardt**

**4.7. Symbols, Patterns & Signals** – there has not been good feedback from the class on this unit so far – possible problem with the maths element.

CB: suggested there could be more maths examples included next year

IH: the unit may be reorganised next year to look at overlaps with other units.

## **5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

**5.1. Advanced Algorithms** – there has been a problem with the lecturer taking the course, Markus Jalsenius, finishing his contract with the university. He has continued to help where he can, but students needed someone else who was here to go to with questions.

IH: students can go to Bogdan Warinschi or Dan Page with questions. Next year there won't be as many staff "bought out" on research grants and there will be 2 new members of staff which should help with this kind of issue.

**5.2. Personal tutors:** RR reported that contact with personal tutors is inconsistent across the department. In first year especially, every student should see their tutor once a week.

IH: has spoken with First Year Tutor, Andrew Calway about this as they wish tutorials to run smoothly. The dept monitor engagement at first year tutorials and so far all appear to have been happening.

➤ **IH to continue speaking with Andrew Calway and to look at making it easier for students to switch tutors.**

**5.3. Course Textbooks:** there are not enough of the recommended texts available in Queen's Library for some units – eg, Computer Graphics, and this is making it difficult for students especially where coursework relies on these texts.

It was suggested that the library has a restricted copy of these books so they can't be taken out of the library.

➤ **RR to email LW a list of the texts, for LW to liaise with the library about this.**

➤ **LW contacted Queen's Library. There are 7 copies of the book in question ("Ray Tracing from the Ground Up" by Kevin Suffern), with 2 available for a 3 day loan. The librarian will now make one copy "short term loan": it will be available for overnight loan, but will be available during the day for a 3 hour loan within the library.**

**5.4. Snowy:** students are finding that others (1<sup>st</sup> years?) are setting up processes which run for a long time and restrict the use of Snowy.

RT: this is a known issue – some of these processes are needed by the students, but some are accidents

IH: students should report these to IT or email the person who has set up the process in a courteous manner

**5.5. Development macs:** would it be possible to have some macs in the dept – especially helpful for the games project.

RT: the University does not support macs. It would be difficult to run a lab of macs but may be able to run 2 or 3 standalone ones.

➤ RT to look into this

**5.6. 3<sup>rd</sup> year individual project organisation:** students feel they are not getting much support with this from staff. Part of the problem was that students were not told to think about project proposals until the last minute and the admin of them is still run on the CS website.

IH: this is scheduled to move over to SAFE. The new system for the MSc projects works more efficiently – proposals for projects are submitted by staff and vetted by markers straight away to ensure they are viable.

➤ IH to carry this forward for next year.

**5.7. Wireless:** in 1<sup>st</sup> floor labs, wireless access is poor.

➤ RT to look at this.

**5.8. Coursework Specifications:** Could any changes to coursework specs be emailed to all students on a unit as some are missing out.

➤ IH to raise this at the next department meeting.

## 6. 4<sup>th</sup> Year

No Rep present

## 7. MSc

**7.1 Printer in 2.11:** the quality of printing is not good and the price is too high. The price is set by the University so this cannot be changed.

➤ RT to look at quality of the printer.

**7.2 May/June exams:** when will the timetable be released?

LW: in March, just before the Easter holidays

**7.3 Object Orientated Programming with Java:** feedback from students is that it is too easy.

IH: this unit is designed for the MSc conversion course where students have no knowledge of programming. It is not meant for the advanced MSc courses however certain people this year were allowed to take it. This won't happen next year.

**7.4 Information on marks to aid selection of units:** would it be possible to have more information on marks obtained in a unit to help when selecting units?

IH: this is part of the unit feedback

➤ IH to ask if statistics can be added to the new feedback system

## 8. Next Meeting

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1 – 2pm, 2.19a MVB. Please arrive promptly.

**Unfortunately the meeting ran over time and the following items on the agenda were not covered:**

8. CSE Reps

10. SSLCs

11. Any Other Business