

Computer Science  
Student Staff Liaison Committee  
Friday 14 February 2014, 1pm, 4.01 MVB

**Present**

<u>Year 1</u>	Grzegorz Pawelczak (GP) (CS) Kanupriya Tibrewal (KT) (Maths & CS)
<u>Year 2</u>	Ben Elgar (BE) (CS) Adam Lyth (AL) (Maths & CS) Selina Johnson (SJ) (CSE)
<u>Year 3</u>	James Pedlingham (JP) (CS)
<u>Year 4</u>	Ved Uttamchandani (VU) (CS) Amir Chohan (ACh) (Maths & CS)

MSc:

Dafni Antotsiou	(DA)	(Adv Comp: Creative Technology)
Abhishek Mitra	(AM)	(Adv Comp: Internet Technologies)
Andreas Yiannakou	(AY)	(Computer Science Conversion)
Milad Abdullah	(MA)	(Adv Comp: Machine Learning, Data Mining and High Performance Computing)
Zoe Lawrence	(ZL)	Chair & SSLC Co-ordinator
Andrew Calway	(AC)	HoD
Syed Rahman	(SR)	IT rep
Emily Bednall	(EM)	Post-Graduate Administrator, Graduate School of Engineering
Sal Allman	(SA)	Minutes

**1. Apologies** None received

**2. Chair's Welcome** ZL thanked all for attending and announced that *Year* specific agenda to be re-ordered

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting** (Action Points Round Up)

- Delayed return of marking: Staff now keeping students informed as requested
- PC Labs: Overcrowding/ 'double booking' Issues raised by Yr1 now resolved
- Math Methods: Demonstrators now have advance notice of material and are better prepared. Issue resolved
- Linux: still a primary complaint along with browsers not being installed
- CS IT Users Forum: AC has this proposal in progress and has received a good response so far
- Worksheet guidance: ZL asked students to forward to her illustrations of good and bad practice (of worked examples) from different lecturers to enable the department to achieve an acceptable standard. [Action Point](#)
- Lectures being available on-line: ZL asked for examples, as above, noting that the department does not want to discourage attendance. SJ suggested that low and non-attendance more usually indicates a weak lecturing style and access to full lecture notes on-line is ideal. ZL proposed for next year, investigating the possibility of having lectures filmed and making these available at the end of teaching as a revision aid. ZL will communicate to staff that at least skeleton notes to be available on-line prior to lecture. [Action Point](#)
- Anonymous Marking: as above good/ bad examples to be forwarded to ZL [Action Point](#)
- Lockers: establishing logistics ~ keys/ padlocks/ responsibility for 'abandoned' lockers, location ~ in progress
- Cloud Computing issues (absence of lecturer and timetabling) now lower on agenda as they were TB1 specific. Grad School to be made aware of the TB1 issues so they can be eradicated for 2014/15. [Action Point](#)
- SDL: Tutorial issues resolved
- Closed Business at end of SSLC: no strong feelings regarding pursuit of this
- Mailing lists: resolved
- Photo board of Programme Reps in MVB: wholesale resistance to this
- Female lavs: sanitary bins now in every cubicle paid for by department
- Male lavs: AC concurs that their current state is unacceptable. Survey of this is underway at high level

**4. Feedback from Faculty SSLCs**

Issues of assignment feedback being returned to students within 3 weeks (15 working days) of submission date now resolved.

**5. Forthcoming Faculty SSLCs:**

Thu 3 Mar 1-2pm QB 2.63 (VCR) and Thu 1 May 1-2pm venue TBA

Same 3 reps: VU; MA; ACh will attend remaining 2 meetings

## 6. Programme Changes

AC reported that no major changes are planned in 2014/15

Concurrency and Databases will be combined in to one unit of 20 credit points: *Concurrency Computing*

The topic of databases will be distributed to Yr1 units: *Programming and Algorithms* and a Yr3 unit

The topic of databases will remain an MSc option for conversion students

There is a proposal to establish a Yr4 optional unit of a multi-disciplinary group project

## 7. MSc

ZL and MA had a 90 minute meeting previous to this to explore PGT specific issues. ZL reported the 'Headlines' of this meeting to the committee:

Start of academic session 'Welcome Meeting/ Briefing' general delivered by Steve Gregory in Wk0 : this did not happen and students remained unclear on expectations of performance on M7/ H6 units and implications for credit points, procedures for ExCircs/ plagiarism guidance/content of SAFE and CS www . In future years it is felt it would be helpful to have this briefing in Wk0 and repeat *circa* Wk3/4/5

AC confirmed all the info is in the handbook

SR suggested filming this 'Welcome/ Briefing' lecture as an on-line resource

Students unhappy that 'Projects Announcement' scheduled for early December was made during January exam period

AC confirmed that students had been given an extension to 21 Feb for submission of synopsis. AC will further extend deadline

[Action Point](#)

Repeated instances of SAFE and CS www being out of order at weekends

AC confirmed that long-term solution is in progress, info could be duplicated elsewhere, submission deadlines will be extended to ensure that no-student is disadvantaged.

PG students feel that they are not included in the social life of the department ~ CSS etc

ZL suggested that CSS president attend PG welcome talk if PG students fall within remit of CSS

Grad School to consider organising networking/ careers events etc

[Action Point](#)

*Cloud Computing* material was not made available on-line (to ameliorate issues arising from staff absence) as this unit is 100% assessed via coursework delivery of lectures not as important as access to material

DA lamented absence of guidance for assignments

AC believes department's approach to this type of assessment at this level is satisfactory. He invited further feedback to be forwarded to ZL and will re-visit as necessary once received

[Action Point](#)

*Machine Learning* unit presents different levels of difficulty and is not highly ranked in terms of teaching.

Assignment had 2 different markers who were inconsistent in their grading

Bioinformatics is marked with grades not a numerical mark

*Integrated Circuits* teaching material of photos of text book is below satisfactory

## 7a. Adv Comp: Internet Technologies (minutes provided by AM (meeting between ZL and AM after SSLC))

1. There is negative sentiment among some students regarding the Cryptography - A Exam Paper. As discussed, AM will take it up with Pauline Wade and Gina Stuart.

2. Cohort has multiple deadlines clashing in this semester: two assignments pending on 7 March; one on 9 March; two assignments on each of 2 May and 9 May. As this semester is mostly assessed by course work, could these deadlines be adjusted so that it helps the students to finish the assignments with ease?

3. AM has received complaints from students that statements like "It's a shame" have been provided in feedback which is very demoralising. Could you please pass on the message to faculties to abstain from using demoralising statements?

### 8. Yr 1

*Programming and Algorithms*: Feedback on the viva was not useful. It took the form of “excellent, poor” etc assessors were not note taking during the session

AC will report these observations to Unit Lead for addressing in 2014/15

[Action Point](#)

*Programming and Algorithms 1* those who opted for more advanced coursework did not receive a mark

### 9. Yr 2

Concurrency marks received w/c 10.02.14 feedback was received earlier

AC confirmed staff absence should have been communicated earlier and rumours/ conspiracy theories avoided

Snowy issues: IT team is renewing the server over the summer

MVB closing times seem to change at short or no notice

[Action Point](#)

*Language Engineering* unit could be more concise

### 10. Yr 3

JP: the number of competing submission deadlines is causing disgruntlement especially as students are lacking guidance on where to concentrate their energies. 3 weeks of simultaneous deadlines and exams followed by 3 weeks of project work only is having a negative impact on both.

He proposed that *HPC and Character Design* be re-scheduled in future. JP will gather feedback from his cohort and a meeting convened to resolve this.

[Action Point](#)

ZL requested feedback from all on impact of the new semester structure

[Action Point](#)

### 11. Yr 4

As reported earlier CS www and Linux continue to disappoint

*Business Plan* being a mandatory unit is making some students unhappy; they would prefer its being optional

AC: unlikely to change as there is a strong steer from the department that it is an important component of a rounded university education, years of experience informs that what a student invests and contributes to this unit is rewarded in same measure

Split between project and units is good but assignment deadlines are not acceptable to all students

Students are curious to know what measures/ actions are taken implemented when a lecturer receives weak/ negative feedback

AC: Unit feedback is loaded to SAFE

ZL: reminded the committee that feedback is moderated and monitored for attack/ abuse bullying and that she will consult with school manager regarding making availability of feedback and follow up actions more of a formal procedure

[Action Point](#)

### 12 AoB

ZL: concerned that CS SSLC is now too big especially given the 1hr constraint and proposed the following:

Longer meetings

More frequent meetings although given the number of avenues available to raise and address issues she does not want to encourage this

Separate meetings for UG and PGT with perhaps one rep from UG to attend PGT and *vice versa*

AC reminded all that his door is always open

MA commented that he takes issues to the source to achieve resolution

SA remarked that having attended many SSLCs throughout many schools and departments in UOB she observes that ZL is an excellent chair: thorough; effective and responsive

SSLC applauded ZL

**13. Date of next meeting:** 1.00-2.00pm (1300-1400hrs) Friday 4 April 2014 Room 4.01 in MVB

Meeting Closed 2.25pm