Department of Computer Science
Student Staff Liaison Committee
Friday 4 April 2014, 1pm, 4.01 MVB

Present

Year 1  Grzegorz Pawelczak (GP) (CS) Kanupriya Tibrewal (KT) (Maths & CS)
Year 2  Ben Elgar (BE) (CS) Selina Johnson (SJ) (CSE)
Year 3  James Pedlingham (JP) (CS)
Year 4  None present

MSc  Andreas Yiannakou (AY) (Computer Science Conversion)

Zoe Lawrence (ZL) Chair & SSLC Co-ordinator
Peter Flach (PF) Senior Tutor

Andrew Calway (AC) HoD
Sal Allman Minutes

1. Apologies
   Adam Lyth (Maths & CS), Amir Chohan (Yr4 Maths & CS), Syed Rahman (IT rep)

1.1 Not Present
   Ved Uttamchandani (Yr4 CS)

2+3. Minutes of Last Meeting + Action Points Round Up

3.1 Linux printer problems and ancient version of gif continue to impede a smooth user experience
   AC asked reps to compile a list of concrete problems in this lab and he will present this to IT to be addressed over Easter
   [Action Point]

3.2 CS IT Users Forum: there is still keen interest in establishing this. AC is awaiting confirmation of personnel changes in IT Services and will pursue formation when all is settled.
   [In Progress]

3.3 Filming of lectures: this will be trialled UoB wide in 2014/15. FENG lead is Dr Mike Barton from EEE. FENG will select 3 units for the trial.

3.4 Demonstrators now have advance notice of material and are better prepared. Issue resolved

3.5 Skeleton notes availability prior to lectures: ZL emailed the committees request to teaching staff; there is some confusion over whether the material that is wanted is in addition to lecture slides. AC reported that the issue is not as straightforward as making material available on-line prior to lectures.

   It can discourage attendance because the material is provided and in some cases where it is not, some students may form an idea that the material is unimportant and/or the lecturer un-prepared.

   If an error (eg in an equation/ formula/ reference) is discovered in the lecture, it may not be possible for this to be corrected immediately in on-line version. Only attendees will be aware of the error.

   Student feedback ranges through: it being stressful to be completely un-primed to it’s helpful when it does happen and not a big issue if it doesn’t. It is extremes of inconsistency that causes most upset

3.6 Anonymous Marking: Colin Dalton drafting best practice guidelines to present to faculty via FUGS.
   [In Progress]

Lockers: continuation of logistics ~ keys/ padlocks/ responsibility for ‘abandoned’ lockers, location.
   [In Progress]

It is established that MVB can accommodate circa 35 lockers. QB has lockers, Keys from QB Faculty Office 1.43 - - Feedback on presentations. AC has ensured that in 2014/15 students will receive formative feedback

3.7 MVB Closing Times: when students feel that the building is being closed early please give this info (who, when, what time) to ZL and it will be addressed via School Manager. JP reported that he has been in MVB every night until 9.30pm for 3 weeks and at around 9.30pm, porter starts to ask people to leave. This seems reasonable as it is a large and complex building to evacuate/ power down/ lock down

3.8 Competing deadlines: issue of 5-6 Unit assignment deadlines and Games Project deadlines spanning only 3 weeks. AC proposes that Games + Games Report and Individual Project deadlines be postponed to Wk 25 (w/c 12.05.14). This is best workable solution as it affects all UG cohorts equally. Amendments to Unit deadlines will equally affect various PGT students as well as compromising marking schedules that are established to meet Exam Board dates. JP to consult with Yr3, then feedback to ZL pretty much immediately.
   [Action Point]
3.9 New Term Structure: All comments/observations submitted to ZL will have been put forward to Senior Management Team and the Students’ Union will be seeking feedback from students.

3.10 Unit Feedback: MVSE’s Student Admin Manager (SAM) Rachel Nee reports that student feedback informs the Annual Programme Review (APR) eg feedback that HPC was time constrained for the amount of material that is taught and assessed resulted in this unit being changed from 10 to 20 Credit Points. Negative feedback of a more personal nature (ie regarding teaching styles/availability to students etc) is dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Unit feedback can be seen by students in the relevant cohort. The department believes it is potentially misleading to have feedback available to ‘incoming’ cohorts as much can change in an academic session including teaching personnel, method of assessment, content of unit, recommended texts, class size etc and these changes frequently incultated by student feedback. SAM (RN) is keen to introduce a ‘You Said - We Did’ approach to student feedback. AC, on behalf the committee, strongly supports this long overdue initiative.

3.11 Joint UG/PGT SSLC meetings. In response to student feedback, CS SSLC is now split into 2 separate meetings with representation from UG at PGT meeting and vice versa. You Said - We Did.

4. Feedback from Faculty SSLCs
iPad for students was discussed at length, unfortunately not financially feasible.

5. Forthcoming Faculty SSLCs:
Thu 1 May 1-2pm venue TBA
3 reps: VU; MA; ACh will be reminded that at SSLC meeting of 14.02.14, they agreed to attend this.

6. Department Matters to Report/Discuss
No matters beyond those already discussed

7. Yr1
CS: nothing to report
M&CS: Conflicting info on options for Yr2. BW is working on resolving programme info and conflicting info will be resolved accordingly.
ZL will ask BW to email this joint cohort with the info that solution is close.
Joint cohort would like a unit choice talk. ZL will ask BW to arrange this.
(The unit choice talk for SH ~ CS was regarding open units. This is not relevant to Joints)

8. Yr 2
8.1 Model Answers are in demand especially for narrative answers, examples available are too vague.
PF: Department resistant to this as students are keen to learn by rote the model answers and not actually learn how to answer the question.
JP: A helpful model answer would be: Your answer to this question should be concerned with X, Y, Z.
This would direct and facilitate self-study as well as encourage the development of one’s own writing style.
BE: Model answers for SQL would have provided a concept
AC: Structure, argument, order of argument all form part of the assessment as well as being formative for life after UoS where there are no model answers.
ZL: matter considered closed but BE to send examples of where solutions given are not satisfactory

8.2 SAFE: rankings, TB2 units, Credit points - all skewed
AC/ ZL: there is much skewed with SAFE at the moment, fixes are in place. Generally we are aware of SAFE problems but please continue to report them.

9. Yr 3
9.1 Students feel their Yr4 options are compromised by coursework load
AC: Taking 6 units in TB1 is not a real-time issue as project work that spans both teaching blocks is of a better standard, provides a richer learning experience and students progress more calmly through the academic year towards exams and assignment submissions.
AC: CS Teaching AwayDay will address workloads of individual units and of the year cohorts, an example proposal being: reduce choice by changing more units to 20CP
AC to email students to re-assure that these concerns are on the radar.

9.2 Unit COMSM1105 ~ Animation Production is listed as 10CP when it should be 20CP
10. Yr 4
The year had no student representation at this meeting

11. CSE
SJ: At EEE SSLC there was a request for more power sources in café area
11.1 Engineering Course Reps Facebook: Matt Graham + Ben Marshall + Student Welfare Officer are information/opinion gathering on approaches to mental health issues. Thus far the feeling is that UoB is strong in addressing known issues and weak at pre-emptive measures/strategies/initiatives. Students are keen to make the discussion of mental health common currency.
AC: It’s a great initiative and will be worth all the investment of energy and effort.
Much discussion of the pros and cons of students being able to view their ranking, on SAFE: making this an option instead of a given; total removal; leave as is. Discussion reached no definite conclusion. ZL to raise with Senior Management
Action Point

12 AoB
All students and staff appreciate the separation of PGT and UG SSLCs and are in favour of this continuing.

13. Date of next meeting:
Will be in academic session 2014/15 in the interim ZL requested that current Course Reps continue their function and as appropriate to issues that arise, address these to ZL/ tutors/ programme co-ordinators/unit co-ordinators/HoD

Meeting Closed 2.08pm