Computer Science
Student Staff Liaison Committee

Friday 11th November 2011

Present:
Staff – Ian Holyer (IH), Lesley Watson (LW), Syed Rahman (SR)
Students –
1st Year: Andrew Pryde (AP), Josh Conroy (JC)
2nd Year: Ved Uttamchandani (VU) (also International Rep)
3rd Year: James Ansell (JA)
4th Year: Jonathan Finerty (JF),
MSc: Ruthie Hambley (RH), Barry Laffoy (BL), Long Pham (LP), Tony Xu (TX), Chris Yin (CY), Jia Chen (JC), Xiaochuan Wu (XW)
Apologies – Rajitha Rattan (3rd yr)

1. Introduction
IH:
- SSLC is not the place to deal with complaints that could be solved quickly – it is for longer term things.
- There have been many changes this year with syllabus, staff etc
- Changes for next year – not very much planned. Some of the double badged units will revert to being single
  ➢ IH to email those affected
- MSc programmes will be restructured – MS51/52/53 to become one programme with themes
  ➢ IH to ask MSc reps for input on this
- Structure of SSLC meetings – less staff this year and IH and LW to manage feedback from meetings
- APR – to be discussed at staff meeting and IH will ask for Reps to read it

2. Minutes
- Minutes of last meeting mainly focused on the syllabus changes.
- Minutes approved.

3. 1st Year
- Intro week – the Treasure Hunt got mixed reviews – liked seeing the different buildings in the precinct but wanted more of a CS focus with more challenge.
  ➢ LW to feedback to admin staff for next year’s Intro week

- Open Units – students expected to be able to choose open units but were not able to. They were put off from choosing them.
  IH noted that the course had changed this year to the default being all Core Units, but that the advertising had not caught up with the change. IH explained that people could take open units if they really wanted to and drop one or two CS units, but it was done on an individual basis.
  ➢ For next year it should be made clearer that it is possible for students to take open units and how to do that.
JC enquired re: Maths & CS and open units – IH explained that there was no choice in 1st year due to having core Maths and core CS units but by 3rd & 4th year there was a lot of choice.

Maths & CS – JC said that 3 students had already dropped maths in favour of the straight CS course. The feeling was that the maths units did not link well with the CS units. IH explained that there are typically a lot of transfers in first few wks, especially with joint courses.
JA added that the streaming system in 2nd year worked well as students could select units which complimented each other. The course has changed and there are no streams now.

4.2nd Year

• No issues

5.3rd Year

• Machine Learning – a lot of the material covered in a previous unit (Symbols, Patterns and Signals) was recapped on in the first 4 weeks of this unit which was felt to be a waste of time.
IH said that units this year have been organised into themes which should help with this kind of issue.

迦 IH to speak to unit organisers regarding this

• Communication – the 3rd years did not know that Bogdan Warinschi was taking over as Programme Director and were not sure what units they could take this year.
There appear to be issues over how students receive communications from the dept

迦 LW to look into communication methods

IH explained that although the SAFE system was locked down, students could still change units by talking with Colin Dalton or him.
At the moment there are some unit descriptions on the CS website and some on the Uni catalogue.

迦 Descriptions of units are all to be moved to the Uni Catalogue--this will not happen immediately

6.4th Year

• Projects – can’t tell if the web pages for selecting a project are up to date and the research group links are broken.
IH: The department is trying to wind down the CS site in favour of the Faculty pages.
Agreed that the project pages were not good and explained the new MSc project scheme would hopefully be rolled over to SAFE and applied to undergrad projects too.
Proposed new system – on SAFE each year will start out blank so there will be no out of date information. Staff will propose ideas and students can be attached to them (1 person per project), but students are still free to come with their own ideas.

The Research group pages are to be rearranged to all appear in the same place –this is ongoing.

迦 IH to unify project proposal system for different project units
• Feedback – after students complete the online feedback, they get no information on what happens with it, on a unit by unit basis (ie, what has changed with a unit). JF suggested a “change log” to be added to unit pages.
  ➢ IH to look into this

• 3rd/4th Year lab
  Computers in this lab were not working
  SR explained that the systems had been freezing but an update was completed 48 hours ago and the computers are stable now. The room should all work, but students to report back to SR if not.

7. MSc
• Software Engineering – lectures and project work are unrelated and it would have been better if IH’s lecture came at the beginning of the unit as it was more applicable.
  ➢ IH to speak with Kirsten Cater about coordinating lectures better or merging them

• Computer Architecture – unit requires students to have their own laptop to run the Modalsim software, but there are no labs organised in advance to help with this.
  RH/BL suggested a crash course on Modalsim
  Also, the Linux labs have Modalsim but MSc students don’t have access
  SR explained this was due to the license for the product
  ➢ SR to look into a different way of getting access
  ➢ IH to look into Opensource

• Image Processing – students would like more time spent on this in lectures
  ➢ LP to speak to lecturer

• Algorithmic & Economic Aspects of the Internet – students are being given far too much information in one lecture and an assignment deadline was changed/delayed at short notice.
  ➢ LP to speak with lecturer – to ask if it is possible to have different assignments for different students

• Learning in Autonomous Systems – there is a class test in wk 12 – can this be moved?
  IH explained this was difficult if there were lots of students on different programmes doing the unit.
  ➢ IH to ask Tim Kovacs if the test can be moved

• Advanced Computing (Creative Technologies) – There have been no teamwork assignments yet in the course and it would be good for students to start mixing and working in teams.
  ➢ IH to speak with Steve Gregory about this

8. Next Meeting
• Date to be decided – beginning of March
  ➢ LW to get availability