

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the 300-Level Liaison Committee Meeting

13th September 2011 1pm

Present:

| Student Representatives | Units |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stephen Guy | COMP344 |
| Oliver Liu | COMP347, ISYS301, ISYS303 |
| Neil Shankar | COMP347 |

| Staff Representatives | Units |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Michael Johnson (MJ) | Chair of the Committee |
| Rajan Shankaran (RS) | COMP347 |
| Igor Shparlinski (IS) | COMP333 |
| Les Bell (LB) | COMP344 |
| Christophe Doche (CD) | Director of Teaching |
| Len Hamey (LH) | COMP347 |
| Tony Sloane (TS) | COMP332 |
| Peter Busch (PB) | ISYS301 |
| Yan Wang | COMP344 |
| Ian Joyner | ISYS301, ISYS303 |
| Melina Chan (MC) | Executive Officer |
| Jackie Walsh (JW) | Department Administrator (Minutes) |

Apologies: Bernard Mans, Debbie Richards, Matthew Roberts.

Meeting started at 1:05pm

MJ welcomed all to the meeting and gave a brief explanation about the purpose of the liaison committee meeting for the benefit of new Student Representatives.

Unit Matters

COMP347: Unit Convenor – Rajan Shankaran

- Student Rep: Feedback from group was that they were finding it very good.
- Lecturer is very approachable.
- Getting through the work quickly.
- Some students finding the prac side a bit hard because there is only one tutor.
- Hardware problem last week but worked around it. It was a bit of a challenge but a good example of what we have to deal with.
- Pracs go very hand in hand with what students are learning.

- RS: Some of the serial cables are broken. Students pull on the serial cables and should not do this.
- Student Rep suggested that the Ethernet would be better.
- RS said that this is not the right way of doing things.
- RS has spoken to RM about having the broken serial cables replaced.
- Prac tutor is very competent.
- Student Rep: Suggested that prac time should be 3 hours and not 2.
- Student Rep: Last week was a hard prac. The first hour could be spent talking about what they are doing.
- MJ said there may not be the budget to pay the prac tutor for this extra hour.
- MJ asked if the students could do this extra hour without the prac tutor.
- Student Rep: Agreed they could do this extra hour without the prac tutor as they need the extra time to fiddle around and learn for themselves.
- Student Rep: The assignment is a bit of a challenge but not too bad.
- Student Rep: The assignment cements what they have learnt.
- Student Rep: The group have been talking about the quiz – still trying to digest information before doing the quiz.
- RS: The problem is that we do not do tuts anymore and tuts were a place you could do quizzes. More material to cover in the lectures. Quizzes now have to be done in pracs. Have a time problem.
- CD asked if students preferred a 1 hour tutorial plus a 2 hour prac or a 3 hour prac.
- MJ asked if they could cut back on lecture time and have more time in pracs.
- Student Rep agreed that for this kind of unit they can learn things themselves through the prac.
- It was agreed that a model of: 1 hour tut, 1 hour prac and 1 hour unsupervised would be good.
- CD: Would need to book the lab for 3 hours. Need to check the policy about students being unsupervised in the lab.
- Student Rep: Need to attract students to come.
- Student Rep: 347 is one of the most relevant units in 300 level. Can see the real-world value in it.

COMP333: Unit Convenor – Igor Shparlinski (No Student Reps)

- IS has just taken over – so far it is good.
- Attendance dropped after 1st lecture. Attendance started at about 20 and dropped to about 10.
- IS: Last year was more enjoyable. This semester the students are not as active.
- IS: Students are good but kind of disappointing that students are not as active and the attendance dropping.
- MJ: Need to think about how to encourage students to attend.
- The problems with acoustics and difficulty cleaning the whiteboard in F9C were noted again.
- RS said that it is still difficult to clean the whiteboard with the whiteboard cleaner spray.
- MC will report these problems again to OFM.

- CD asked if the whiteboards in F9C can be cleaned during the break.
- IJ asked if all the whiteboards can be cleaned in the break.
- MC will also send this request to OFM.
- RS: Students have complained about the ventilation in E7B 264.
- The complaint about E7B 264 has already been reported to OFM but MC will report again.

COMP344: Unit Convenor – Yan Wang

- Everything is pretty good.
- Student Rep: Students feedback is as follows:
- Generally good with lectures and pracs.
- One problem is with programming language the students are using.
- Some issues have already been addressed in the discussion forum and having the discussion forum is really appreciated.
- Discussion forums in iLearn is good – get quick response to questions.
- Good mix of programming and theory in the course.
- Lecture notes are generally good – some points needed more explanation and the lecturer explained in more detail.
- Tuts are good.
- Students hope that the tuts reflect some of the exam questions the students will get. Don't want any surprises at exam time.
- Students hope to get a sample exam before the real exam.
- Assignment is good – the different submission times have been good.
- The programming languages used are ASP and Javascript. Students would prefer PHP or ASP.Net. Some students feel that ASP is a bit outdated.
- LB has conducted a survey of some of the programming languages that students would like.
- Student Rep: Students hoped that their opinions in this survey would be listened to.
- iLearn is a good tool.
- Some students have complained that some of the submissions have been lost. Students would appreciate some flexibility in resubmission.
- TS advised that there was a case of lost submission in 332 this week.
- MJ: Need to track to see if this was genuine.
- YW: Would be a good idea to change the system so that when students submit, it should come up with a message that it has been uploaded.
- LB: Would be good to have late submissions flagged in red.
- Student Rep: iLearn submission time is incorrect – a half hour earlier.
- Student Rep: Was it possible to have a live clock.
- PB advised that he gives an hours grace.
- Student Rep advised that it was possible to get locked out of iLearn. Said that 3 incorrect passwords were entered and was locked out.
- TS: There has been a debate that 3 times to enter a password is not enough.
- TS: The issue has been raised with Informatics.
- Student Rep: Maybe can take a screenshot when locked out and send to lecturer.
- TS and RS and other student rep have all been locked out.

- The textbook in Library on Closed Reserve and there is not enough space for the students.
- Library rule that you can't take the textbook out from Reserve.
- 1st August have to submit the plan for 1st assignment.
- Sample reports were provided but has student ID on them.
- MJ: Have to be careful about this and lecturer needs to check.
- One complaint that a 3 hour lecture at the end of the day is too long.
- One student complained that one assignment submission was in the middle of vacation.
- Some group work would be good for information exchange.
- One student wanted to do a bit more with Javascript and possibly Javascript Libraries.
- Getting started on ASP very helpful. Option there was good.

ISYS301: Unit Convenor – Peter Busch

- Student Rep: Withdrawn from 301 as found it to be text based.
- PB: Some students do not understand what they have to do in the assignment.
- PB: Some students wanted lecture notes before the lecture and PB has been doing this. Has passed this request on to IJ.

ISYS303: Unit Convenor – Matthew Roberts (not present)

- IJ: At other universities – students are using the Wiki for lecture notes. Thought this was good. A bit too late for 303 this year.
- MJ: Some students at other Universities take good lectures notes and put on the Wiki. They can take these lecture notes into the exam. Students take turns to take the lecture notes.
- The problem is that some students may not take good lecture notes and this affects others.
- Student Rep: Some complaints that the practical classes are too big.
- Student Rep: Lab is a problem – Some 300 level students sit in the lab as well but they are not 303 students. It was suggested could they sit in the 2nd year lab.
- Student Rep: First assignment is not clear enough what to do.
- Student Rep: A lot of information. Jumping between the different topics.
- Student Rep: Major project assignment is good. Follows step by step in the pracs.
- Student Rep: At the beginning of the semester there was a software problem.
- Student Rep: Suggested for the iLearn submission problem to look at other systems at other Universities. At UNSW they have a back up submission system.

COMP332: Unit Convenor – Tony Sloane (No Student Reps)

- TS: Mid-semester test was yesterday. It was the most attended lecture ever.
- TS: Assignment was due yesterday and has yet to be marked.

MJ thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their valuable input.

The meeting closed at 2:00 pm.