

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the 100-Level Liaison Committee Meeting
20 October 2010 1pm

Present:

Student Representatives	Units	Student ID
Colin Coker	COMP125, ISYS114, INFO111	
Samuel Marks	COMP125, ISYS114	
Doug Shearman	COMP125	
Claire Gibson	ISYS100	
Rosemarie Scarano	ISYS100	

Staff Representatives	Units
Anthony Tsui	INFO104
Bernard Mans	Head of Department
Christophe Doche	COMP125
Debbie Richards	ISYS114
Matthew Mansour	ISYS100
Michael Hitchens	INFO111
Mike Johnson	Chair
Richard Miller	Science IT, Labs
Ros Ballantyne	COMP125
Melina Chan	Executive Officer
Fiona Yang	Minutes

Apologies:

Jian Yang (ISYS114)

Meeting started at 1:05pm

MJ welcomed all for attending the meeting.

UNIT MATTERS

COMP125: Unit Convenor – Christophe Doche

General:

- Student representative commented there was some concern with the use of Mahara in this unit. It was suggested that if Mahara was to be used in future semesters, it needed to be improved. According to personal experience, the issue was that tutors were not provided with enough information regarding the use of Mahara, and students needed more information at an earlier stage on what would be needed in the e-portfolio.
- CD agreed that there was no surprise to the feedback, as it was only decided one week before semester started that Mahara should be used for this unit.
- Student rep further explained that when compiling an e-portfolio, it was difficult to decide what would be good information. If someone was good at writing, they would not produce a good portfolio; if someone was not choosing the correct view in Mahara, the outcome would not be good; or if someone's interpretation of the requirements were incorrect, their portfolio may not be good either.
- CD commented that this would be the same situation when students were facing final exams. They need to understand the questions before answering them.
- Student rep argued that although they were expected to add programs, this requirement was not clearly expressed early enough in this unit.
- CD advised that in week 3 or week 4, examples were provided to students and e-portfolio was all about providing information. He however apologised for not providing this information earlier than that.
- Student rep asked how CD would access students' feedback.
- CD said that he would respond to emails from students, usually those who submitted in their e-portfolios.
- Student rep further commented that there was also positive feedback on the use of Mahara as well. The concept was great and should not be look at negatively.
- CD agreed that this was a new concept to get used to.
- Student rep suggested that there could have been more support.
- CD agreed and suggested a get-together in the following week to discuss existing issues.

Lectures:

- Student rep commented that everything else seems going on well and the lectures were great.

Assignment:

- CD asked RB if everything was okay with her use of Mahara since in the last meeting RB mentioned that she found Mahara very slow to use.
- RB replied that she managed to access Mahara via another log-in interface and there was no more problems with the connection.
- Student rep added that if accounts were set up earlier, they were suggested to access Mahara via Moodle site.
- CD confirmed that he would check view for students, as he did not know whether there was a view for submission.
- Student rep commented that there were not enough codes to compile and would like access to the full content.
- RB explained that she put up a few programs for students and those could be used. She also gave examples to the advanced students, and the codes provided were inclusive. There were also examples in practical classes. RB also advised that she always took her memory stick with her in classes but this was not allowed this semester due to some unresolved problem with the teaching equipment.
- RB further added that she had two hours of core materials to cover in class, and then another hour for those struggling to play around and creating things. Students could download the whole program to play with from the unit website.
- MJ commented that the student rep raised some interesting points and worth thinking about. About Mahara, he asked for student rep's opinion for what the department to do next year to make the experience better as there might not be enough time to change for this year.
- Student rep suggested that it would be very helpful if tutors were briefed properly in case students make enquiries regarding the use.
- CD advised that he could organise another catch-up class and he may ask the students with good submissions to provide a demonstration for the others.
- CD also advised that if students kept submitting, they should have an excellent view in their e-portfolio.
- Student rep said that Mahara seemed to be an easy portfolio tool but it was not easy to use when people make errors or to edit. There was also some link-up problems with Linux because if students clicked on email, the page would go to a strange website.
- CD would look into that and have the problem fixed.

ISYS114: Unit Convenor – Debbie Richards

Lectures:

- Student rep commented that the content html was very interesting and they could create SQL, instead of a few lines codes. They were happy creating data, table, and insert codes etc. The students were happier than they were.
- Student rep commented that JY was good and responds to students queries within a few days.

Assignments:

- Student rep suggested that they still believed the assignment in Moodle was ambiguous, and also when asked to connect to databases, many students did not know how to.
- Student rep also advised that the tutor said if they connect to T-Cup, they should have the same two points as creating database. However with firewalls, T-Cup could not be connected.
- RM asked if student rep was using One-Net wireless or WiFi.
- Student was not sure however the use at home was fine.
- Student rep stressed that there should also be some way for students to upload and make changes. It seemed that once final file is uploaded, no more changes could be made.
- DR advised there should be two ways to submit.
- Student also advised that Uni-Code did not seem to be supported by the system as the file extension name could not be recognised in Moodle.
- Student rep concluded that everything was positive and SQL was good to work on.

INFO111: Unit Convenor – Michael Hitchens

General:

- Student rep advised that half way through the unit, he now understood the structure of the unit and how it all made sense.
- MH commented that this unit covered a broad subject and may never seem to end, and there were some compromises made for students from both Computing and Media departments.
- MH also advised that regarding the assignment issue raised in previous meeting, he had spoken to the tutor and he confirmed that he already took into account the time difference when marking students' presentations in different weeks.
- MJ commented that everything seemed to be working well in this unit.
- Student rep asked if as an IT unit, the difficulty was tuned down for student s from Media.

- MH commented that the IT difficulty was not what would be found in an IT unit, but neither is the Media as difficult as what would be found in a media unit.
- MH also commented that given the opportunity, he would like to open a new unit regarding game design with more focus to this area.

Assignments:

- MH advised that given the marks of essays given, he would not agree that the level of difficulty was decreased. Lots of students found the first assignment challenging, and it would be fair to say that contents were adjusted for both departments so it would not be as full-blown as Media lectures either.

INFO104: Unit Convenor – Anthony Tsui

- No student representative of this unit was present.

Lectures:

- AT received feedback from the supplier of the ICDL textbook that they could provide a CD ROM version of the ICDL Course (Syllabus 5) for him to evaluate its suitability as teaching reference for 2011. It is hoped that this will resolve the issue of lack of suitable teaching references and materials for this course. This has been an issue in Semester 2, 2010 due to the introduction of ICDL Syllabus 5 and the mandatory retirement of ICDL Syllabus 4 teaching references and material.
- Classes have been going well and all students have been attending.

Assignments:

- Students will continue to work on their group assignments that seem to be working well too.
- MJ commented positively on the progress in this unit.

ISYS100: Unit Convenor – Matthew Mansour

Assignments:

- Student rep reported one issue with their assignment. They have been required to upload videos onto the blog site they created. However if the students had no prior experience doing so, they would find the task quite challenging.
- MM agreed to the point raised, however he also advised that as this

was assignment 3 and a group assignment, he would expect a bit more creative thinking from the students and there are many help available online.

- MM demonstrated capturing video in the lecture and he would like students to research and find out how to upload it. MM however advised that he probably should have provided more examples to students in lecture.
- RB asked about the content of the assignment.
- Student rep explained that in assignment 1 and 2, they were asked to set up a blog about their chosen topic, and in assignment 3, they were to provide a video about their blog and upload it. Student rep thought it was a very good way for assessment.

Lecture:

- Student rep advised that some student did not like the fact that MM moved around the classroom in lectures, while some others have no problem at all.
- MM believed there was no need for students to follow him around, but doing this was definitely beneficial for him to check how students were engaging in the lecture.
- Student rep also asked why whiteboard was not used in lectures,
- BM explained that the use of whiteboard was not preferred for larger classes, and notes put on whiteboard could not be captured in i-lectures either.

General:

- Student rep asked why the marks of their assignments were not provided via Twitter as previously advised.
- MM advised that there was some concern regarding the liability of the public website and would provide marks in other ways.
- MM further commented that Twitter was only used to give reminders to students and also this could provide ideas that something was different.
- MM asked student rep if Mahara would work for ISYS100.
- Student rep said that for the purpose of blogging, Mahara would be find to use, however if needed to upload pictures, or videos, it may not be suitable.
- BM advised that academics should be aware of the use of media tools.
- MM agreed and advised that he would need to update the media tools for 2011 and may incorporate GO tagging.
- Student rep summarised that she did not expect this unit to be this good.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS:

- MJ asked if there was anything else to be discussed.

- Student rep raised some questions, such as what do to after first year of study.
- BM suggests that the department may organise some information sessions to help students identify their interests.
- MH also suggested that students could look up the available units in one's major, and he advised that students could change their major if they want to after one year of study.
- Student rep also asked if they could request units, such as a unit in the area of security.
- BM suggested students to speak to him or any of the academics in the department. BM also advised that the department were reviewing 2012 program, and they were aware of the need for a unit in security.
- MJ further added that students should make sure that there is time and knowledge required if anyone wishes to change major.

MJ wished all student representatives the best for the upcoming semester end.

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

The meeting closed at 2:05 pm