

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the 300-Level Liaison Committee Meeting
24 August 2010 1pm

Present:

Student Representatives	Units	Student ID
David Black	COMP347, 332	
Shane Grimson-Smith	COMP332, 333, 340	
Daniel Kenji Toyama	COMP332, 333, 355, ISYS303	
Steen Cummings	COMP332, 333	
Simon Dawson	COMP332, 333, 355	
Meryl Baquiran	COMP332, 333, 355	
Peter Schmidt	COMP332, 333, ISYS303	
Den Allen Angeles	COMP344, ISYS303, ISYS301, ISYS355	

Staff Representatives	Units
Annabelle McIver	Chair
Bernard Mans	COMP333, Head of Department
Tony Sloane	COMP332
Rajan Shankaran	COMP347
Matt Cabanag	Science IT
Abhaya Nayak	COMP329
Peter Busch	ISYS301
Igor Shparlinski	COMP333
Matthew Roberts	ISYS303
Len Hamey	COMP347
Richard Miller	Science IT
Christophe Doche	Director of Teaching
Michael Johnson	
Melina Chan	Executive Officer
Jackie Walsh	Minutes

Apologies:

Frank Moisiadis

Meeting started 1:05pm

The Chair welcomed all and invited members to introduce themselves at the meeting.

UNIT MATTERS

COMP332: Unit Convenor – Tony Sloane

- Course was going well but 1st prac could have done more.
- With pracs – Wednesday afternoon dealt with information covered in Wednesday lecture.
- TS said not bad to try things out.
- Lecture room – E7B163 was stuffy and had no circulation.
- TS asked students to remind him to turn the fan on and perhaps leave doors open, the only problem with leaving the doors open is that it can be noisy.
- Assignment ok but would like more specification of what you want – more guidance with testing would have been useful.
- TS advised that the 1st assignment was designed to get students to think a bit, not give them a detailed recipe.
- Actual prac short – better to give a skeleton of what was there.
- TS said one of the reasons for this is that we want you to go away and read (read the code and try and work).
- TS said that pracs before lecture will be more in sync from now on.
- Student likes the language of the week that TS does – should be in every unit.

COMP333: Unit Convenor – Igor Shparlinski

- Good.
- Good to have assignment released early to start to work on.
- Maybe in mixed classes a little bit more on why things are done would be good.
- BM advised he was writing tutorial solutions at the moment, so probably his fault.
- IS advised that it was usual to guess how to do things. Start from the bottom and work up so you start understanding how to do things.
- Not much feedback in marked tutorial questions.
- Need help on why they get things wrong.
- Student sent email to IS about this and this has been clarified.
- 300 level labs been used by 100 level units constantly.
- BM advised they will have access to 200 level labs.

ISYS301: Unit Convenor – Peter Busch

- Find assignment 1 a bit vague but guess it was supposed to be that way so that you would research.
- Very interactive – very good.
- PB advised he would try and release the next assignment either today or tomorrow and would try not to be so vague next time.

ISYS303: Unit Convenor – Matthew Roberts

- MR – forum on Reddit - students not using for discussions.
- Lectures good.

- Lecture format good – generates a more engaged group.
- Tuts a bit vague. Ian very patient with questions that are irrelevant.
- Everybody worried about marks. Throwing everything at Ian to try and get marks – slows class down.
- MR – reduce the number of questions.

COMP340: Unit Convenor – Frank Moisiadis (not present)

- Most of it group work.
- Lectures good.

COMP344: Unit Convenor – Michael Hitchens (not present)

- Pretty straightforward, find it pretty easy.

COMP347: Unit Convenor – Rajan Shankaran

- Student advised that he has only attended one lecture and it was good. Has been reading the lecture slides.
- Student advised that not enough information had been supplied in prac exercises. This has now been addressed.
- RS advised that lab exercises a lot more complex as you go along.
- RS advised that he is putting solutions for tuts up.

COMP355/ISYS355: Unit Convenor – Frank Moisiadis (not present)

- A lot of students in the class.
- Afraid they are not able to deliver whole project in 10 weeks. Not sure we can use equipment we want to use.
- Chose their own projects.
- Want more assistance from Frank.
- Working with someone externally.
- Because students are in Comp, Frank wanted something technology based.
- External person told students to let him know what to buy and he will buy it.
- Tight deadline on the unit.
- Have to stretch everything in 10 weeks.
- Don't know how it will be marked in the end.
- Hard to cope with the demands of the unit and delivering the product.
- Asked if they could still get good marks even if they don't complete the project.
- MR advised that it is better to aim small and hit it than to aim too big and miss it.
- AM advised students to go back to Frank and say this is what we plan to deliver – too big to deliver in 10 weeks.
- MR expected that FM would be happy to sit down with the students and say this is what you need to do to get a HD and so on.
- LH said they were right to have some concern about interfacing with hardware – can be a tricky situation. Can create a nice separation into: outcomes that don't require the hardware interface and other outcomes where the interface is. LH is happy to give the students his support.
- Scale to do the job is \$570.00.

- MJ concerned that there is not many ISYS students represented at the liaison meetings.
- MJ suggested an evening liaison meeting so that ISYS students can attend if they are working.
- AM advised that students can always email their comments to her outside of the meetings.

Action Points:

- MR will mention this to ISYS students.
- AM will ask Frank to remind ISYS students to attend the meetings so they can have a voice.

COMP329: Unit Convenor – Abhaya Nayak

- Still using DOB password to log into the Unix systems, which is pretty bad. Cannot have anything confidential on that account.
- RM advised still working on authentication issues but the workaround is to use SSH keys. Lee Coady is setting up a self-service web page to manage SSH keys. At that point will turn off DOB password. Will tell all students by broadcast email.
- Student questioned why 347 is still using Blackboard. Blackboard is horrible. When they upload files to Blackboard for submission, the URL of the document can be referenced by any other user and gain access to the document.
- RS advised need to clear browser cache when finished.
- LH said this problem should be reported to the Uni.
- RS said there were selfish reasons for using Blackboard as it is easy to manage course.
- BM advised that the University position is to use Blackboard until the end of 2011.
- Blackboard not working in 200 and 300 level labs and two of the electronics rooms on the 2nd floor.
- MR: Sure this is only particular versions of Internet Explorer and since then other browsers have been made available including Firefox. This problem should now be rectified.
- The consensus is that all students would like to use Moodle.
- Matt Cabanag said in that case more resources would need to be put into it – someone has to pretty much look after it full-time. The Moodle server has been relocated to the CoLo and the Faculty of Science no longer has responsibility for network layers level 3 and below.
- The problem with Blackboard is that you have other units that use Moodle. Can get confused with submission. Should be all or nothing.

AM thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 2:00 pm.