DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the 100-Level Liaison Committee Meeting
15 March 2012 - 1pm

Present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Representatives</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natasha Izadfar</td>
<td>ISYS104, COMP115</td>
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<th>Staff Representatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe Doche</td>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
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<td>Mark Dras</td>
<td>Chair</td>
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<td>Matthew Mansour</td>
<td>ISYS100, ISYS104</td>
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<td>Jian Yang</td>
<td>ISYS104</td>
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<td>Yan Wang</td>
<td>COMP115</td>
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<td>Gaurav Gupta</td>
<td>COMP115</td>
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<td>Richard Miller</td>
<td>Science IT</td>
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<td>Darius Taslim</td>
<td>Science IT</td>
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<td>Melina Chan</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
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<td>Sylvian Chow</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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Apologies:

Dominic Verity (Acting HoD)
Mike Johnson (COMP188)
Meeting started at 1:10pm

MD welcomed all to the meeting and explained that this meeting was here to provide an opportunity for student representatives to discuss matters relating to their units – i.e. what works and any rooms for improvement. MD invited all to introduce themselves before our discussions.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS:

MD stated that the i-Lectures did not work in the 1st week and we sorted out the matter manually in the past 2 weeks. It should be fine from now on.

UNIT MATTERS – For both ISYS104 and COMP115

ISYS104: Unit Convenor – Jian Yang
COMP115: Unit Convenor – Yan Wang

General:

- ISYS104 - Natasha said that it was very fun and interactive, and she enjoyed the unit very much.
- COMP115 – Natasha’s brother did that before and therefore she knew it would be somewhat harder for her and she was also pre-warned by her brother that no last minute work and highly regarded self-discipline. Natasha has been reading a lot and all has been going well for her.

Lectures:

- Lecture times are a bit awkward as Thursday Lecture finishes at 9pm and then Natasha has a class the next day at 8am. A friend who is doing the same course as Natasha has to come to Uni every day.
- MD explained that due to unexpected large enrolments at uni and the availability of rooms throughout the campus, therefore, we have to accept those weird allocated time-slots for our units.
- Lecture notes are fine! Natasha compared her notes and the lecture notes, it seemed that she was not writing fast enough as she had not been able to cover everything. Other than this, it was good!

Tutorials:

- Tutorials are good. Tutors are very nice and helpful. Natasha’s tutors are Frances (ISYS104) and Francois (COMP115). Natasha has received the tutors’ contact details.

Labs:

- There were login problems in the first week and IT had fixed the problems immediately.
Textbooks:

- Textbooks are good!
- Natasha asked if she could use the 1st ed. of the required text for ISYS104. MM confirmed that it should be fine as concept wise it was all covered in the 1st ed.

Any difficulties:

- Natasha finds COMP115 a bit hard due to the processing language, however, she now understands as she has read her notes/texts thoroughly. Her brother did C++ and it was considered to be even harder.
- MM said that he had an excellent group of students and they all seemed to understand pretty well. All students are getting involved in class and they like having self-discussions in groups. MM is very happy with them.
- Space allocations are good! Both MM and YW are pleased with the healthy numbers!
- GG said that COMP115 had lots of programming. GG has divided students into groups according to their ability and he has given more complex tasks to those who know more about programming (around 15-20% of the cohort has programming background, and overall around 20-30 students who are very keen to learn more).

Resources on Material:

- It is good and very resourceful!

Mentoring Program/Forum:

- Natasha found that some students were so ahead and was wondering if she needed to be liked one of them. It was confirmed that it was not necessary.
- Currently through Forum, students are free to discuss among themselves regarding questions being posted up there. GG has also set up a separate Forum for advanced students. It is considering that we should offer space for the mentoring programme and it would involve these COMP115 advanced students.
- YW suggested that we could perhaps get tutors to run extra classes in Labs but needed to check Lab bookings first.
- GG said some students in COMP115 offered some informal gathering for their fellow students but the response was not great.

i-Learn:

- Natasha commented that i-Learn was good and the structure there provided was excellent (e.g. with different major headers like Announcement from the Lecture; Forum; Week 1; Week 2 etc.)
- i-Lectures are good. However, Natasha would prefer to attend real lectures with more interactions.
MD thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their valuable input.

The meeting closed at 1:30 pm.

Additional Feedback sent through email to MD (for COMP115):

Gaurav has told me you're the person to email if I have feedback for the unit COMP115, I hope this is correct.

Just wanted to sing the praises of Gaurav he is a great lecturer and let you know I think it is silly to get rid of him from the unit and replace him with Yan as lecturer.

Whilst I'm sure Yan (I think that's who the replacement will be) is a great lecturer in his own right, we're all used to Gaurav's teaching style, he is doing such a good job in my opinion and he definitely appears to be capable of teaching the whole unit.

If Gaurav feels he is capable of teaching the unit I'd suggest keeping him on full time or bringin Yan in for the Monday lecture and Guarav for the Wednesday lecture each week, I believe either of these scenarios would be more likely to achieve good student outcomes compared to the alternative as in the past when lecturers have changed mid semester my learning and the learning of other class mates has suffered.

Thank you for your consideration.

P.s. another alternative is to keep Gaurav on and have Yan audit the class every couple of weeks to keep an eye on things, mandatory unweighted online tests could even be employed to see how well the class is doing as a whole under.

Reply from MD:

Yes, it is me; thanks for your comments. I'll pass them along to be included in the minutes of the liaison meeting.

One of the reasons we share the teaching between two lecturers is so that our lecturers have experience teaching a wider range of units; that means they have a variety of perspectives they can bring to units, and on a practical level they can be called in if someone leaves or is unavailable for a semester.

But I do understand that you appreciate Gaurav's teaching style -- I think he's pretty great myself -- and I'll pass your positive view of Gaurav on to our Director of Teaching.