Minutes of the 200-Level Liaison Committee Meeting

7th March 2011 1pm

Present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Representatives</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Shearman</td>
<td>ISYS254, COMP247, COMP249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colin Coker</td>
<td>ISYS254, COMP225, COMP249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Marks</td>
<td>COMP225, COMP247, COMP249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stefan Arsenich</td>
<td>ISYS254</td>
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<td>Christopher Walker</td>
<td>COMP247, COMP249</td>
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<th>Staff Representatives</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Johnson (MJ)</td>
<td>Chair of the Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernard Mans (BM)</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>Christophe Doche (CD)</td>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Igor Shparlinski (IS)</td>
<td>COMP225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Len Hamey (LH)</td>
<td>COMP247</td>
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<td>Rajan Shankaran (RS)</td>
<td>COMP247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Cassidy (SC)</td>
<td>COMP249</td>
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<td>Yan Wang (YW)</td>
<td>ISYS254</td>
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<td>Guanfeng Liu (GL)</td>
<td>ISYS254</td>
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<td>Richard Miller (RM)</td>
<td>ScienceIT</td>
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<td>Darius Taslim (DT)</td>
<td>ScienceIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melina Chan (MC)</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
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<td>Fiona Yang (FY)</td>
<td>Department Administrator (Minutes)</td>
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Apologies:
Meeting started at 1:05pm

MJ welcomed all for attending the meeting and would like student representatives to encourage more fellow students to participate and put forward advices and suggestions regarding Computing units.

Unit Matters

COMP225: Unit Convenor – Igor Shparlinski

Lectures:

- Student Representative commented that he enjoyed the lectures, however was concerned that the lectures might be going a bit too fast in order for the concepts to be absorbed properly. He suggested that it would be nice to have more specific examples provided in mixed classes for students to re-enforce their understanding of concepts.
- Student rep asked if the assignment details or exam information would be available soon. IS confirmed that the information had already been provided in Moodle, and the students should be able to view the information while his access to Moodle was granted.
- MJ commented that he believed it would be a good pace when students felt challenged in lectures, however he would like to know if the pace was going too fast.
- Student rep suggested that there was some concern that he might be left behind later on in the semester if the concepts were not properly accepted in early semester. Another student rep also commented that it would be good idea to have 100 level Math units taught applied to computing from beginning. IS suggested that not all enrolled students would have appropriate background to do this unfortunately.
- IS advised that he was under the impression the lecturers were going a bit slow, and explained that the first two lectures were more about concepts, while he would expect the mixed classes to help students re-enforce their understanding.
- MJ concluded that it was great that students and lecturers got to communicate through liaison meetings so that the pace of lectures could be well controlled.

General:

- IS suggested that there were approximately 60 students in lectures.

COMP247: Unit Convenor – Len Hamey

General:

- Rajan apologized on Len’s behalf that he might not be able to attend the
meeting in time. Len joined the meeting during the discussion of this unit.

- Student rep believed that he should have been granted Advanced Standing as he studied in TAFE for three years for a Diploma in Networking, which covered more content than what this unit was offering. However his paperwork submitted to the uni did not seem to have been processed and he had to enrol in this unit to gain credit points for his degree.
- MJ and SC recommended it would be worthwhile for the student to contact relevant office in unit to enquire into this issue further and find out if Advanced Standing could be granted.
- Another student rep was in a similar situation, where he completed a Cert IV in IT Networking in TAFE before, but this was not sufficient enough to gain Advanced Standing. In order to take as many COMP units as he could for second year, he would need to take COMP247 as some other units were dropped in this semester, although there was no issue against the unit itself, however he might have been able to gain more from other COMP units if available.
- RS expressed hope that students would still learn something new in this unit given their circumstances.
- MJ thanked student reps for their comments, and confirmed that the department certainly care a lot about their feedback as both HoD and DoT would take time to attend these liaison meetings.

**Lectures:**

- Student rep raised the issue that the second lecture was cancelled due to the industrial actions at uni.
- MJ said that LH provided lecture notes for students to read to cover the contents that should have been delivered in second lecture, which was wonderful.
- Student rep advised that this was a great idea and very helpful, although he was still going through lecture notes for week 1, and only managed to scan through the notes for week 2, and had some issue printing out the notes from home computer due to some reason.
- Student rep reported that there was some problem for him to enrol into lecture class as the max enrolment number was already reached. In practice this wouldn't be an issue as he could still attend the class; however it became a problem when he wanted to print out timetable.
- MC would follow up with timetabling service to see if there would be anyway to allow the class enrolment size to be manually adjusted after max number was reached.

**Practical:**

- Student rep commented that the practicals were great fun. RS agreed that these classes were fun-oriented to encourage students to engage in crimping.
- Student rep suggested that it would be good for some more experienced students to buddy up with the ones who were struggling. This would not
only help the ones struggling, but also help the experienced students to re-enforce their knowledge.

- MJ agreed this was a lovely idea.
- In some classes, students were already put into buddy groups by tutors.
- LH suggested that he would speak to the tutors about this suggestion.
- RS also encouraged students to consult with lectures in their consultation hours if they wish to discuss anything else regarding this unit.

**COMP249: Unit Convenor – Steve Cassidy**

**General:**

- Student rep asked why COMP249 was still using Blackboard and Moodle, instead of just Moodle.
- SC explained that the roll-out of Moodle throughout the uni would take place in 2012. Before that, Computing was the department trying out the system, and was supporting Moodle internally. Due to limit of resources within the department, it was not possible to support the unit in Moodle only as yet, but should be available next year when the system is centrally supported by the uni.

**Lectures:**

- Student rep commented that this unit had been fantastic and one of his favourite subjects. Student rep also liked the iLectures, which were convenient when he could not make it to attend classes, or could help re-enhance knowledge after attending a class.
- Student asked if it would be possible for SC to add a play - all function in Blackboard to allow students to download all iLectures at one time. SC responded positively that he was considering a solution, such as a playlist function so students could subscribe these iLectures in iTunes, or Google Reader. He will look further into this and for those who wish to download the iLectures, it will be better to subscribe so students can receive updates whenever the playlist is renewed.
- Student rep advised that regarding Python, the open letter SC provided to students was good. SC confirmed that more resources should be available in Python Resources section later, which would be a mixture of the department material and other resources.
- SC also advised that he would be putting up answers to “ten easy pieces” quiz into the system, so when student attempts the questions, answers will appear straight away.
- MJ asked if other staff academics could have access to Moodle of this unit, and BM recommended a generic account to be set up to allow that.
Lectures:

- Student rep advised that unit was going well, and there was no complaint. However in his opinion, the way ISYS units were run was not as smooth as the COMP units. It would probably help if there were few lectures, and more practicals. He also believed that all theories should be learnt in programming. BM added that some students might not have any programming background before entry of this unit.
- SC agreed that students could come from information stream, and computing stream, and the unit has to be structured in order to allow students from both streams to work on without programming background.
- GL further explained that in first half of the semester, students needed to learn UML diagrams, and therefore concepts behind UML diagrams had to be first introduced. For future lectures, he would provide more examples to facilitate understanding of concepts.
- Student rep raised a question regarding the format the lecture on Wednesday was run. To him, it seemed like a lecture, tutorial combo, where students were encouraged to discuss topics with other students around, and then they could present their ideas in front of the class after discussion. However due to the size of the class, and also the layout of the classroom, students were not participating as they could have been. BM advised that this teaching method was on trial in this unit, to incorporate some tutorial and discussion in a lecture. While in trail last year, there were fewer students in class, the outcome was quite good. Hopefully with further development in the class room this year, the teaching experience will be better in the future.

General Matters:

- Student rep wondered if there would be any chance to organise a day to showcase the side projects they were working on towards the end of the semester. BM suggested students to contact Macquarie Computer Society regarding this, and the department would be more than happy to facilitate with the event by booking venue etc. MJ also believed that this was a wonderful idea for students to present the side projects.
- Student rep also would like to find out if the industrial action information could be relayed to the students from the department first, rather than by the university announcement.
- Student rep raised no particular issue in labs.

The meeting closed at 2:00 pm