DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the 200-Level Liaison Committee Meeting
11th April 2013 at 1:00 pm

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Representatives (SRs)</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Jones</td>
<td>COMP225, COMP249, COMP260</td>
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<td>Sarah Heimlich</td>
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<td>Harish Ravi</td>
<td>COMP247</td>
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<td>Rebekah Coote</td>
<td>ISYS254</td>
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<td>James Moss</td>
<td>COMP247, COMP249</td>
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<td>Brogan Creasey</td>
<td>COMP247, COMP260</td>
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<td>Luke Vergos</td>
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<td>Ronald Hancock</td>
<td>COMP249, ISYS254</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Hitchens (MH)</td>
<td>COMP260</td>
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<td>Rolf Schwitter (RS)</td>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
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<td>Richard Miller (RM)</td>
<td>Science IT</td>
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<td>Rajan Shankaran (RS)</td>
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<td>Steve Cassidy (SC)</td>
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<td>Mark Dras (MD)</td>
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<td>Stephen Smith (SS)</td>
<td>ISYS254</td>
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<td>Michael Johnson (MJ)</td>
<td>Chair</td>
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<td>Bernard Mans (BM)</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>Timothy Lambert (TL)</td>
<td>COMP260</td>
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<td>Melina Chan (MC)</td>
<td>Executive officer</td>
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<td>Nader Hanna (NH)</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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Apologies: Annabelle McIver (COMP225)

Meeting started at 1:00pm- E6A357

The chair welcomed everyone to the 200-level liaison meeting.
Unit Matters:

COMP225 – Annabelle McIver/Mark Dras

Lectures and Tutorials

- Student reps said they are happy with the unit.
- Students said the Openlearning system is different from previous offerings and they got the sense of why the arrangement is different. The actual activities are good.

Assignment

- The student referred that the activities said "See Question n from the Exercises". MD explained that he would put all the activity questions in the Exercises because the typesetting was better with latex than in OpenLearning.
- Student Reps believe the assignment is easy; MD said that the goal of the assignment will be clearer with next assignment. The first assignment will help to understand more of the second one.
- MD talked about the assignment of week 6 and the portfolio file, and the feedback the students will have on their files.
- Students expressed concern that they are not sure about how much effort and weighting to be put in the portfolio. MD stated that the most important issue about portfolios is to be structured and concrete.

COMP247 – Rajan Shankaran/Ian Joyner

Lectures and Tutorials

- Students commented that the lectures are great and tutorial are very good and they are happy with both the lectures and the tutors. Practicals are challenging and they learned a lot from them.
- Rajan asked for the feedback re: the online material about subnetting and the students said it is very helpful.
- Rajan discussed with the students about few issues to make sure that main concepts of subnetting and mask are clear in their mind.

Quiz and assignment

- Students said they have a quiz which was fine and easy, but they did not have the enough time to answer the quiz. Some student reps declared that they knew the answers to some of the questions in the quiz but did not have the time to write the answers. Rajan would take that into account in the future.
• Assignment was fine, it is not very easy and not hard. Rajan said the aim of the questions is to open a discussion between the students and the tutors.
• Rajan stated that he does not post the solution immediately, so that the students think more about these questions.
• Fri morning practical – too crowded. It takes a while for the prac supervisor to attend to requests. An extra helping hand would be welcome.

**COMP249 – Steve Cassidy/ Guanfeng Liu**

**Lectures and Tutorials**

• The latest assignment and workshop were really good and they made the students to watch the video and attend lectures to keep up with the content.
• SC said the structure of the unit is to make the students start practicing Python programming early.
• Students commented that more programming content in the unit would be good, but maybe for COMP and not ISYS students.
• It was mentioned that there are always students with different background in HTML and Python. SC added that we have changed the prerequisite of the unit to be COMP115 instead of COMP125. It is a huge difference when we lowered the prerequisite and we have some students who are not familiar with programming.
• Students talked about the different approaches used by the tutors. One of the tutors is more theoretical while another one is more practical. They believe a combined approach would be better. SC said he will talk with the tutors about this.
• BM mentioned that a new major in Web Design and Development will be offered next year and students could transfer to this new major. BM said there will be a presentation on this new major; he would provide more information in the next meeting.

**Assignment**

• MJ asked how the students feel about the programming task. Students said those students who do not have good background in programming struggled, but those attending the meeting were fine. One student said he had asked for more examples in the weekly workshops in the first liaison meeting; these have been provided and now he is on top of the unit materials.
• SC asked SRs what they think about the online material. Students commented that the online material is helpful besides searching the web about the syntax of HTML and Python. One student suggested adding an index to the notes; SC said that he would try to do this.
SC stressed that he will add more material to the online notes as the semester progresses, but also that there are many pointers to other online resources in the iLearn pages.

COMP260 – Michael Hitchens/ Timothy Lambert

Lectures/ Tutorials

- Lectures are fine. Textbook is good.
- The practicals are pretty fun and the students find it interesting.
- One student rep said that they are learning and he did change his way of thinking after he studied in the unit.
- The guest lecturer from the industry gave some insight. It was very interesting to the students. They learned more important issues in industry gaming designing such as networking.
- MH commented that by inviting someone from the industry he want the student to get the feeling of game industry.
- The chair (MJ) asked if the unit satisfies their expectations and the students agreed that the unit meets their expectations.

Other

- MH commented on the big size of the files of the assignment that students used many texture. BM suggested to contact iLearn to increase the file submission size.

ISYS254 - Stephen Smith/Matthew Mansour

Lectures

- Students said the lectures are good and both lecturers are of similar style.
- SS declared that the content of ISYS254 will help the students so much in COMP355. ISYS254 is a good introduction to COMP355.
- Students felt that they had learned from the unit.

Textbook:

Students said the textbook contained different things about stages of software life cycle. But they complained that it is hard to remember all definitions, steps and sub steps. Besides, a lot of textbook materials was not covered in lecture. SS answered that the slides in the lectures are the slides taken from the textbook. The textbook is a reference for further knowledge. What is covered in the lectures would be what the students get in the exams and assignment.
Assignment:

- Students mentioned that the progress of the groups of the students in the assignment varies due to the management approach of the groups. SS commented that one of the aims of the assignment is to train the students on how to work in a group.
- Students said in some groups some members do not interact and participate properly with other group members and other do not know how to work in group. Perhaps some tips about working in a group would be helpful.
- MJ commented that they should know how to work in group. If everyone works in groups, there will be no complaints.
- SRs said the assignment was not clear in the beginning weeks. SS said it was meant to make the assignment challenging and let the students struggle to run the project to establish deeper understanding to the requirements of the assignment.
- About assignment group behaviour, SS said in real world, the one who pays is the one who specifies the requirements, but in student group activity everyone is biased to his/her own ideas.

General Matters

- Students asked about having new computers in the labs as mentioned in the last liaison meeting. BM replied that it will be as soon as possible but not this semester.
- Students commented there are still lots of the broken computers in the labs.
- Many students prefer to use their personal laptops in the labs because the computers in the labs are slower and it is easier to carry the laptop with all required data.
- General feeling that the wireless network is not working well on campus.
- Richard said that few years ago Optus had a tower in campus, but it was removed because the signal of the tower interfered with Macquarie buildings and equipment.

The meeting closed at 1:55 pm.