**DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTING ~ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of the 300-Level Liaison Committee Meeting

**10th March 2011 1pm**

**Present:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Representatives</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dale Hastings</td>
<td>ISYS326</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adrian Melara</td>
<td>ISYS326</td>
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<td>Yvonne Ip</td>
<td>ISYS326, COMP348</td>
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<td>Jye Murray</td>
<td>COMP348</td>
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<td>Den Allen Angeles</td>
<td>ISYS326, COMP348</td>
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<th>Staff Representatives</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Len Hamey (LM)</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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<tr>
<td>Christophe Doche (CD)</td>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
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<td>Peter Busch (PB)</td>
<td>ISYS302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mehmet Orgun (MO)</td>
<td>ISYS326</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe Doche (CD)</td>
<td>COMP343</td>
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<td>Josef Pieprzyk (JP)</td>
<td>COMP343</td>
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<td>Robert Dale (RD)</td>
<td>COMP348</td>
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<td>Gary Lau (GL)</td>
<td>ISYS360</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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<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:** Deborah Richards (COMP365)
Meeting started at 1:05pm

LH welcomed all for attending the meeting and pointed out that the purpose of the liaison meeting was to help the department improve learning experience for students, and the department would always be interested in hearing feedback from students.

Unit Matters

ISYS302: Unit Convenor – Peter Busch

Lectures:

- Student Representative advised that he had been enjoying the lectures, and he loved the challenge brought by the assignment too.
- PB confirmed that the unit was moving along okay with regards to iLectures etc. This semester the lectures are to be held in C5C T1, which is a newly refurbed room, which works fine for the lectures and the students, except that the lectern screen is smaller than the older style, and is a touch screen, and iLectures was not recorded in week 1. All these might have affected teaching in some way, but hopefully the experience will be better in later weeks.
- LH asked the student representatives if they would rely on iLectures for this unit. Student rep said he personally did not rely on these, and preferred to attend classes. However he also believed that video lectures are good resource to help re-enhance or revision of knowledge from live classes.
- LH asked further if anyone believed that the missing of iLecture would affect many students. PB commented that in previous year, approximately 25-30% of students might be using iLectures according to the attendance percentage. JP suggested that PB check the click history of his iLectures to see how many students would have viewed or downloaded the videos.

ISYS326: Unit Convenor – Mehmet Orgun

Lectures:

- Student Representative advised that so far the classes went well and the pace was okay.
- MO advised that due to enrolment number of this unit, OFM had booked C5CT2 for lectures. While the refurbishment in this classroom was still in progress, there was no Internet connection, and the visualiser was not working yet either. As aircon would not be functioning yet for another few weeks, the classroom was a bit stuffy after one hour lecture. Once the refurbishment is completed, T2 would be a nice classroom to use. MC asked MO to see how things would go for the next lecture, and if he found the classroom not suitable to use yet, she would contact OFM to see if other
arrangement could be made.

**Mixed Classes:**

- Student rep commented that the mixed class was quite easy and MO clarified that the first class was held as a revision exercise and no assignment was required yet. Student rep understood that revision was important, and would love to start on hands-on projects soon.
- Student rep mentioned there were tutorials last semester for this unit, however they were not available this semester. Would there be any alternatives to the tutorial classes? MO mentioned that he would be handing out exercises instead as tutorial classes wouldn’t be available. He would consider converting one or two lectures into tutorial classes if needed. Or if students wanted, he could provide exercises as extra study tasks throughout this semester. LH suggested that students could organise study groups themselves. CD also added that MO could probably take 20 minutes in lectures to provide consultation to students, or for students to provide feedback to lecturer.

**COMP343: Unit Convenor – Christophe Doche**

- There was no student representative from this unit present at the meeting.

**Lectures:**

- JP was conducting lectures for first half of the semester for this unit. He commented that iLecture would start in week 2, as the recording was not booked in time unfortunately for week 1.
- Student rep who studied this unit last year commented that the extra materials provided in classes were very helpful to students in order to understand lectures better.
- At this stage, enrolment number is still changing.

**COMP348: Unit Convenor – Robert Dale**

**Lectures:**

- Student rep commented positively on the unit, but also wondered if many students would have had linguistics background. He explained that this unit was rooted in English, and was very interesting to learn and work on. He would however like to have more codes in classes to work with, and it would be great if the pace would be a bit slower for students to follow. RD explained the issue might be that he was assuming too much knowledge from students regarding linguistics, and also programming, which could explain why students might find the pace a bit too fast. It was expected that third year students already had some experience in programming before taking this unit.
Student rep also commented that the lecture notes were very helpful however it was a bit difficult to print the slides.

LH wondered if there were any language issue regarding this unit. Student rep said that the materials provided were good, and helpful. Although some thought there was a big jump from COMP249 into COMP348. RD commented that as tutorials and practicals were cut this semester, he was concerned about the time strain in the unit, and hoped that students would find the unit would become easier when programming sinks in a bit more.

RD confirmed that all resources required for this unit were available.

**COMP365: Unit Convenor** – Deborah Richards

- This unit was a one year project unit, and there was no student representative from this unit present at the meeting.

**ISYS360: Unit Convenor** – Gary Lau

**Lectures:**

- Student rep commented that this unit went well, and he enjoyed the lectures.
- PB was conducting lectures in first two weeks, and GL started from week 3. GL advised that it was the first time for him to use the lectern in class and he was still learning how to work with this new technology.
- GL noticed a big drop-out in attendance during the four /five hour class (with a short break after two hours), while there were around 100 students present at first block, and only 30 students stayed for the second half. Students who stayed for the second half of class appeared more engaged in discussions, and this could be the case with a smaller class.
- Student rep suggested that the class was actually five hour in duration, and GL clarified that according to the timetable, it should have been a two hour mixed class, followed by a three hour lecture. However it would work better if the lecturer engaged material first, and then follow up by discussion. Student rep said that during class they did have a vote that they would like a shorter break and finish class earlier, instead of having a five hour class. PB also added that due to staffing issue this semester, there was no resource to conduct practical classes separately. Also mixed classes and lectures were placed on one day in order to cater for students who would not be able to travel to uni for two separate sessions.

**General Matters**

**Labs:**

- LH asked if student reps had any comments regarding labs, if computers
worked fine, if they had any issue with log-ins.

- Student rep commented that the motion sensor was a bit distracting as the lights would switch off if no motion was detected in the room, while everyone was still using their computers.

- Student rep also complained that there was not much space on the desks in 300 level labs, as the computer case (flat box) took too much space. LH asked if the machines could be relocated. DT explained that the graphic cards for the computers were too big, and required an unreasonably big computer case. Although tower box would be better, however ScienceIT could not find one for the graphic card to fit in. Also if the computer box was to be placed underneath the table, it would be very easy to cause injuries when students move around the desks due to the size of the box.

- LM expressed concerns regarding the above complained, and RM suggested LH take a look at the layout of the labs with him when the meeting was finished to see if he would be able to come up with any suggestions.

- BM advised that ScienceIT would be replacing computers for first year labs during semester break. Also due to security reasons, all computing labs would be closed at 10pm instead of 1am from this semester on.

- BM also wondered if students would like to use their own laptops with wireless connection while on campus. Student rep said unfortunately the connection on campus was not ideal, and it would still be easier for them to use the computers in the labs. The new library should provide internet connection for students; however the opening time was yet to be announced, mainly depending on the moving of the collections from the old library.

**Systems:**

- RD noticed that in Moodle there was a half hour delay in time and was concerned that this might cause problems later on. RM explained that the software used to support the Moodle Clock was quite old, and it was not worth replacing as the new Moodle would roll out across the whole university next year. At the moment, there was a ten minute rest work-around regarding the time issue.

**Other matters:**

- BM asked if a large portion of third year students would be working already outside campus. Student rep said that he did not believe so as not many people would be still need a degree to get a full time job. However night classes work well for those who had to work part-time during the day.

The meeting closed at 2:00 pm