The meeting was opened by Steve Cassidy by introducing himself and the purpose of the meeting.
Notes from meeting

- At the beginning, Steve established the goal of the meeting, which was to understand feedback from Computing students. These meetings would be held multiple times throughout the semester.
- The aim of the meeting was to know what the students liked and what they do not like about the program in order for the program to improve.
  - During the meeting students could discuss aspects regarding the Computing department overall and specific units.
- When asked, students said they were able to adapt to Macquarie’s teaching style after a few classes.
- Some students said that sometimes the tutorial times were too short for the students to ask all their questions.
- Students who first went to MUIC or SIBT struggled a bit when they started studying at Macquarie due to the differences in the style of teaching.
- Students pointed out that the printers in the labs sometimes did not have papers in them.
- Some students used the computers provided in the labs because they did not have the required software on their devices.
- The students explained they used the printers to print solutions, assignments or important lecture notes, which helped them study for exams.
- During the meeting, the students were asked about free printing in the labs and whether the students should continue to have free printing, as other departments did not offer free printing. The Computing department currently subsidised printing.
- The students were asked about iLab and how often they used it.
  - One student had previously used it, but found it a bit slow to use.
  - Another student used it for STAT170 to access the statistics program, however was not planning to use iLab again.
  - Another student suggested that it would better to provide students with a license that allowed him or her to use the software on their computers.
    - However, not all software companies allowed that.
    - That was why it would better to use open source software.
    - The students preferred to be able to directly use the software rather than through iLab.
- The students were asked about the Computing labs and if they had any comments or feedback regarding them:
  - Students said that when classes were full, it was difficult to find a place to study in the labs.
  - Many students relied on the labs to use unavailable software on their computers such as Eclipse.
- The students were asked if they had any comments or feedback regarding iLearn:
  - One student pointed out that sometimes students un-enrolled from a unit but their name still appeared on iLearn.
  - Students suggested they should be able to send messages to group members on iLearn as their student emails were unavailable.
  - Students suggested they should be able to send personal messages on iLearn or at least had emails visible, in order to be able to message group members.
Communication between staff and students

- During the meeting the students were asked for suggestions on how to improve communication between staff and students.
  - One idea was to have a teaching committee that met once a month to discuss programs, new programs, assessments and teaching styles.
  - This committee would have student representation to present the point of view of students and provide direct student feedback.
- The students were asked what they considered would be the best way to find student representative.
  - The students suggested that the student representatives must be enthusiastic students from the current student’s cohort.
  - It was suggested that all students should be able to contribute. Contribution could possibly be made through iLearn.
  - For example, a forum or a discussion board could be made that involves students posting their opinion in it.
  - The students suggested the following regarding the student representative:
    - Representative should be a student who had good grades.
    - Student should be able to connect with all students.
    - Usually people who attended the meetings were the motivated students. However, the problem was they did not relate to the students who fell behind on the assignments.
    - Would be helpful to have discussions outside and inside the meeting.
    - Must be a student who was keen to apply.
- Labs proposed changes
  - The labs currently were open 8am to 8pm during the weekend.
  - The proposed change was to change the weekend lab opening time to 9am to 5pm to stop students from misusing the labs at night.

COMP115

- Students were asked about their experience in COMP115:
  - They suggested that the class was fun to attend and was interesting.
  - The students enjoyed learning how to program.
  - One student had a brief Python programming background from school in year 9 and year 10, however, not all students had a programming background and were new to programming.
- It was pointed out that previous SIBT student found differences in the style of teaching between SIBT and Macquarie University. For example:
  - At Macquarie, due to the bigger size of classes, teachers did not have time to address every individual student’s question. Some students struggled and fell behind as a result.
  - Students said that tutorial time was too short to be able to ask questions.
- COMP115 was now called ‘Introduction to Computer Programming’ so that the name was more accurate.
- After COMP115, many students undertook COMP125. The students were asked if COMP115 was a good preparation to undertaking COMP125.
  - There was a change in web major, which led to COMP125 to become a required unit. Additionally COMP249 now required COMP125 as a pre-
requisite, in order for students to have a stronger programming before undertaking COMP249.

- As it was found that students struggle in COMP249 due to the lack of prior programming language

**COMP247**

Students were asked about their experience in COMP247.

- The students said that the labs were good and that they provided hands on experience.
- The students said the lectures were good and engaging.
- The students found the assignment to be appropriate to the topic.
- The computer lab provided good practical practice according to the students as well.

Information regarding the labs from the students was:

- The equipment worked well. However, sometimes there were not enough equipment and as a result, students had to share.
- The new equipment was working well according to the students.
- The students said that COMP247 was a fun unit. However, it was also challenging to some students, particularly the students who did not have a background in networking.
- Some students dropped out of the class because they deemed the first assignment to be too difficult.
- COMP247 was a core unit for BIT.
- The Computing Department offered the suggestions that COMP247 should be offered in semester 1 and semester 2:
  - This would benefit the students who dropped out in semester 1 or for students who had to repeat in the next semester.
  - The idea would also benefit students who started university in semester 2.
  - Due to the big number of students in the unit, it would be beneficial if the classes were provided in semester 1 and semester 2.
- It was pointed out that some students enrolled in the tutorial did NOT show up to class, while other students could not attend the tutorial, as classes were full.

**COMP343**

Students were asked about their experience in COMP343.

- The class involved students bringing their own device to class (BYOD).
- Students said that it could be confusing for students to build their own systems.
- The students said they were enjoying the unit.
Improving the Computing culture

During the meeting, the students were asked how to improve the Computing culture.

- The students were asked about the Mentors program.
  - Unfortunately, not many students were familiar with the program.
  - Students who attended did not get involved with the program.
  - Some students knew about the program and had a mentor, however were too busy to become a mentor.
  - The students were asked what could have made the mentor program better.
    - One suggestion was to integrate the program with the curriculum.
    - Another suggestion was to have more dedicated mentors to their degrees, by having smaller groups.
- In order to improve the tutorials, it was suggested there should be more pair tutors.
  - It could be beneficial to employ previous students who excelled in a unit as pair tutors to help the students during class, especially when the tutors could help every student due to time constraints.
- The students were asked if they felt like they belonged in the Computing Department.
  - The students said that they usually hung out in the labs to work on assignments or collaborating with students.
  - When they were in the labs, students usually tended to talk to the other students.
- The students were asked about the Computing society and if it created an engaging environment.
- The students were also asked if there should there be more societies and if the students are engaged in the Computing society.
- It was suggested that there should be University competitors to increase communications with other universities.

Overall end notes

- Two more meetings were held on the same day in other Computing majors/degrees.
- The students and staff were keen to create a discussion environment.
- The ideas that were collected from the meeting would be considered and adopted if possible.
- The students were encouraged to send any further questions or ideas forward, as all ideas were welcome.

// End of Meeting