Department of Computing - Macquarie University

Minutes for the PG Liaison Meeting

5:00pm - 28 August 2015 - EMC Tea Room

Present:

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<th>Student Representatives</th>
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<td>Yukun Liu</td>
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<td>Paul Crees</td>
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<td>Salih Kulic</td>
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<td>Yue Wu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manolya Kavakli</td>
<td>Director of PG Program</td>
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<td>Melina Chan</td>
<td>Executive Officer-Team Leader</td>
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<td>Rolf Schwitter</td>
<td>ITEC830</td>
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<td>Christophe Doche</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>Ian Krycer</td>
<td>ITEC832/INFO843/ITEC871</td>
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<td>Ian Joyner</td>
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<td>Mark Johnson</td>
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<td>Damian Jurd</td>
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<td>Milton Baar</td>
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<td>Len Hamey</td>
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<td>ITEC851</td>
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<td>Vijay Varadharajan</td>
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<td>Dzung Le</td>
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Proceedings

Meeting opened at 5:00pm by Manolya Kavakli.

Initially no students were present.
Discussion of individual units proceeded.

**COMP777**

**Mark Johnson**

Mark described the role of the unit as to shift students from an undergraduate routine of weekly or bi-weekly assignments towards what they will be required to do in the second year of the MRes program, namely the submission of a year long thesis. Accordingly Mark has had his students work on a single semester long project with a series of milestones along the way. The students have just completed their research proposal presentation. This will be followed by a written proposal, a first draft of the paper, a presentation of the paper and then a final submission. Mark notes that this is the first time many students have had to do a substantial piece of work.

Christophe asked if the assessment structure had changed since last year. Mark responded that the unit is running as is.

Manolya queried students numbers, Mark responded that there were six. Christophe further queried if all of the students were Computing students. Mark noted that one of the students was from Chemistry.

Mark concluded that he believed that the unit was going well.

**ITEC801**

**Ian Joyner**

Ian believes that the unit is going well. Attendance is around 12-13 students every week out of an enrolment of 17. Ian made the observation that those that aren’t attending are students have transitioned from undergraduate studies at Macquarie and therefore are likely on the habit of obtaining lecture content via ECHO360.

Student progress has been tracked by assigning weekly tasks. Students have been mostly performing well. A couple of students didn’t submit the week 1 task and had made submissions in weeks 2 and 3. He believes that these students are likely to un-enrol before the census date. Ian K queried if the submissions were assessable. Ian J responded that they are worth 1% each and noted that although this was a small number of marks there was a strong correlation between performance on these tasks and the final grade in previous
unit offerings and that if a student was a borderline fail that their submission record may affect their final grade.

Manolya asked Ian what was the overall level of the students. Ian responded that the students were mostly well equipped and further identified that five of the students were enrolled in the security stream of the MIT and therefore he has been approaching the material from a security perspective.

Manolya further queried if any of the students had an engineering background, Ian said the he did not think so however the previous offering of ITEC801 had some students with an engineering background. Damian mentioned that in ITEC850, which he had taught jointly with Ian, the two best performing students had undergraduate engineering degrees.

Manolya said that she asked about student background due to MEng students asking her for enrolment advice regarding ITEC units as they are generally lacking background in both programming and management.

Ian responded that ITEC801 was not a programming course and there were no programming assignments in the unit but he has mentioned facilities that some programming languages possess as part of his lectures and he believes that students understand the relevance of programming to the unit content.

ITEC810

Len Hamey

Len stated that the student cohort was small and that first presentations were good

Mark Johnson mentioned that Mike Johnson had asked him to supervise an MEng student who wanted to do a project in Data Science. Mark recommends that the student ought to enrol in COMP783 and asked about the possibility of co-badging it as an 800-level unit.

Len queried if it was still possible for and undergraduate student to enrol in an 800-level unit as a 3cp non-computing unit to count towards their degree requirements, Christophe believes that it is no longer possible but that he would seek clarification.
ITEC830

Rolf Schwitter

Rolf notes that the unit was formerly called “XML technologies” but is now “Web data technologies”.

Diego has done all the teaching so far; Rolf will start teaching next week, Diego will return for another week and then will go on long service leave. Rolf has however inspected iLearn and feels that the unit is going well so far. In response to a query from Christophe regarding class size Rolf noted that there was an improvement in the gender balance of the class as 4 of the 10 students were female. Rolf also noted that assignment 1 had been released, further to this he said that as there is a lot of programming involved in the bi-weekly tasks assignment 2 will now be of the form of a written report and an accompanying presentation in week 12 or 13.

ITEC842

Ian Krycer

Ian stated that the unit has somewhat changed since the previous offering and as such there will be an LET survey taken later in the semester however the feedback received so far has been positive. Ian described the class as large with at least 18 enrolments. Assessment is continual, worth almost 10% per week; initially a diagnostic and currently a series of assessments worth 9% each with a final presentation worth 15%. Ian notes that he had discussed with students that the 5pm Monday submission time was firm and there could be no late submissions as the content of submissions and Ian’s reflections on them are discussed during the class at 6pm.

Ian also notes that there have been a number of erroneous submissions by students. In some cases students have submitted work for ITEC871 which Ian also convenes.

Ian noted that there have been three instances of students submitting the wrong file which has resulted in complications regarding marking. Ian believes that the students are happy with the assessment model as there is no final exam.

Manolya asked if the unit was appropriate for the proposed Master’s of Commerce, Master’s of IT double-degree. Ian responded in the affirmative as
the unit is case-study based and as such is focused on strategy. CIO’s choose technologies for projects based upon alignment with a chosen strategy.

Manolya also asked how much programming is in the unit to which Ian responded that there was none and further emphasised the unit is based upon a case study approach and although the content is IT related the focus is more generally on business and how IT can complement business strategy.

Milton asks if failed projects are discussed Ian responded that some there is some discussion of that in ITEC841.

INFO843

Ian Krycer

Large class of approximately 21 with a large international contingent. Initially the students were quiet and hard to engage. Ian has chosen projects to discuss that he believes that the cohort will more readily engage with.

Ian also notes that the unit text emphasizes the PMI (Project Management Institute) approach to project management.

ITEC851

Rajan Shankaran

(absent)

ITEC852

Vijay Varadharajan

(absent)
ITEC854

Milton Baar

Milton said that there were 27 students enrolled which is less than previous offerings.

Students have had their first assessment and that the marks ranged between 40 and 100% (1 at 40%, quite a few at 100%)

Students are divided into groups with weekly tasks working towards an assessment due during the mid-semester break.

Five groups have self-formed; four of the groups are three weeks behind. This is unprecedented, it is normal for them to be one week behind. The CEO’s of the companies that the groups are working with have contacted the students and CC’d Milton to let them know that they need to improve otherwise the projects are in trouble.

Manolya asked how large the groups are, Milton responded that groups range between four and seven students.

Milton notes that the unit is “front loaded” so they should be “drowning” by week 6 but they are already at that point.

Manolya also asked how much programming is in the unit. Milton responded that there is none.

Milton further notes that prior management skills are useful however as the unit is based upon human behavior, the unit would suitable for MEng, MGSM, and Psychology students.

Assignment was given to students in week 1 and that they must have started during week 1, no extensions.

The assignment will be externally examined by the former head of Air Services Australia IT and the lead auditor from Standards Australia who developed the international standard for the auditing of ISO 27001.
ITEC870

Dzung Le

(absent)

ITEC871

Ian Krycer

Ian notes that there are low student numbers, around twelve however this will still allow for assignment three to be a group assignment as stated in the unit outline.

Ian also stated that assignment 1 had been submitted and evaluated and that all students passed.

Starting next week, there will be a series of guest lecturers from SAP, Microsoft, and Oracle. This will help students to see trends in the marketplace.

This week, the unit had a focus on Big Data based upon on IBM literature.

Manolya mentioned that the Enterprise Manager from Huawei is interested in giving a guest lecture and she will pass on the details to Ian.

General Discussion

Christophe asked if liaison meetings should continue given the lack of student attendance or should other alternatives be explored.

Ian Krycer mentioned that some other institutions have a member of the administrative staff poll students during a timetabled class.

Len observed that this may be seen as less confrontational by students.

(A small group of students arrived just before the end of the meeting)

Yukun Liu - ITEC810
Yukun said that the projects are very creative and that students don't have much prior knowledge so there is a lot of research needed and as a result the projects are enjoyable and challenging.

Manolya asked Yukun if he was able to relay feedback from other students. Yukun stated that as students have chosen projects they are likely to be enjoying what they are doing.

**Paul Crees - ITEC810**

Paul said that the workload is heavy as it is constant unlike other units which tend to have work that comes in bursts.

Ian Krycer asked Paul what he thought about having student feedback being polled during class by a non-academic staff member as an alternative to liaison meetings. Paul replied that he thought it would be a good idea.

Christophe asked Paul and the other students if he was to poll the students would they be likely to self-censor given that he is an Academic as administrative staff would not be present during the 6pm lectures for ITEC units.

**Salih Kulic - ITEC810**

Salih said that everything was going okay. There was an initial delay in things appearing on iLearn but it's now ok. Otherwise it was still too early in the semester for significant problems to have occurred.

**Yue Wu - ITEC810**

Yue suggested that iLearn submission boxes should be opened earlier. He also said that unit outlines mention a week number rather than a date for submissions and as a result students erroneously assume that the due date will be the Friday of the stated week.

Due to low student numbers Christophe suggested that there is no need to have a further PG liaison meeting this year. Perhaps PG liaison meetings should be replaced with another type of feedback from the students.

**Meeting closed at 5:51pm**