

Department of Computer Science

Minutes of Staff/Student Meeting

Monday 8 October 2012

Present:

Staff: Paul Denny (Chair), Ann Cameron, Angela Chang, Adriana Ferraro, Sithra Skumuaar

Students: Saurabh Sood (101), Ashley Noel Hinton (210), Faizev Hussein (220), Timothy Diack (230), John Douglas (314, 335), Nick Stones-Havas (340), Frederick 'JJ' Blucher (367), Ben Skudder (707), Stephen Hood (750) and Le Zhang (775)

Apologies:

Staff: Robert Amor, Robert Sheehan

Student: Students: Uhyoung Choi (111), Sam Pearson (111), Priyal Bangia(230), Ben Davies (105)

If you attended the meeting and your name does not appear above, you did not fill out the attendance sheet as requested.

1) Welcome

Paul welcomed the class representatives to the final meeting for the year and thanked them for their duty. A very nice lunch was provided.

2) HoD report

The programming teams performed well in the ACM South Pacific Programming Contest. Most of our teams were in the top quarter of the regional table. Thanks to Michael Dinneen for the time he puts in to training the teams, and organizing the events.

3) Report back

Paul reported back on several items from the previous staff student meeting.

- The AC had discussed using different systems to support online student Q&A (with facebook and Piazza being considered). Facebook was considered primarily because many classes already have student-created facebook. Of the two options, using Piazza is current the most likely candidate and has performed very well in Engineering courses. Class reps highlighted the importance of providing highly visible links to whichever system was used.

- An annoying clicking noise could be heard in the upper F&P lecture theatre. There was some discussion about whether this had been reported formally to LTMU.

4) Technical report

There was no representative from Science IT for the technical report.

5) Faculty staff/student consultative committee

Tim Diack reported back from the undergraduate Faculty SS meeting. A Science Faculty Student Association is in the process of being formed. They have been having preliminary discussions with other associations such as AUSA (who have been very supportive) and they will be planning events for orientation week next year. One of the goals of the proposed student association will be to organise social events for Science students, as well as academic related events such as job fairs or post-grad staffed help sessions.

6) General business

Paul raised an issue from AC which was that in Sem 1, across all course evaluations, there had been a consistently poor response for the following survey questions:

- I had a clear idea of what was expected from me
- I received helpful feedback on my learning progress
- I found the course intellectually stimulating

The AC had discussed whether students understand or interpret these questions in the same way as staff do, and wondered whether the class reps might be able to suggest ways we could perform better on these questions. The student rep on AC suggested office hours is where you receive the most helpful feedback - but what other helpful feedback can we provide?

Comments from this meeting on the topic were as follows:

- digital submissions of assignments aren't generally well marked and although there is a feedback/comments section, the marker often does not fill this in (or it just includes some generic comments like: "Good effort").
- if marks were lost on an assignment, students wanted to know where they were lost
- turn around time for assignments was sometimes slow
- model solutions appear to be quite rare, and so even if you know where you lost marks, you may not know how you could have earned them
- for tests, model solutions are useful or at the very least it would be good for the lecturer to address and questions that were commonly answered poorly during the test

Others:

There was some discussion about the usefulness of having class reps in very small classes (<10 students). In these cases, normally the students are comfortable approaching the lecturer directly with any issues and so there aren't usually issues to bring to the SS meetings. One class rep made the point that the class rep meetings

do at least allow you to learn about what is happening in the department, and so you might want to report certain things back to your class (even if your class doesn't normally report issues themselves).

There was some general discussion about the most appropriate way for students to contact the class reps, and that the class reps sometimes felt like their fellow students were holding them responsible for problems in a course (a "don't shoot the messenger" type issue).

One of the tables in Sci space is broken (the power plugs do not work), although this has since been reported.

Finally, a couple of issues relating to writing neatly and recording lectures appropriately were discussed leading to the following reminders for staff:

- it is important to write neatly on the whiteboard
- in classes with two screens where the lecture is being recorded, lecturers need to be aware of which screen is being recorded

The meeting closed at 1.55 pm.

See you all next year!