STUDENT STAFF COMMITTEE, SCHOOL OF COMPUTING SCIENCE

Minutes of Meeting held on 2nd December 2015 in Room 701
Claremont Tower

Present:

Ms L Heels  Transition Officer / Staff Facilitator of Committee
Mrs AM Barfield  Secretary
Mrs M Bent  Robinson Library
Mrs N Dolman  School Manager
Mr P Harle  NUTT
Mr P Sumner  Computer Officer
Dr NA Speirs  Undergraduate Degree Programme Director
Jay Rainey  MRes Digital Civics (Deputy)
Abdullahi Kawu  MSc Advanced Computer Science (ACS)
Jordan Ashworth  MSc Bioinformatics programmes representative (Bio)
Peter Merkert  MSc Computer Game Engineering representative (Games)
Niamh Gohil  MComp Stage 4 representative
Milton Li  Stage 3 representative
Nafisa Shaikh  Stage 2 representative
Benjamin Lam  Stage 2 representative
Tolu Awosanya  Stage 1 representative
Yogananthan Mani  Stage 1,2,3,4 ECE representative
Taghreed Alshehri  Women’s representative
Eva Theodoridou  Women’s representative (Chair for this meeting)

Apologies:

Dr M Devlin  Senior Tutor
Rosie Bellini  MSc Computer Science representative (Comp Sci)
Harry Large  Stage 1 representative

1. **Items raised by MRes Digital Civics reps**

   Students were generally happy with their timetable. There are no other issues.

3. **Items raised by MSc ACS rep**

   a) Students are only allowed to change modules in the first two weeks of the Semester. Some students found that their interests did not match with modules which they had chosen in blocks later in the Semester. Other students found that they did not enjoy certain modules but could not change them. Mrs Barfield explained that this is a University regulation and the main reason for it is because of the need to use the module registration data to write the examination timetable. It is unfortunate that students with block-mode teaching are affected by this.

   b) Students felt that the information that they had been given in the ACS handbook about modules differed from their experience of what they were being taught. Mrs Barfield asked the rep to report any specific instances so that this could be investigated.

4. **Items raised by MSc Bio rep**

   a) The rep asked whether it would be possible to release information about practicals/coursework sooner so that students have a chance to read through them. It
was felt that in general this should be possible. The rep should contact Module Leaders about this issue.

b) Computational Systems Biology students feel that the Introductory Programming for Biologists module is not well suited to them e.g. only one library is used, there could be more transferable skills.

c) The Numerical skills module teaches too much statistics and not enough taught R. The rep should take this issue to the DPD or Module Leader.

6. **Items raised by MSc Comp Sci rep**
The rep was not able to be present, but had sent the following items:

a) Students want common room space close to Claremont Tower where they can eat at lunchtime etc. Mrs Dolman explained that space had been made available as a Common Room for all MSc students in room CLT.602 (opposite the meeting room 602A). Additionally all students can use the mezzanine floor in the Rack.

b) Students asked whether it would be possible that CS portable apps could be installed on the library computers in the yourspace section where the larger screens are installed. There will be extra machines in the new Library Space in 89 Sandyford Road from 11th January. *Action: NIUT/School Support to look into the Apps issue.*

It was noted that the Stage 1 students do not seem to be aware of the portable apps. *Action: Ms Heels to alert Stage 1.*

7. **Items raised by Stage 3 reps**
a) The Stage 3 reps had already raised a number of specific module issues with Module Leaders.

b) There are not enough demonstrators for CSC3422. The Module Leader had been contacted about this

c) There are three different pieces of coursework due all on the same day at the end of term for different modules. Ms Heels explained that the only way to change these deadlines would be to bring one of them forward. Deadlines will not be moved into the Christmas vacation so that revision is not affected.

**Items raised by Stage 2 reps**

a) Water had not been re-filled in the Rack. Students need to alert Reception that it has run out by emailing cs.reception@ncl.ac.uk The notice about this has disappeared from near the water cooler. *Action: Teaching Manager.*

b) Students are being disturbed by the drilling outside Claremont Tower. This is affecting staff as well. The work could go on until January or February.

c) There are two large pieces of coursework due on the last day of term. *Action: Ms Heels will ask Dr Colquhoun to send a message to students about time management.*

d) There is a lack of PCs for Stage 2 to use. It was noted that now we have larger class sizes, it can be difficult to find PCs for everyone to use, especially when there are practical classes in the Rack. The School is currently trying to make more PCs available.

**Items raised by Stage 1 reps**

a) Stage 1 students did not like long gaps in the timetable. Mrs Barfield explained that with large class sizes there are only a small number of lecture theatres on campus which Stage 1 will fit into. All programmes have to be accommodated in the timetable and there will be some inconveniences for some students.
b) There are not enough demonstrators to allow everyone to get help and to get exercises signed off. Ms Heels noted that this does tend to be a problem around this time of year, but that CSC1021 has the largest number of demonstrators of any module. *Action: Ms Heels will investigate whether anything further can be done.*

9. **Items raised by Women’s reps**
   a) In Open Lab a women-only meeting will be held to see whether there are any issues specific to women.
   b) The women’s toilets on 6th floor Tower only have one sanitary bin for all of the cubicles. *Action: School Manager to request more bins.*
   c) PG students had reported that students from other Schools had been using the kitchen and Common Room on the 10th floor. This common room facility is for School staff and PhD students only. *Action: School Manager to consider action.*

11. **Items raised by the Library rep**
    A Library update sheet was circulated. This contains information about opening hours and an event during the Christmas vacation.

12. **Items raised by NUIT rep**
    In response to comments at the previous meeting, a number of high specification machines have now been added to the cluster in the Old Library User Area, which is open for 24 hours a day. These machines should have the same specification as the Rack, so CS students should be able to do all their coursework there (with the exception of Games coursework).

14. **Items raised by the Staff Facilitator**
    Ms Heels wanted some UG students for a focus group which was taking place later that day. There were a couple of volunteers.

15. **Items raised by the Secretary**
    Mrs Barfield reported that the Careers Adviser for Computing Science will attend the next meeting of this Committee in February. Reps should contact their cohorts to see if there are any issues to raise.