STUDENT STAFF COMMITTEE, SCHOOL OF COMPUTING SCIENCE

Minutes of Meeting held on 28th October 2015 in Room 701
Claremont Tower

Present:
- Ms L Heels, Transition Officer / Staff Facilitator of Committee
- Mrs AM Barfield, Secretary
- Ms S Bellwood, School Support Assistant (for School Manager)
- Mrs M Bent, Robinson Library
- Mr P Harle, IT Service
- Mr P Sumner, Computer Officer
- Dr NA Speirs, Undergraduate Degree Programme Director
- Dr A Tully, Director of Excellence in Learning & Teaching
- Nataly Birbeck, MRes Digital Civics
- 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)
- Rosie Bellini, MSc Computer Science representative (Comp Sci)
- Milton Li, Stage 3 representative
- Ed Spooner, Stage 3 representative
- Tolu Awoseya, Stage 1 representative
- Harry Large, Stage 1 representative
- Yoganathan Mani, Stage 1,2,3,4 ECE representative
- Taghreed Alshehri, Women’s representative
- Eva Theodoridou, Women’s representative

Apologies:
- Dr M Devlin, Senior Tutor
- Niamh Gohil, MComp Stage 4 representative
- Nafisa Shaikh, Stage 2 representative

1. Terms of Reference/Overview of how the Committee works
   a) Ms Heels welcomed everyone to the Committee. She is the Staff Facilitator for the Committee. The Committee works by reps raising issues with staff. Reps should be professional when raising issues.
   b) This is the only meeting that Ms Heels will Chair. We need to elect a student Chair of the Committee. Nataly Rainey was elected as student Chair with Jay Rainey as her Deputy. The Chair will also be expected to attend Board of Studies meetings to report from this meeting.

Each person was asked if they had any issues to raise and to report on any issues about Registration and Welcome Week:

2. Items raised by MRes Digital Civics reps
   Students were generally happy with Welcome Week. They had some sessions in Open Lab and some in Claremont Tower. Some Open Lab staff were confused as to whether students should also attend the sessions in Claremont Tower. The Welcome Week
timetable scheduled for Digital Civics students listed both types and it was intended that students should attend both.

3. **Items raised by MSc ACS rep**
   a) Students have not been able to locate the printer. Better signage and information is needed. *Action: Mr Sumner.*
   b) The Welcome Week talk on Careers had to be re-scheduled. Some students could not go. Mrs Barfield will ask for a copy of the slides to circulate. *Actions: Mrs Barfield*

4. **Items raised by MSc Bio rep**
   a) On the Friday of the second week, there was an event with some seminars and a chance to meet staff socially. However students would have liked a social event to get to know their classmates during Welcome Week.
   b) There are a couple of modules where the sessions are not based in the Bio cluster. These are modules where there are more students in the class than just those students who have a machine in the cluster. Owing to class size the sessions have been moved to a different location.

5. **Items raised by MSc Games rep**
   a) There was time in the Welcome Week timetable to allow students to attend Fresher’s events, but the academic timetable was not very full. Students would have liked a social event during Welcome Week to get to know each other.
   b) In Welcome Week the Student Union only came and spoke for only 30 minutes. Students were left with 30 minutes between sessions.

6. **Items raised by MSc Comp Sci rep**
   a) There were some mature students who had problems registering because they did not have an academic reference and graduated a long time ago. The rep was asked to send names and details to Mrs Barfield so that this could be investigated.
   b) Many of the students on the course are new to Java and have a large learning curve. It was suggested that there should be a couple of hours introducing Java in Welcome Week.

7. **Items raised by Stage 3 reps**
   a) There had been a problem with the Ubiquitous Computing module, but it has been resolved.
   b) The rep thanked Drs Colquhoun and Riddle for organising the pub quiz. However, students would have liked this in Welcome Week itself.
   c) Students wanted weekend opening in the Rack. (This would mean that more bins and CCTV would be needed.) Mr Sumner explained that the restriction on opening hours was due to a security issue. Security are not intending to increase the opening hours. In fact, the Rack is actually open slightly longer than other clusters.

   It was discussed whether remote access to PCs in the Rack was possible. It was thought that it is possible from on-campus PCs, but not off-campus. The School would look into it. *Action: Mr Sumner.*

8. **Items raised by Stage 1 reps**
   a) Students had enjoyed Fresher’s activities. However, you had to come to the Union to register for activities (starting from 8.00am) which took place later that day. This meant that you had to be there by 10.00am at the latest or you would not get a place.
Students who live a long distance from campus found this difficult if they then had a long wait until they had anything scheduled. There was no on-line registration. Reps suggested that perhaps there could be on-line registration which only opened on the day of the event.

b) Students enjoyed the bowling event organised by the School.

c) Some Peer Mentors did not seem to know what to do and the ice breaker was not good. However other Peer Mentors were good. Ms Heels explained that for some Peer Mentors it is the first time that they have done this role. There will be questionnaires coming out about Peer Mentors.

d) In the Rack there are no blinds in the small rooms. Action: Space Committee.

e) Vending machines are not working in the entrance to the Rack. Action: Space Committee.

9. Items raised by Women’s reps
The rep said she had met a female student who was having problems balancing workload with a baby. Ms Heels advised that there are a number of sources help and advice available: Student Union, Student Advice Centre (in Student Union), Student Wellbeing (in King’s Gate). Dr Marie Devlin is the Senior Tutor. If a female student has a male tutor, but wishes to consult a female member of staff about a personal issue, she may do so.

10. Items raised by Computing Science NUIT rep
a) If students discover a technical problem they should report it either by sending an email to cs-support@ncl.ac.uk or go to https://support.cs.ncl.ac.uk/ and follow the links to submit a support ticket. Technical support staff are based in Claremont Tower, room 640.

b) If students have requests for specific software to be put on School machines, contact the local IT support as above.

11. Items raised by the Library rep
a) Copies of an update document from the library were circulated, and will also be sent out via email. Mrs Bent highlighted some issues:

b) The Computing Science subject page has been re-organised. She would like some feedback on this, especially if anything is missing.

c) There are some specialist workshops listed. Those most likely to be of interest to this School are: Scopus and IEEE workshops.

d) Extra library space will open in January at 89 Sandyford Road. It will be open 8.30am to midnight and staffed all the time. There will be an extra 220 PCs. The seating capacity is 632 (mostly study space, but some café space). There will be some small study spaces and one silent study space. No books will be housed in this building, but there will be a book drop-off service. (Note: the library has plenty of e-books.)

e) If students want a book which is not in the library, they should request one via the form at “Books on time”.

f) When reps were asked if they had any issues to raise for the library, the issue of CAD PCs was raised. NUIT are looking into making more CAD PCs available on campus. Action: Mr Harle to check on progress.

12. Items raised by NUIT rep
a) NUIT have various student deals available on e.g. Microsoft, Dreamweaver etc. Search for “Student Software Deals” on the IT service pages.
b) There have been some improvements to central printing services. There are now more
printers in corridors etc. Students should be able to use “NUPrint” to print to any
printer. It will be charged via the central charging system. Each student has £37.00.
See nuprint.ncl.ac.uk

c) DreamSpark. It is not clear how students find out about this. Action: Ms Heels will
look into it.

13. Items raised by the Director of Learning & Teaching
a) Students are surveyed about each module which they study. It does matter that
students tell us what they think about our courses. We are trying to reduce the number
of questions in the questionnaire. The School now has a web page called You Said
We Did http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/yousaidwedid/ This publicises the
fact that we do look at the results of the questionnaires and that staff reflect on it.
Reps were asked to encourage others to look at the web page and to complete the
questionnaires. If a module shows that the reflection is “missing”, please tell the
Module Leader.

b) Each School has a School rep who attends meetings at Faculty & University level. If
you have an issue with the School, it should be raised at School level first (not Faculty
level). The School rep has not yet been elected for this year.

14. Items raised by the Staff Facilitator
Ms Heels said that a number of awards are to be announced and asked how best to
publicise it. It was suggested that it should be raised in a lecture for each Stage.

15. Items raised by the Secretary
a) Mrs Barfield stressed that it is important that all students read their @ncl email
regularly. The reason that students are given this email address is because this is how
the University will communicate with students. Students contacting staff should
always use their @ncl email address, so that we are clear exactly who is contacting us,
especially where personal information is concerned.

b) Mrs Barfield said that student rep email addresses would be put on the Staff Student
Committee website next week. However she needed to ask permission to do this for
data protection reasons. Anyone not wishing their email address to go on the site
should contact her not later than this Friday. Meeting dates are on the website.

c) Mrs Barfield will send out a list of group email addresses which student reps may use
to contact students in their cohort. The women’s email group will need to be
moderated and she will talk to the reps about doing this.

d) Following the meeting Mrs Barfield circulated a copy of the 2014-15 Student Staff
Committee Annual report.