STUDENT STAFF COMMITTEE (SSC)  
SCHOOL OF COMPUTING SCIENCE  

Minutes of Meeting held on 25th October 2017  
in Room 4.005, Urban Sciences Building  

Present:  
Ms L Heels  
Transition Officer / Staff Facilitator of Committee  
Mrs AM Barfield  
Secretary  
Mr J Carey  
NUIT (Central)  
Ms S Bellwood  
Operations Assistant  
Dr C Morisset  
Deputy Director of PGT studies  
Oluwafemi Adams  
MSc Bioinformatics programmes representative (Bio)  
Charlotte Brown  
MSc Bioinformatics programmes representative (Bio)  
Joao Martins Nunes  
MSc Bioinformatics programmes representative (Bio)  
Dale Whinham  
MSc Computer Game Engineering representative (Games)  
Julia Elbe  
MSc Computer Security and Resilience representative (CSR)  
Eduardo Hernandez Coronado  
MSc Cloud Computing representative (Cloud)  
Jack Lloyd  
MComp Stage 4 representative (MComp)  
Ariela Bawol  
Stage 3 representative  
Chris McQueen  
Stage 3 representative  
Emma Wilson  
Stage 3 representative  
Matt Bellis  
Stage 2 representative  
Vic Godsell  
Stage 2 representative and Student Chair  
Mark Newton  
Stage 2 representative  
Alice Thornton White  
Stage 2 representative  
Farhath Al-Masrur  
Stage 1 representative  
Kacper Florianski  
Stage 1 representative  
Peter Golawski  
Stage 1 representative  
Alexandru Ulianov  
Stage 1 representative  
Josh Spindler  
UG School Rep and Deputy Student Chair  
Callum Simpson  
UG Equality & Diversity rep  
Kerry Lewis  
Student Experience Working Group rep  

Apologies:  
Dr NA Speirs  
Undergraduate Degree Programme Director  
Dr S Riddle  
Senior Tutor  
Michael Biech  
MSc Bioinformatics programmes representative
1. **Introduction**
Ms Heels welcomed everyone to the Committee and thanked all those who had volunteered to be reps. She apologised for the delay in emailing students, which was due to staff illness.

**Issues raised by representatives**
*Note: many of these issues relate to the fact that the School has just moved into a brand new building)*

2. **Issues raised by Stage 2 representatives**
a) Students were not made aware of the existence or location of gender-neutral toilets. Better signage is required.

ACTION: Building Manager to consider signage for WCs.

b) Students were not informed about the locations of printers, that Smartcards were needed or how to use them. Proper instructions need to be sent out to all students and staff.

ACTION: Ms Heels to report to Board of Studies and ensure that instructions are made available.

c) Reps proposed that the SSC could be re-structured by reps for each cohort meeting together and agreeing on issues, then only requiring one person to attend the main SSC meeting. This would help to get things on the agenda before the meeting. Another possibility might be to split the SSC into UG and PG meetings. Further discussions on this issue would be deferred to the next meeting.

ACTIONS: Add as an agenda item for next meeting.

UG Rep to forward information on Student Union policy on SSCs.

d) Stage 2 attendance is low. Some students feel that there is a repetition of some material from Stage 1. There is a bigger question about how we engage students in general.

ACTION: Ms Heels to raise at Board of Studies

e) Dr Marshall’s Welcome Week talk on Time Management was very interesting.

3. **Issues raised by Stage 3 representatives**
a) NUIT systems failed over the last weekend. The NUIT rep explained that there had been a failure on Friday, but there had also been planned maintenance of systems that weekend. (Planned maintenance is normally done overnight and not during the day.) Unfortunately School staff were unaware of the planned maintenance. Some students felt that the amount of time to do their coursework was affected and others were unable to submit when they wanted to. (CSC2022 was one of the modules affected.)

ACTIONS: Mr Carey will feedback about the lack of communication about maintenance.

Ms Heels will talk to UG & MSc Bio DPDs where student deadlines may have been affected and whether deadlines might need moving.

b) Students would like GIT in the Library.

ACTION: Mr Carey will investigate.

c) NESS coursework submission receipts are going into students’ junk mail as the from field is “unknown”.

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**ACTION:** Mrs Barfield will update the existing ticket about this issue.

d) Hard copy room timetables are shown on the door, but if there are updates mid-week these are not shown. Ms Heels showed a draft web page which shows cluster availability and the number of PCs available. There are almost always a few machines available even when there is teaching in a cluster. Reps were very positive about this development, though there were concerns that when all students have deadlines at once, clusters will still be very busy and noisy. (Some students are wanting quiet space to work on PCs.) Students would like more information on the page about what the cluster is and who may use it. It was suggested that the page could be displayed at School Reception.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to take suggestions on the web page back to School NUIT.

**Ms Heels to raise the issue about “quiet” cluster space at Board of Studies**

e) Some reps felt the time of this meeting was overwhelming if they had had 4 consecutive lectures that morning. However food had been provided prior to the start of the meeting and this was felt to be helpful.

f) Students would like a phone charging station in USB, like those in the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms.

g) Students reported being locked out of USB.3.003. However this was found to be after “core hours” and this was the reason that Smartcards did not work.

4. **Issues raised by MSc Bioinformatics programmes representatives**

a) Students would like 24 hour access to the building. Mr Goodwin explained that 24 hour access is currently being investigated. There are 2 issues: certain doors need additional hardware and there are safety issues. We are waiting for contractors to work on the doors and we need a risk assessment from the Safety Office. It is at the top of the “teething issues”, but unfortunately a definite date cannot be given for this being resolved.

**ACTION:** Mr Goodwin to let Ms Heels have an update as soon as anything is known.

b) Students would like a microwave and think that there is room for one on the 4th floor. This is a safety issue. It has been reported to the relevant people and will be reported at Board of Studies. Reps were asked to find out whether microwaves are supplied for student use in other Schools and report to Ms Heels.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to report at Board of Studies.

**Reps to report on microwave availability elsewhere on campus.**

c) Bio students would like to have keys to access pedestals under their desks. Ms Heels has already raised the issue about lockers. Since Bio students are in more than one room, each room has different facilities.

d) Students would like admin access to PCs. Ms Heels reported that students are not entitled to have their “own” PC, therefore they are not allowed admin access.

e) There do not seem to be enough demonstrators for some modules on the Bio programmes (none at all for Numerical skills). Students spend a lot of time waiting for help. Students suggested that those with programming knowledge could help those who
are new to it, and similarly for those with biology knowledge. Workshops were suggested.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to raise the issue of lack of demonstrators and workshops for MSc Bio students at Board of Studies.

g) Ubuntu is getting stuck when using Python. Ms Bellwood reported that there have been some network issues in the building which may be causing this.

**ACTION:** Ms Bellwood to report Ubuntu/Python issues to School NUIT.

**g)** Not all academic staff seem to know how the AV technology works in the building. There were training sessions for staff. It may be that there have been teething problems with the equipment.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to check whether further training sessions are required for academic staff.

**h)** Stage 3 students offered to help as demonstrators on programming for MSc students who are new to the subject.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to consult with Board of Studies as to whether this may be possible.

**i)** VMs on Windows. This issue has been reported and Ms Heels is waiting for a response from the Module Leader.

5. **Issues raised by the Staff Facilitator**

Ms Heels reported a number of issues:

**a)** Last year’s Annual Report will go on the SSC website as soon as possible. She highlighted things which this Committee had achieved from last year’s meetings:

- New Chair elected ready for this academic year for the first time.
- Equality and Diversity reps were newly appointed to SSC.
- MSc Bio students had a social event in Welcome Week itself.
- CS Portable Apps was available across campus.
- This School’s SSC will be used by the Student Union as an example of best practice for other SSCs to follow.
- The PG Rep received an award from the Student Union.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to supply Mrs Barfield with Annual Report.

**b)** The National Student Survey (NSS) is a survey which is completed nationally by all graduating UG students. The School’s new Director of Excellence for Learning & Teaching has written a report about the most recent results. There are areas where we would like to make improvements and there are proposals for actions. Student comments on the actions are needed for the next meeting. Topics include:

- Teaching on my course: staff approachability/enthusiasm, lack of variety in teaching methods/delivery, etc.
- Learning Opportunities: opportunities to explore certain areas in depth.
- Assessment & Feedback: clarity of marking criteria.
- Student Voice: opportunities to provide feedback on your course.

**ACTION:** Ms Heels to circulate a document to reps on NSS and request comments.

6. **Issues raised by central NUIT rep**
a) On the App there is a My Course reps section. The School will “opt in” for SSC polls, and a “School News section”.

ACTION: Mr Carey to action the “opt ins”

b) Students wanted to know if they can print from their own devices on USB printers.

ACTION: Mr Carey to check out access to USB printers.

c) All University owned halls now have access to the Student Network Access Service (SNAS) for laptops etc.

d) There are student deals for free Microsoft and other software via the NUIT website at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/software/softwaredeals/student/

e) If you have a problem, you can raise a tickets by sending an email to central NUIT at it.servicedesk@ncl.ac.uk or phone 208 85999. If students need to submit a ticket about something in USB, then email cs.support@ncl.ac.uk

7. Issues raised by the Library rep

The Library rep was not able to be present, but sent a report after the meeting which would be circulated with the minutes.

8. Other Business raised by Committee members

a) Students need greater clarity about rooms and facilities in the building and what they are allowed to use and until when. Undergraduate students were not aware that they could use USB.4.020 and USB.4.041 because they were told that this floor is for MScs. Other students are not clear whether they are allowed in the MSc Games cluster. Students would like a map of the building.

It was suggested that a symbol could be put on the card reader to signify who is allowed in a room.

ACTION: Ms Heels is working on rules about where/when students are allowed in the building.

Mr Goodwin to consider producing a map of the building and symbols on card readers.

b) Students wanted to know about prayer room facilities. There is a room in King George VI building and the Chaplaincy which can be used for prayer. (Unfortunately it was reported that the space in King George VI is currently not available.) In USB there are two quiet rooms on the second floor. These may be used for prayer, but are not bookable and everyone should pay attention to the Vacant/Engaged sign on the doors.

ACTION: Mr Goodwin - Better signage needed on quiet room doors.

Ms Heels to talk about prayer room space at Board of Studies.

c) Students are currently not able to book rooms themselves, they need to ask at School Reception on 2nd floor for this.

d) Some people are not exiting the building near the bike sheds after hours, as per the instructions on the main doors.

e) The Games lab is very hot in the evening. Mr Goodwin explained that the air conditioning only works during “core hours” i.e. until 6.00pm. The reason for this is for energy management. Students were asked not to wedge doors open after hours for security reasons.
f) Students and staff are asked not to smoke by the front doors of the building. It brings smoke into the building and is illegal.

g) Mr Spindler has developed an App which allows students to contact their rep. It was noted that the University app has a section for My Reps in My School section. It was agreed that photos should be taken of the current reps individually and as a group, so that they can be used for publicity about SSC and so that students know who their rep is. (Anyone not wanting their photo taken for this should let Ms Heels know.) The possibility of special lanyards or hoodies for reps was suggested.

ACTION: Chair to arrange for photos to be taken.
Ms Heels to consider special lanyards/hoodies.

h) Reps would like a map of how the Committee structure works in the School.
ACTION: Ms Heels and Mr Spindler to liaise over map of Committee structure.

i) Payment card payment is not working on the vending machine on Level 2.
ACTION: Ms Heels to report vending machine problem.

j) Should this Committee produce a log of all the issues it has dealt with so that statistics can be produced? The Action Log does report this. However Ms Heels will consider whether this is necessary.

ACTION: Ms Heels - consider Annual Report vs. statistics.

k) Students would like facilities for charging laptops in clusters.
ACTION: Ms Heels to report the request about charging laptops.

l) There is a facility in cluster rooms allowing students to request help, but this has not been advertised.
ACTION: Ms Heels to add to list of instructions about building.

m) Event Space, ground floor USB. Ideas had been requested for what can happen in this space. NUCATS are planning a number of events.

n) Students wanted to know if they can bring their own food into the café in USB. No, it is a normal café, so this is not allowed. Students wanted space to charge laptops in the café. The tables are being changed so this will not be possible.

o) Some students are turning up late to lectures in the lecture theatre. Some lecturers are stopping their lecture when this happens. Reps wondered whether it would be possible for later-arriving students to be allowed to enter the lecture theatre at the back of Level 2 instead of the front of Level 1.

ACTION: Ms Heels will raise this at Board of Studies.

p) Lecturing staff need to remember to switch off microphones when leaving the lecture theatre, if they are still wearing them.

ACTION: Ms Heels will raise this at Board of Studies.