STUDENT STAFF COMMITTEE (SSC)  
SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

Minutes of Meeting held on 14th February 2018  
in Room 4.005, Urban Sciences Building

Present:
Vic Godsell  Stage 2 representative and Student Chair
Mrs C Nicoll  Secretary
Dr S Riddle  Staff Facilitator of Committee
Dr NA Speirs  Undergraduate Degree Programme Director
Mr P Sumner  NUIT
Mr D Goodwin  Building Manager
Oluwafemi Adams  MSc Bioinformatics
Julia Elbe  MSc Computer Security and Resilience representative (CSR)
Josh Spindler  UG School Rep and Deputy Student Chair
Ariela Bawol  Stage 3 representative
Joseph Honour  Stage 3 representative
Chris McQueen  Stage 3 representative
Emma Wilson  Stage 3 representative
Matthew Bellis  Stage 2 Representative
Mark Newton  Stage 2 Undergraduate Rep
Callum Simpson  UG Equality & Diversity rep
Alice Thornton White  Stage 2 Undergraduate Rep
Kacper Florianski  Stage 1 representative
Kerry Lewis  Stage 3 representative
Elyse Merriman  MSc Computer Science
Michael Westerby  MSc Computer Science
1. **Feedback Fortnight**
Rowen South informed the committee about the upcoming feedback fortnight campaign. This is a two week campaign dedicated to giving students valuable feedback. Students queried the differences in feedback that were given by lecturers and asked how this could be standardised. Rowen suggested a universal feedback form could be requested and used by all lecturers. Feedback fortnight is for exam feedback only. 
*ACTION*: to be taken to Learning and Teaching Committee and Board of Studies

2. **Library Update**
The Library is looking into automatic renewals for students and changes to overdue charges. Documents containing further information was received and reps were asked to send any feedback to the Chair.

3. **Rep Awareness Week Recruitment**
UG School rep Josh Spindler reminded the committee about the upcoming Rep Awareness Week which starts on Monday 19th February. There will be a stall manned by Josh in the USB Atrium on Tuesday 20th February from 10 until 12 noon. All information regarding recruitment week is on the website and social media.

4. **Feedback from FLTSEC: Evasys**
Josh reported back to the committee regarding comments that were raised at FLTSEC about the Evasys feedback system. Students were found to be submitting hurtful and personal comments directed at the lecturer rather than focussing on constructive comments on the module. Any feedback on this item should be sent direct to Josh.

5. **Past Papers**
Students have asked for at least two sample exam papers and outline answers to be uploaded to Blackboard for all modules. Stage 1 students have also requested this for PC based exams. It would be preferable for these to be uploaded at the start of the semester.

6. **Issues raised by Stage 2 representatives**
- **Module Surveys** – Students proposed to delay the release of module surveys until after the exams have concluded to allow for feedback on all aspects of the module, including revision material. Dr Riddle noted that staff would also give individual feedback if required. Mrs Nicoll also noted that Stage Evaluations would be coming into effect in the summer where constructive feedback on modules and the stage could also be given.
- **Release of Notes and Practicals** – It was felt that some lecturers were staggering the release of notes/practicals making it difficult for students to plan or read ahead. Students requested that all notes should be put online at the start of the semester. Dr Speirs informed the group that staff work on their slides and handouts throughout the year, but he agreed that it would be practical to upload the documents a week or two in advance of the lecture.
• Coursework Specification – Students have raised the issue of a lack of consistency between modules in their format of specification and where it is released, whether it be on Blackboard or NESS. It was noted that the policy is for all coursework specification to be uploaded to Blackboard. We can remind staff of this at the next Board of Studies. 

**ACTION:** take to Board of Studies

• Union Involvement – Students feel that there is a disconnection between the USB and the student union, e.g. RAG week was not attended by many students. The proposal is to move some events to the USB and Business School so students can be easily included. Other suggestions were to raise publicity of the events using the screens around the building.

• Feedback – It was agreed that individual comments were a good help to students but a number of lecturers cut and paste comments that means students aren’t receiving the correct feedback for their work. They would like to see how many marks were given and where marks had been lost on a particular question or elements. Dr Riddle spoke about specific feedback being beneficial but in many cases there is always going to be standard replies.

7. **Issues raised by Stage 3 representatives**

• Dissertations – Stage 3 reps have asked for more sample dissertations to be put on Blackboard which were marked in the high 2:1 and 1st Class marks.

  **ACTION:** Module Leader and Alex Barfield

• Exam Period – Student reps were happy with the white boards during exam period, and said they were very useful.

• USB Out of Hours – Students are happy with the new timetable for the buildings out of hours access.

• Microwave – Students had requested a microwave to use within the building. Mr Goodwin advised that this was not possible due to a directive from the fire safety officer and also a housekeeping issue of who would be responsible for cleaning.

• Lockers – A request for lockers for student use was raised. Students who cycle to and from University have no place to keep helmets and rain clothes. This will be raised with the School Manager.

  **ACTION:** School Manager

• PC Availability – Students requested a indicator of which clusters had available PC’s in at certain times of day. Mr Sumner informed the group that this is available via NCL app but he would also look to having it displayed on a screen in the atrium.

  **ACTION:** IT Support

• Blackboard/ReCAp – A request for students to be informed when applications such as NESS and Blackboard go down, especially during exam revision weeks. The exams website, which included the past papers, went down over the Christmas break and students were left with no information. Mr Sumner informed the students that the University was closed at this time and therefore we were unable to inform anyone. He will request with central NUIT to inform schools if anything occurs.
• PEC Forms – students queried who sees PEC forms within the school. Dr Riddle informed the committee that all PEC forms were treat under the Data Protection Act and treat confidentially with only a small number of staff sitting in the PEC Committee. The decision rating of the PEC committee is given to the Board of Examiners but this is only a rating as student names are not given, as all decisions are anonymous.
• Plagiarism – Students requested that all plagiarism cases are dealt with after the exam period so that undue stress is not put upon students during this time.
• Coursework – Request for feedback to be returned within the two week period. Certain modules were expected to use the feedback to prepare for the 2nd practical but it was not distributed in time.
• NESS – difficulty in uploading large files to NESS.
  ACTION: Teaching Manager
• Smartcard Access – Students were unable to gain access to the building during the weekend of 6th and 7th January. Mr Sumner explained that this was due to staff sickness during that period.
• Strike – Students asked about the effects of the strikes on their timetable. Dr Riddle explained that the school would not find out which staff were on strike but an email from the school would be sent out.

8. Issues raised by MSc representatives
• MSc Bio Lab – Students asking about a desk and computer for a returning student.
  ACTION: to speak to MSc DPD regarding the hot desk approach.
• Dissertation – Projects were given to students during exam period, which inflicted on time taken to see supervisors. Some students who went after revision missed out on projects. Dr Riddle said project distribution is being looked at for some courses but there are some programmes which receive their projects later in the semester.
• 5.023 door closure – problems with door closure. Mr Goodwin dealing with issue.
• Solutions and Past Papers - MSc students would like to see the solutions to coursework and quizzes uploaded to Blackboard
• Computer Security and Resilience – Students are happy with the programme but would like to see more practical of application of theory.

Next meeting 07/03/2018