Department of Computing – Macquarie University
Minutes of UG Liaison Committee Meeting – Software Technology, Software Engineering, Games Design

Date: 08 April 2019
Venue: Seminar Room 333, BD Building, Level 3, 4 Research Park Drive

<table>
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<th>Students Representatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bailey Gibbons</td>
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<td>Joseph Hardman</td>
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<td>John (Su Ho) Kim</td>
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<td>Jerome Barkhan</td>
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<td>Bradley Kenny</td>
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<td>Jordan Bertasso</td>
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<td>Sang Gon Jung</td>
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<td>Jess Dalmati</td>
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<td>Lin Xie</td>
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<th>Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Cassidy</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Chairperson</td>
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<td>Malcolm Ryan</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
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<td>Hedieh Ranjbartabar</td>
<td>Minutes Taker</td>
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Steve Cassidy introduced himself, stated the purpose of the meeting and then opened the meeting at 5:05 pm.

**Agenda 1: Lab spaces**
- Labs are usually full.
- Desks and computers are dusty.
- Often there are some computers are out of order in the labs particularly in the lab 114.
- In the Lab 114, there are 2 computers usually are out of order even though tutors have reported them to Science IT.
- Every time students walk into the 09WW (E6A) building, it makes them feel down as building is dark with terrible paint color.
- Students suggested having a lab like the new ones in MUIC (i.e. Mq Uni International College).
- In 12WW (E7A) the physics computer labs also are brighter and nicer than the ones they have in 09WW (E6A).
- The way the whiteboard and desks are set up right now in the labs are not too bad, because of having tutorials written on the board sometimes.
- However, it is better to have whiteboard everywhere and students could get access to them like Lab 127.
- It is good to get students in the lab to talk to each other by tutors.
- Labs are always full. Even adding 2 more labs are not the solution, will be fill up anyway.
- To answer the question “what if bringing laptop becomes mandatory solve the issues for the lab?” they said some cannot afford it.
- There are not enough power points and USBs in the labs to use for laptops so it is not easy to do group works with laptops in the labs. There are cable management issues.
- To answer the question “If they also wants screens for the group work with laptops?” they said no but it would be good if there is a screen where someone could hook up the laptop and share screens in the group works (like presentation pod in the ex-library).
- University is taking on more than its capacity. Every resource, everywhere they go is so full. It is hard to find somewhere to sit down and study. Some resources are booked out for weeks.

Department Comments/To Do List:
- Department has begun the discussion to refurbish the 1st floor to become lab space.
- Adding extra power points and USBs in the labs
- Next year department is looking at more free space as well as new labs.
- In design of the future labs, department needs students’ input.

Agenda 2: Teaching quality
- Sometimes, students receive no feedback on their assignments. For instance, in COMP335 Stage1 report writing assessment, a student has not received any feedback. Then when he asked the convener, he just received a copy of the feedback his friend had received. He was not satisfied by that. Students do appreciate feedback on their work.
- Regarding course structure, it would be good if there is a guideline on what unit students should be taking and when (making the path clearer). Without attending academic advisor session, sometimes it is hard to make informed decisions as to what units to take, especially, when extra benefit may exist should they have selected a particular unit sooner than later.
- Students do not have general knowledge on the major such as the pre-requisites from Engineering Dept. Although, relevant information has been sent to students via emails with 10 attachments, students are less likely to read.
- Students prefer not to go to lectures in person as they have to watch lectures online even after they attended the lectures as watching lectures online is very good to review the lecture (being able to pause, etc.).
- Kahoot is a good tool to use in the lecture.
- It would be good if echo lectures could be broken down into “topics”. Shorter videos are better (i.e. 10 -15 minutes).
- The more complicated units are not structured. Students cannot see the relationship between topics and the relationship to a bigger picture. A sudden move to a different topic make it hard for students to find the relationship. Students need to spend time to put the topics together and find their relationships to one another. Examples of such units are COMP225 and COMP335.
- To answer to the question “Do the things you’ve learned from one unit support you in another unit?” students said yes and mentioned COMP247 but they could not think of an example of any other units.
- On iLearn, units have to be structured into topics not into weeks.
- COMP115 is a module-based unit, which is better than week based structure.
Department Comments/To Do List:

- The system is supposed to be improved. The new Curriculum Management System is supposed to help the department to design the new program and for students to understand our programs better. It will eventually replace eStudent.
- The Curriculum Management System may address some of the issues raised above regarding selecting the order of units they are taking.
- Designing better documentations for students on units selection.
- There is a trial for automatic transcription option in the lecture recording this year.
- Moving away from a WEEK based to a TOPIC based structure unit.

Agenda 3: Support available

- Student would not need help outside the lectures and tutorials if they did right.
- Communicating with unit convenors and lecturers through iLearn is helpful.
- Students Discussion Forum on iLearn needs to be managed properly. There are many posts which should be either closed, pinned or removed to a different forum.

Department Comments/To Do List:

- Online chat system can be an option.

Agenda 4: Overall Progression

- Students asked for units that they can replace with other units (for instance from Engineering because there are units they do not do in Software Engineering). However, students have done the two 300 level units so there are no other choices for them.
- Students are interested in Stats and more advanced database programming units. ISYS114 was too easy for them. For Software Eng/Tech students the ideal option could be COMP249 with a DB module in it.

Department Comments/To Do List:

- Software Engineering students to be able to take Big Data without Data Science pre-req.
- The new curriculum program has been finalised for 2020. We are at the transition plan. The initial idea will be to get everybody moved to the new program. For Software Engineering, the new program will be similar to the old one. For Software Tech, it will be the same. Major will actually be smaller than the current major.
- Unit codes will be changed as well.

In the last extra 10 minutes, students’ specific questions about the new program were answered.

Steve thanked everyone for attending and closed the session at 6:10 pm.