

Staff-Student Liaison Committee Meeting
6th October 2014

1pm, Informatics Forum – Rm 3.02

Present:

Alex Lascarides - Deputy Head of Graduate School
Alison Downie – Computing Staff
Dave Hamilton – Buildings/Technical Staff
Kate Farrow - Informatics Graduate School Administration Staff
Fraser Pullar – Informatics Graduate School Administration Staff
Krzysztof Geras – IANC Representative
Alyssa Alcorn – ILCC Representative
Katharina Heil – EUSA Representative
Sergio Elizondo Gonzales – CISA Representative
Valentin Radu – ICSA Representative
Daniel Franzen – LFCS Representative
Balazs Szigeti – IPAB/DTC Representative

Apologies:

Andrew McPherson – ICSA Representative
Daniel Banks – DTC Representative
Daniel Duma – ILCC Representative
Joseph Hallett – LFCS Representative

Institute representatives were reminded to contact their Institute members/students to notify them of upcoming Staff-Student Liaison Meetings so that any issues they may have can be raised by their representatives.

Computing

- a) Alison Downie informed that the old student and staff compute clusters will be replaced in the very near future. The new machines are significantly better than what is currently available. Individual institutes have their own compute machines available also.
- b) Alison Downie announced the new Computing Support Twitter feed and urged all students to take a look. The feed gives notifications of any changes or issues along with any new developments.

Buildings

- a) Valentin Radu raised the issue of overcrowding in Room 1.19. The room has been modified in order to accommodate extra student desks which has resulted in complaints of a lack of space, noise and no access to the whiteboards on the wall. Dave Hamilton is aware of the issues but noted that the options available were limited. It was thought that the students within room 1.19 should devise and propose a plan that DH can put forward at the next Buildings Committee meeting.

One proposed solution was to insert panels between each desk and look into moving the power outlets and desks up against the wall. DH stated these were reasonable request, but would wait for a room layout proposal for the students. AL noted that throughout the building, in general, the students still have more space allocated to them than the University's suggested minimum space.

- b) Krzysztof Geras informed that students had been complaining about poor ventilation and a lack of oxygen within certain offices in the Informatics Forum. DH will look into the ability to alter room ventilation.

Teaching Support Staff (TSS)

- a) Alex Lascarides, Michael Rovatsos and Alyssa Alcorn met to discuss redesigning Informatics policy for how teaching is resourced, described and advertised. The aim is to make the expectations on the student a lot more transparent. AL thanked AA for agreeing to work on this. A draft policy was put before Strategy Committee and will be discussed further with Teaching Committee.
- b) Following the SSLC meeting it was confirmed to the members that the document is awaiting Strategy Committee and Teaching Committee approval; an update will be provided once the discussions are concluded.

Postgraduate Performance Review (PPR)

- a) AL thanked everyone for attending the PPR and for their contributions. AL explained there were several commendations and wished to highlight some of the recommendations which are mainly focussed on completion rates:
 - Changes to the structure of 1st year have been made in order to push those who enter with a more-defined thesis proposal. A students' Thesis Proposal review will be based on how well-defined the proposal was on entry.
 - The structure of the Thesis Proposal will need to change to get the students used to a certain writing style.
 - It is proposed that the external panel member from the review will meet with the student, in confidence, when the supervisor is not present. Topics of discussion can be confidential or reported on, if necessary.
 - Amos Storkey has been contacted about starting a forum and/or peer-mentoring scheme for PGR Tutors and Demonstrators.

Social Events

- a) AL thanked Katharina Heil and Krzysztof Geras for their work in organising a fantastic ceilidh.
- b) Alyssa Alcorn proposed a pizza, beer and boardgames evening. Originally planned within ILCC, AL encouraged that a school-wide event might be suitable for this and also noted that IAD funding would be available for this.