School of Informatics

UG1 Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting Minutes
2 pm, 29 November 2018, 5.03 Appleton Tower

Present: Paul Anderson – Chair (UG1 Year Organiser)
                       Panda Doyle (UG1 Class Rep)
                       Gabrielle Gaudeau (UG1 Class Rep)
                       Dee Yeum (UG1 Class Rep)
                       Michael Fourman (Inf1A Course Co-organiser - CL)
                       Don Sannella (Inf1A Course Co-organiser - FP)

In Attendance: Rob Armitage (UG1 Secretary)

Apologies: Lars Werne (UG1 Rep)
                       Cristina Alexandru (CP Course Organiser)

PA introduced himself as Chair and welcomed the UG1 Reps and Course Organisers to the meeting, explaining that he would chair the first meeting and offered the role of chair for the next meeting to any UG1 Rep who would like to take it on. PA then asked for course feedback from the UG1 Reps, from their individual experiences as well as from communications with the student body.

1. Introduction and overview of SSLC:
    1.1 Remit
        1.1.1   PA set out the purpose of the biannual SSLC meetings as a way to give feedback from a broader and longer-term perspective than the weekly Rep meetings.
    1.2 Membership
        1.2.1   The committee agreed that the new system for recruiting members for this year's Reps was effective and should be used again.
    1.3 Selection of Reps
        1.3.1   The Reps suggested that the current UG1 Reps meet next year's Reps at the start of the year for continuity.
            1.3.1.1 **ACTION 1.3.1.1: PA and UG1 Secretary make a note to contact former Reps when inducting 2019/20 Reps and arrange a meeting.**
        1.3.2   The UG1 Reps did not have much contact or feedback from Computer Programming Skills and Concepts (CP) students those enrolled are non-Informatics students. The idea of recruiting a CP Rep was floated, however PA informed the committee that the CP course is not running in 2019/20 so no action was recorded.
    1.4 Chair
        1.4.1   PA offered the Chair role to any of the UG1 Reps who would like to take it on.
            1.4.1.1 **ACTION 1.4.1.1: RA to email about Chair role when the Minutes are distributed; PA or RA to send a reminder when arranging the Semester 2 meeting.**
    1.5 Frequency

1.5.1   PA noted that the SSLC meetings take place once each semester, in the second half of the semester.

1.6 Documents

1.6.1   Course Feedback Summaries

1.6.2   External Examiner Report

1.6.3   Course Evaluations

1.6.4   Quality Reports

1.6.5   TPR Review

1.6.6   Minutes from 2017/18 meetings were requested

1.6.6.1 ACTION 1.6.6.1: RA to add minutes from last meeting to Documents list. Documents to be circulated prior to next meeting.

2.   Comments on Lectures, Tutorials, Labs and Coursework:

2.1 Informatics 1 – Introduction to Computation, Course Lecturers: Don Sannella and Michael Fourman.

UG1 Reps' comments:

GG suspected that many people on the course don't engage very much and that it was difficult at the beginning to get to grips with the course due to it being confusing and therefore easy to feel overwhelmed. While InfBase and InfPALS were advertised the beginning of the semester, GG felt that students didn't engage because they weren't "ready" to.

The UG1 Reps organised and advertised peer support groups that were attended by a small number of students, estimated to be 15 at the most.

GG requested that pre-arrival material be sent out to incoming students before the beginning of Semester 1, referencing the School of Mathematics' procedure of sending a diagnostic test then additional resources depending on your grade. DS noted that games designed to teach Haskell were created and sent out during the summer of 2018, however GG noted that she received these but was not able to run them. MF noted that work currently being done on Haskell by Nora Vazbyte could be distributed in the future.

ACTION 2.1.1: Pre-arrival material to be prepared and sent out for 2019/20 cohort. PA to discuss with Stuart Anderson and arrange payment for students to compile material.

DY asked if anything could be done to make the Computation and Logic (CL) component easier to follow. MF noted that he will be reorganising this component. PD noted that a number of students seemed to find it easier to write their work on paper before applying it to Haskell.

DS noted that the lab sessions for the Functional Programming (FP) component from previous years were removed. They had varied attendance rates.

GG noted that the FP mock exam was useful since she – and presumably others – had not logged into DICE since the intro session at the beginning of the semester; she was now more confident in using DICE for the exam.

PD requested an introductory component in the first few weeks of the course for compiling a programme. An option raised was Bandit wargames which teach how to use bash (command language/programming language).

The Reps noted that the Imperative Programming option provided by Volker in the second half of the semester had received good, if scarce, feedback. RA noted that more detailed feedback would be useful to determine how best to implement this in the future.

PD noted that the reading list for course materials seems disjointed, DS responded that he plans to write a textbook for Inf1A while on sabbatical next year. DY noted that the main textbook for CL was somewhat abstract and therefore not overly useful, but that finding a good textbook had been difficult. The two textbooks recommended by DS for FP were agreed by the Reps to be useful.

2.2 Computer Programming Skills and Concepts, Course Lecturers: Cristina Alexandru and Ajitha Rajan.

UG1 Reps' comments:

No comments or feedback were offered. This course is not running in 2019/20 so no feedback was pursued post-meeting.

3. General issues about the year
   3.1 InfBase
   RA's action from last year was to find attendance stats but was unable to track down the data. It is likely that data is not available.

   GG queried the lab sessions from previous years regarding the opportunity to ask questions, especially since the times first year students can attend InfBase are inconsistent due to whether the InfBase tutors present have the requisite course knowledge, creating a barrier for use. Lab sessions are not going to be reinstated. MF felt that anyone in the InfBase tutor role should be able to assist on all Inf1 courses.

   ACTION 3.1.1: RA to contact Benjamin Bach, InfBase Coordinator, regarding the requirement for all InfBase tutors to have knowledge of all Inf1 courses.

   3.2 Merging the Inf1-CL and Inf1-FP courses into Inf1A
   PD noted that students have found it disruptive. Students requested more coursework across the semester rather than a single exam.

   3.3 Tutorials
   MF invited feedback. GG would have preferred completing the optional material as a group and noted that they tended not to progress quickly enough to get to this material. Most tasks were completed individually, with some discussion between group members, rather than as a group. PD noted that some students attended without having done the preparatory work and therefore had to learn during the tutorial, to the hindrance of the other students.

DS suggested having a tutor assigned to each table for next year.

4. Comments on Computer Facilities, labs, study spaces and social spaces
   No comments were made.

5. Comments on Computing Support.
   No comments were made.

6. Comments on ITO Support.
   No comments were made.

PA thanked the committee for attending.