



Clayton School of Information Technology Student/Staff Meeting No. 1 2007

Minutes of the first Student/Staff meeting, held for the Clayton School of Information Technology on Friday 30th March 2007 at 1.00pm in room 115/63, Clayton campus.

Present

Damminda Alahakoon, David Albrecht, Chitra Appalanaidu, John Betts, Victoria Colquhoun, Yen Cheung, Alan Dorin, David Dowe, Maria Garcia de la Banda, Daniel Heath, Asad Khan, Michelle Leclair, Rod Martin, Jon McCormack, Nicholas Meinhold, Bernd Meyer, Ann Nicholson, Dmitri Nikulin, Jeffrey Parsons, Sita Ramakrishnan, Sid Ray, David Squire, Lyfie Sugianto, David Taniar, Peter Tischer, Emily van der Walt, Paul van Haaster, Joseph Vu, Michael Wulfsohn, Ai Cheo Yeo, Ingrid Zukerman

Apologies

Sue Bedingfield, Nandita Bhattacharjee, Kirsten Frederiksen, John Hurst, Kevin Korb, Kunal Singh Mamik, Ian Martin, Kym McGain, Mahbubur Rahim, Nasrin Rahmati, Andrew Paplinski

Ann Nicholson opened the meeting at 1.05pm and welcomed everyone. Ann explained that this was the first integrated meeting with both Computer Science/Software Engineering and Business Information Systems students, and explained how the meeting worked, that it needed both negative and positive feedback.

HONOURS

The reps indicated that induction session could have been earlier. It was noted however that Project information comes late and takes time to co-ordinate. Jon McCormack doesn't have access to web advertise Projects, Caitlin has to update.

Students also felt the honours information session was more targeted towards Computer Science and most Software Engineering students were not able to walk away with a clear understanding of what was expected of them.

There was a general complaint about the honours labs, with students are concerned about the MUSE lab getting too full around assignment due dates and project milestones. Paul van Haaster reported that the number of honours students exceeded the number of PC's in the lab. Ann explained that the current honours lab arrangements in Blg 26 were in response to the reduction in SE 4th year and Honours student numbers and that they would change anyway when the area was re-configured with the move of Technical services to Blg 26. Sita noted that it is not ideal for SE and CS students to share, as the MUSE lab was customised to Software Engineering students.

Jon McCormack was praised for his efforts as honours co-ordinator.

There was a general complaint about difficulties using MUSO, with the specific complaint that students can't re-submit assignments. David Albrecht said that this depended on how the unit leader has set up MUSO.

Action: Advise Helana Scheepers about this for FIT4005, and also make sure other academics using MUSO for assignment submission are aware of the options.

Computer Science students complained that Research Methods contained too much qualitative methods that were not relevant to their CS Honours research. David Albrecht mentioned that students enrolled in Research Methods come from different backgrounds. Possibly the balance isn't right, the unit is being assessed and is continually being re-vamped. John Betts stated that in the last meeting, Research Methods was said to be too Computer Science orientated. Chitra suggested maybe splitting the unit between Computer Science and Business Information Systems students, however Ann said that this was not practical at the moment, also the Faculty has decided to have a single Research Methods unit for honours and Masters students.

Chitra mentioned that Jon McCormack was very accessible and that it was great that Alan Dorin was using live examples in FIT4012.

THIRD YEAR

Michael Wulfsohn stated that there needed to be more focus on the soft skills in business such as teamwork and communication. John Betts said that this was a fair point and in BUS3600 there is more engagement with peers. Nicholas Meinhold and Maria Garcia de la Banda mentioned that pairs worked well in their unit. Ann mentioned that this was a good point and these were important graduate attributes. Daniel Heath said from his experience in Computer Science group assignments, that the other person doesn't do much work. David Squire said for CSE3308 the students have to do a peer assessment where the students assess the contribution of the other students in their group, this way problems are caught early. Sid Ray also agreed that peer assessments worked for CSE3302 Project, problems were caught early and students can be penalised. Ann added that she would try to look at a program for staff to address this problem. Sita said that CSE4402 which was a full year project had hurdles and milestones, so roles are established and students can't hide. Staff need to monitor this.

Daniel reported that he asked 15 people about MUSO, and all of them reported that they had problems with it. Jeffrey also did an informal survey on MUSO and all students said that they either all had problems with it, or didn't know what MUSO was. Ann explained that MUSO was implemented after a University survey and that we were told students wanted everything online with the same interface. Maria stated that 75% of students like MUSO according to the University survey. Daniel stated that MUSO was good for non-technical users, but it did have browser problems. Ann advised that MUSO was moving to a new version soon. Paul van Haaster reiterated that a new version was coming and that FIT academics had a very short lead-up time to set up their MUSO sites. Bernd said in regards to the University survey feedback, that it depended on what Faculty the feedback was coming from. CSSE has good courseware sites, and other Faculties didn't have anything like that at all. Ann said that Margot Schuhmacher needed to be advertised as the person to contact if there were any MUSO problems. Rod Martin stated that he had been using MUSO for several years and had no problem with it using it simply and sensibly and also that Margot was very helpful.

Daniel stated that he felt the new course was moving away from core Computer Science, and was moving to a trade course rather than an academic one. Ann said that the course had expanded especially with the Faculty common core units but most of the fundamental CS topics were still in the core or elective curriculum and the course product groups were keeping an eye on the curriculum.

SECOND YEAR

Students reported an overlap in FIT2001 with FIT1010 and FIT1003. Ann advised that as this was the first time the unit is being run, there will be issues to sort out. Victoria stated that the blogs in the unit were unnecessary and students didn't like them. Yen advised that the issue of the blogs was under discussion as other lecturers weren't happy with the blog component either. Jeff noted that the blogs were a hurdle but nothing happens with them. Ann stated that this issue will be followed up on.

Jeff said that the two hour lecture for FIT2010 was too long and students preferred two one hour lectures. This led to a more general discussion about timetabling of lectures. Ann stated that lecturers need to put in requests for lecture times and it's too late to change

lecture times mid-semester. David Dowe said that he was only offered a two hour lecture time slot or an 8am lecture and that he prefers two one hour lectures also.

Victoria reported that some of the Database tutors aren't confident enough in explaining material and that she had been going to other tutorials to get extra help. Maria asked if it was a communication problem or a matter of not knowing the material. Ann mentioned that we may need to do more work with the tutors.

Action: Student reps for FIT1004/FIT2010 Database to give the lecturer Dr. Dowe more information on problems with specific tutors, who will then work with these tutors on improving their teaching.

Students reported that in FIT2024, the software in the labs was outdated. David Squire said that this was the first time he was taking the unit, and that he would stick to the old version for the moment as the code was already available. The new version will be rolled out for 2008. Some students noticed an overlap in FIT2024 with FIT1010 and as Ann was taking FIT1010 in semester 2, she would liaise with David Squire to make sure this doesn't happen. Overall everyone was enjoying FIT2024.

Students reported that they liked FIT2004, but it was quite hard. Jeff would like official tutorial solutions to be put up somewhere.

Action: Bernd Meyer to hand out tutorial solutions.

Students advised that there was only one Help Room consultation time for FIT2004 that most people couldn't attend.

Action: Bernd Meyer will address this in his lecture.

Ann reminded representatives that they must talk to their lecturers about any issues that arise as soon as possible (and not just wait for the Staff/Student meeting).

Daniel stated that Collabra 1 (C1) was an exceptional tool for feedback and this should be advertised in lectures. Ann advised that there were discussion tools on MUSO. David Squire added that the move from C1 to MUSO was University policy and Maria confirmed this. Maria stated that this may be because MUSO is archived and therefore accessible for problems to address and that C1 possibly doesn't have the archive function. David confirmed that C1 was backed up and was a lot better and Maria agreed. Overall, it was agreed that the use of any discussion forums was good for students.

FIRST YEAR

Joseph reported that lecture notes in FIT1001 are covered too briefly and that the pace is too fast. Eg. The topic Boolean algebra went too quickly. Ingrid asked for an email list of things that hadn't been explained and was in the process of reducing the material being covered in the unit. Students reported that some of the tutors aren't very helpful and that there may be a communication problem. They have trouble explaining things. Students feel that the unit is challenging but are enjoying it at this stage.

Action: students to provide FIT1001 lecturer Prof. Ingrid Zukerman with list of things that had been covered too quickly.

Students are enjoying FIT1002 lectures and pace and the material is covered well. There was a report of one demonstrator doing personal work instead of concentrating on the lab.

Nicholas said that there needed to be a process for raising issues with tutors. David Squire added that there were old CSSE expectations from tutors. Bernd confirmed that this was documented but needed to be reinforced.

Students reported that the maths in FIT1006 had already been covered at secondary school level. John Betts said that there were students at a basic level maths and others who were very advanced. John has tried to cut things down and assures students that they will be moving to material they haven't seen soon. Daniel suggested running a tutorial for basic maths.

Rod Martin added that there are students even at a Masters level who struggle with basic maths. John stated that there are other pathways to our degrees where we can't assume pre-

requisite knowledge. Daniel said that he had struggled with some notations and that maybe there needed to be a notations guide. Sid said that students should always ask about notations as there are so many and that it would be too hard to have a notation guide for Computer Science.

Sita noted that there was a slide to be advertised in lectures stressing students to find out who their contacts are. Sita brought up the fact that some students didn't know who their lecturer or tutor was.

Joseph reported that students liked the FIT1013 two hour lectures, and that the 10 minute break in the middle was working. Joseph also reported that assignment 1 for FIT1013 was vaguely worded. Ann said that students should give feedback to the lecturer as soon as possible regarding these kinds of issues.

Meeting closed at 2.20pm

Next meeting Friday 11th May (Week 10).