Meeting held on Thursday 8th September 2005 from 12-2pm in B3.11, Caulfield Campus

Attendees

Staff: Mr Adnan Bader, Mr Jason Ceddia, Associate Professor Graham Farr, Mr Stephen Giles, Mr Peter Granville, Ms Dianne Hagan, Dr Maria Indrawan, Dr Chris Ling, Ms Aleisha Matthews (secretary), Ms Jan Miller, Ms Judy Sheard, Dr David Squire (Chair)

Students: Ms Barbara Anglim (2nd year BComp), Mr Ben Carmichael (3rd Yr BComp), Mr Michael Shimmins (3rd year BComp)

Apologies: Mr Andrew Barnden, Ms Chris Gonsalvez, Dr Kathy Lynch, Dr Campbell Wilson

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr David Squire opened the meeting by welcoming both staff and students. All attendees introduced themselves.

2. Action items from previous minutes

2.1 CISCO Credit for Tafe Courses – Mr Stephen Giles informed everyone that the issue of Credit for CISCO courses given through institutions other than Monash University has been brought to the attention of the Associate Dean of Education and clarification on this issue is yet to be finalised.

2.2 Unit Content of CSE4490, CSE9000, CSE4530 & CSE5910 – Mr Stephen Giles reported that discussion has taken place between course coordinators and unit leaders regarding the unit content for these units and the issue of introductory programming content.

2.3 Enrolling in 9 series units through Wes (Web Enrolment System) – Mr Stephen Giles informed everyone that the issue of students being able to enrol in 9 series unit through Wes without seeking course coordinator advice has been reported to the Faculty of IT. They have assured him that this problem won’t happen again in the future.

3. Student Email Responses

3.1 CSE2318 – Feedback on CSE2318 Data Communications was received from a Bachelor of Computing student. Issues included in the email were that the workload for this unit was very high. Mr Peter Granville responded by explaining
that there were two presentations that the students were to do in the semester. Mr Ben Carmichael said that he found the preparation for these two presentations was very intense, however believed that it was reasonable. Mr Michael Shimmins expressed that assignment 1 was a bit long and was slightly complicated. He felt it was a bit time consuming in comparison to other 2nd year units. Ms Barbara Anglim felt that the practical side and the investigating process of the assignments were great. She felt that they gave good practice for the effort required for industry work. Mr Peter Granville reported that the failure rate for the unit was 12% which was around average. The email response also stated that the tutorials, which mainly involved the students presenting material to each other, were inefficient. Mr Peter Granville said that he tends to format the tutorials in this manner so that students can participate in the tutorials rather than simply work alone. Ms Barbara Anglim felt that the presentations were both helpful and a good opportunity to build students’ confidence. Dr David Squire also commented that communication in industry is very important, and industry does not require only technical expertise.

Cisco Certification - It was also asked why CISCO Certification credit was not awarded for this unit, though it is awarded for some 3rd year elective units. The CISCO program is not considered to have enough overlap with CSE2318 for a credit to be appropriate in this unit

3.2 Student/ Tutor Ratio – Another email response was received from a MAIT student, saying that the student/tutor ratio was not reasonable. At times there were more than 16 students in a tutorial and the student felt that, if there were no more than 15 students, the tutor could have 8 minutes per student. It was said that tutorials should not be treated as a consultation time one on one with students. Also, quite often when students were officially allocated into a particular tutorial, they may not always attend this class and may attend another tutorial instead. In this case, it was suggested that lecturers should be stricter in regards to ensuring the correctly allocated students are attending their specified tutorial. Attendance checks could be done prior to the commencement of the class.

Help Desk Sessions – The student complained that the help desk timetable did not coordinate well with the lecture and tutorial for the same units. At times they would run directly after one another rather than on a different day. The general response was that it was hard to timetable help desk sessions as tutors have other academic requirements, however if there were issues the student could always discuss this with the lecturer.

Scholarships – A student asked whether there were any scholarships available for postgraduate international students. Mr Stephen Giles said there were both Faculty and University scholarships available on a performance and merit basis. There is also external scholarships available. Information detailing university scholarships is available at http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/scholarships/. The link to this scholarships webpage provides the application process and further details on what scholarships are available to International students. For information specifically on Faculty scholarships, students should check the Faculty homepage for updated information. It was also suggested that a scholarships portal, to which staff could add links to external scholarships, would
be a good idea to produce so this information can be found easily and is updated regularly.

4. Issues Facing Minority Groups in IT – Ms Barbara Anglim

Ms Barbara Anglim is a part-time student in the BComp degree. She began by explaining that minority groups such as women in IT, low income earners and/or part-time students can face difficulties during their studies which include difficulty forming assignment groups and also not being able to afford the software or textbooks required. Ms Anglim also felt that, with short notice of assignments being due, it was hard to find enough time to complete the assignments because of part-time work commitments. Being unable to find suitable assignment partners often forced her to complete the assignments by herself. Dr David Squire suggested that lecturers form groups for assignments, at least in the early years of the degree, rather than allowing the students to choose groups themselves. This idea was agreed to be the better option. It was noted that the ability to communicate with a wide variety of people rather than work in groups of peoples own choosing was an important graduate attribute that should be aimed for. Mr Michael Shimmins and Mr Ben Carmichael both agreed as students that they would be happy with being allocated into a group by the lecturer, rather than choosing groups themselves. Ms Anglim also said that it was hard to afford the software needed for the unit; Dr David Squire said that lecturers should ensure that the software is affordable for the students and easy to access. This should also apply with text books; they should be available from the library and lecturers should ensure this is the case and that some are kept on Reserve.

5. Other Business

Mr Ben Carmichael completed CSE3208 UNIX Programming, CSE2030 Web Interface Technology and CSE3420 Developing Graphical WWW in Java in Semester 1, 2005. During this time, he felt that the workload for CSE2030 was far too high. He felt that the timeframe and the scope need to be looked at. Mr Jason Ceddia responded that he sets up the assignments to be reasonably hard, but passable, in order to challenge the students. Mr Ceddia said that he will look into the pass/credit level, as this unit is a core unit in the new BITS degree. Mr Ben Carmichael also commented that Jane his tutor for CSE3420 was excellent and always very helpful. Dr Chris Ling said he would pass these comments on. Mr Ben Carmichael also took this opportunity, his last student meeting, to thank Ms Dianne Hagan for all her help and assistance through his degree.

Mr Shimmins raised the unit content of CSE3210 Software Component Technology. It was originally outlined that the programming knowledge was expected, however for the first 7 weeks of the unit basic programming was covered and not until week 7 was the real unit content reached. Ms Hagan said as this unit will be part of an elective for the new BITS degree, the unit content can be looked into further and this issue can be addressed.

Meeting Closed 1.40pm