

Minutes of the meeting (CSE Teaching Committee Meeting 14/6) of the **COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TEACHING COMMITTEE** held at 1:30pm on **Friday, 19 September 2014**, in Room 103 (HoS Meeting Room), Computer Science Building.

Present AProf F Rabhi
Drs B Gaeta, H Guo, E Martin, J Shepherd, S Venugopal

Absent with Apologies Prof A Sowmya
AProfs R Buckland, M Pagnucco
Mr O Tan

Absent Prof J Xue
Dr A Blair

In Attendance Miss C Nock

Present / Quorum: 6 / 7
Attendance Rate: 7 / 13

1 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies from Maurice Pagnucco, Richard Buckland and Arcot Sowmya.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the CSE Teaching Committee Meeting 14/5 held on 22 August 2014 were confirmed and signed.

3 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

It appears that the new BE(Hons) stream progression rules will cause no problems for CSE majors.

4 TEACHING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Maurice Pagnucco will send a request to the School asking for volunteers to replace Malcolm Ryan and Arcot Sowmya as members of the CSE TC.

Some suggestions for encouraging people to join: offer lunch at TC meetings, give all members a free iPhone 6+.

Another possibility would be to change the TC constitution to reduce the number of academic staff representatives.

It was felt that a CSG representative is not required (and was not mentioned in the TC constitution in any case).

5 REPORTS FROM CHAIRS OF WORKING GROUPS

Neither of the Working Group chairs was present. JAS reported that the Core Syllabus group has been meeting, has had some robust discussion and seems to be making progress towards a final report and proposal. JAS was unaware of any activity by the Skills Syllabus (aka Program Outcomes) Working Group.

6 BENGSC, AND ITS STREAMS

JAS noted that the faculty had proposed a three-year BEngSc as an exit pathway for

underperforming students and now requires stream definitions for all of the streams in the BE(Hons). The streams need to be structured in such a way that students are in a position to graduate with a reasonable knowledge/skill set after completing 3 years of study under the BE(Hons). Stuart Upton has posted a set of guidelines for structuring BEngSc streams to members of the Faculty Education Committee. The will be sent to the Program Directors to check whether the existing BE(Hons) streams can be massaged via these rules to produce a viable BEngSc stream.

Bruno Gaeta noted that our current 4-year programs push the required Ethics course into the 4th year of the program. If the BEngSc has an Ethics requirement, we will need to change this. Similar considerations apply to the Gen Ed requirement.

Fethi Rabhi suggested that we needed to inform underperforming students early on (well before third year) that required transfer to the BEngSc was a possibility unless they improved.

JAS noted that the Faculty was intending to *also* use the BEngSc as a means of providing 5-year dual award Eng/Eng degrees (BE(Hons)/BEngSc). This does not seem compatible with its use as an exit-only program (note: nobody will be able to directly enrol into a single-degree BEngSc in first year). Cassandra Nock suggested that a double-major might be a simpler strategy to achieve qualification in two Engineering disciplines. Students can already do this by taking more courses than required (by the single degree).

7 ADVANCED MASTERS PROGRAM

Eric Martin tabled his revised Advanced Masters Program document. He noted that there had been little reaction to the proposal when it was mentioned at the recent School meeting. Eric described the overall strategy to developing the program and then there was a discussion, during which the following points were raised:

- what are the entry requirements? (CompSci/IT 4 year undergrad degree)
- but not all such degrees have equal coverage; if many courses rely on a particular core topic, and many students do not have the required background, would we then need to mount "semi advanced" courses to fill the gap? or would we end up reducing the "advanced"ness of the advanced courses
- who is the market for such a degree? Not internationals, who want a two-year masters. Locals with the right kind of background might be hard to find, and often such people might be more interested in direct entry to PhD than in taking an advanced masters. Perhaps for professional development, paid for by employers, but to cater for this cohort might then change the nature of the program?
- what should the degree be called? The name has to sound like it's a genuine advanced program, but if it's too broad (e.g. "Advanced Masters in Computing") then it starts to sound less "advanced".
- are majors feasible? Not likely. Given the wide spread of topics that will likely result from getting people to teach in their specific research area, it is difficult to see how a substantial focussed stream might arise.

Eric will revise the document to address the above and then release it to the School for wider consideration before implementation proceeds.

8 OFFERINGS OF CORE COURSES

JAS showed enrolment statistics that revealed an alarming jump in the size of some core courses (e.g. COMP2041 has 450 students in 14s2) since they were shifted to once-per-year offering.

Cassandra mentioned the difficulties in timetabling such large courses (lack of suitable-sized lecture theatres, problems booking so many lab slots); inevitably, two streams are required, which means that either one person has to take repeat lectures or each such course need two lecturers (to run simultaneous lecture streams).

Looking back at the old enrolments, the numbers between the two offerings were reasonably split, and even with reduced enrolments, no core course was not viable in any given semester, even if run twice per year.

JAS has mentioned in previous meetings the issue of progression being stymied for students who (a) fail anything, or (b) commence in s2, if core courses are only offered once-per-year.

Oliver Tan (student rep, who had to leave the meeting early) mentioned that students have been requesting (to the student reps) to have more offerings of core courses.

Cassandra Nock noted that UNSW was considering a substantial increase in fees (subject to deregulation) which might depress enrolment numbers substantially, so it was possible that the problem would go away "naturally". Of course, with increased fees there might be a demand for more course offerings to provide "better service".

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

JAS noted that the CSE proposals related to CompSci (3772) and CompSciEng (Hons) (4515, BINFBH) had passed through the Faculty Standing Committee this morning.

10 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 31st October (last day of semester).