

Minutes of the meeting (CSE Teaching Committee 15/2) of the **COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TEACHING COMMITTEE** held at 1:00pm on **Friday, 27 March 2015**, in Room 103 (HoS Meeting Room), Computer Science Building.

The meeting was moved to K17-401K because of building works in the HoS Meeting Room. The meeting was quorate (10/7). The minutes for the previous meeting (Feb 27) had not yet been prepared; minutes for the Feb 27 and Mar 27 meetings will be approved at the next TC meeting.

Present AProfs M Pagnucco, F Rabhi
Drs A Blair, B Gaeta, H Guo, E Martin, H Paik, J Shepherd, H Wu
Mr O Tan

Absent with Apologies Prof J Xue
AProf R Buckland
Miss C Nock

Present / Quorum: Not Set

Attendance Rate: 10 / 13

1 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Welcome Hui Wu and Helen Paik as members of the committee: Hui Wu as a staff rep, Helen Paik as 4th-year Thesis Coordinator. Cassandra Nock, Richard Buckland and Jingling Xue sent apologies.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3 REPORT FROM COMMITTEES NOT IN CSE

John Shepherd reported on some items from the last Engineering Programs Committee (EPC) meeting.

UNSW is trying to organise 3+1+2 undergraduate+masters degrees for students from good Chinese universities; 3 years in China, 1 year at UNSW, degree from Chinese Uni, subject to performance then get entry to 2 year UNSW Masters programs.

Academic Board (AB) is considering the rules on Recognition of Prior Learning. It looks like it will remain the case that you cannot receive a UNSW degree without studying for at least one year at UNSW (note: different to above 3+1 proposal).

AB is looking at grading. Plans to abolish PC and UF grades. Any mark below 50 will be a fail, although two new grades may be introduced: MP (Marginal Pass) for 50-54, MF (Marginal Fail) for 45-49.

There was also discussion about assessment methods at EPC. It seems that almost any scheme is acceptable, provided that it is communicated to students in the Course Outline (and then followed as stated there).

EPC will provide a document indicating what you can change about a Course/Stream/Program for it to be considered as a Minor Revision. Minor Revisions have a slightly streamlined workflow.

*4 4TH-YEAR THESES

Helen Paik reported that the structure of 4th-year Theses at Faculty level was ongoing. A document, discussed at the last TC meeting, gave *guidelines* for what submissions were required and how theses might be assessed. This roughly accords with current practice in CSE. The document also contained *policies* for dealing with late submissions and failure (repeating thesis A and/or B). These policies are mandated across the Faculty and may require some minor tweaking to our practices.

Helen reminded us of a point raised by Alan Blair at the previous meeting on whether external examiners (i.e. outside the School) were required. Helen indicated that this was not required.

Another meeting of the Faculty Thesis Working Group is scheduled for early May, and Helen will present a proposal with all of the details for how CSE handles theses at the next TC meeting.

***5 CORE SYLLABUS AND PROGRAMS**

John Shepherd tabled a document with possible program structures including the proposed CSE Core courses, compared to the existing program structures. A potential problem is that we notionally have only 4 "core" course currently, and the proposal has 5 "core" courses.

The Computer Science degree was largely uncontroversial, basically because of the large number of elective slots, some of which could absorb the extra "core" course.

There was some confusion as to whether COMP2041 would continue to exist under the new syllabus. Alan Blair thought that its content had been largely subsumed in the SE Fundamentals course. Andrew Taylor suggested that only part of COMP2041 was covered in the SE Fundamentals course, and the focus was quite different, so COMP2041 still has a role in the CSE curriculum.

Bioinformatics Engineering (BinfE) is problematic. Bruno Gaeta indicated that it would be very difficult to accommodate an extra course. Fethi Rabhi suggested that SENG1031 would be dropped once the SE Fundamentals course was introduced, and that solves one of the BinfE overload issues. Bruno indicated that there was pressure from Science to re-introduce a second chemistry course, which would make things even more difficult. He also indicated that Python was potentially useful for BinfE students.

During the BinfE discussion, Oliver Tan suggested that having Data Structures in first year was useful, since it helped students applying for work in the summer at the end of their first year. He also noted that most students prefer that CSE retains C as the language for the introductory course, and that COMP2041 was very popular.

Computer Engineering (CE) is crowded, but it is possible to fit the eight suggested courses into the first two years.

During this discussion, Oliver Tan queried why most CSE students needed to take both of MATH1131 and MATH1231. Potentially, we could request Maths to develop a special first-year Math syllabus for CSE students, although CE still needs to take both of these as background for their Physics and EE courses.

Software Engineering (SE) can accommodate the extra course, given that SE Fundamentals is replacing the first SENG1031 workshop, although SE students might take of the material in a different order.

Bruno Gaeta is concerned that it is simply not possible to accommodate an extra COMP course in the BinfE curriculum.

During further discussion on BinfE, Bruno Gaeta noted that Physics had been included to satisfy Eng Aust accreditation, and so could not be removed.

Andrew Taylor expressed concern that making the degrees more constrained might affect enrolments, particularly in BinfE and CE, which already have low enrolments. He also raised the issue of how this would fit with dual-award programs.

During the discussion, it was occasionally suggested that one of the Core courses could be omitted. The Committee was reminded that a fundamental principle in the design of the Core courses, is that they contain material that CSE believes *every* CSE graduate should know.

John Shepherd will make the document available to program directors, and has pointed them to the other material that Jingling has accumulated in the Working Group. They should consider this and give feedback to Jingling ASAP.

John Shepherd's Program Core Courses document:

<http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/~teachadmin/tc/meetings/2015/Mar/programs-with-new-core.html>

Jingling's Working Group documents:

<http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/~jingling/CSWG/>

6 EXTERNAL SITES USING CSE MATERIAL

John Shepherd queried whether sites such as coursehero.com, which copy CSE material and re-purpose it, are a problem.

Oliver Tan noted that many students upload material to sites like GitHub, not so much to assist copying assignments, but to build a portfolio of work. Andrew Taylor expressed that this was a perfectly legitimate use.

The concensus was that we have been dealing with issues like these for some time, and these new sites don't present any new "threat". The current practices of not re-cycling assignments and testing assignment-related material should suffice.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Oliver Tan asked if there were any questions we wanted added to the StuRep survey. Some questions about ownership and usage of personal laptops for doing CSE coursework will be added.

Maurice Pagnucco (MP) noted that the new labs in J17 were scheduled to be opened soon and queried whether students would mind if we didn't use their suggested names "in-SomeWord" (e.g. insane, inside).

MP mentioned some points from the Dean's Advisory Committee: changes to grading (no more PCs), changes to admission criteria, peer review of teaching (likely to be a policy that every academic is peer reviewed at least once every two years; useful for accreditation), ...