

1st Year Student Staff Liaison Committee

Thursday 1st March 2012, Room 4.14, Appleton Tower.

Attendees: Ewan Klein (Inf1 Course Organiser), Alex Simpson (Lecturer) Henry Thompson (Lecturer), Aurora Constantin (DA TA), Stephen Gilmore (OP Tutor) Daniel Renshaw (OP Tutor) Andrew Johnson (Class Rep, Inf1), Tanja Daub (Class Rep Inf1-CG), Patricia Dragan (Inf1 Class Rep)

Apologies: Mark McConville (TA)

Informatics 1: Data and Analysis

Overall the course feedback was positive. The Inf1-DA lectures are theoretical to begin with before moving on to practical aspects. The student reps suggested that the students very much enjoyed the practical exercises, and would prefer these were introduced earlier. However Alex Simpson explained the importance of covering the theoretical work first. Aurora Constantin felt the students were very engaged and enjoying the course.

Informatics 1: Object Orientated Programming

The response to the Inf1-OP lectures was positive. The lab exercises were well received and considered to be interesting.

The project and tutorial work received mixed feedback from the students. Meeting every 2 weeks was too infrequent and this was increased by some tutors to a weekly session. The groups which included java experienced students worked well. Those groups with only inexperienced students struggled. Avoiding this is difficult because of timetabling issues; all groups were initially balanced but moves inevitably took place. Stephen Gilmore felt the projects were perhaps too ambitious. Communication within groups was also poor with some students showing very low levels of participation. Henry Thompson suggested an "each one teach one" model with groups of 2, pairing the experienced with the inexperienced. Ewan Klein suggested that a more prescriptive project framework may be more successful.

Informatics 1: Cognitive Science

The Inf1-CG student reps reported that attendance at the lectures was considered by some students to be unnecessary. The lecture slides are online and the students felt very little extra was added to these in lectures.

The tutorials are discussion based and very well received; the students generally found them very enjoyable. The lab exercises involved working in pairs which some students found a hindrance.

The assignments were well received but the instructions for the second assignment were considered to be too long; it was suggested that a link to the essay writing guidance be included.

More support is needed for external students in accessing their DICE accounts. Henry Thompson suggested the link for computer support should be emailed to the class list at beginning of semester.

Maths Courses

The student reps have received several complaints regarding the Maths for Informatics courses both this semester and last semester. These courses use WebCT which frequently fails, leaving the students unable to access important materials. It was agreed that Kousha Etessami who is the Informatics liaison with maths should be contacted.

Innovative Learning Week: It was felt more use could have been made of innovative learning week; the programme was released late and not as comprehensive as it might have been. It was suggested that ILW could be assigned as a separate duty to a staff member. Planning ILW should work more closely with student societies and staff.