



## Clayton School of Information Technology Student/Staff Meeting

Meeting 1, 2014

Date and Location: Thursday March 27, 2014 at 2pm in Building 63 Room 115

---

### **PRESENT**

**Chair:** Graham Farr

**Assistant to Chair:** Amelia Morrison

#### STAFF

Marc Cheong  
Alan Dorin  
Julian Garcia  
Chris Gonsalvez  
Daniel Horsley  
Stephen Huxford  
Arun Konagurthu  
Carlo Kopp  
Michelle Leclair  
Mary Lim  
Ron Pose  
Rita Quieros  
Margot Schuhmacher  
Peter Tischer

#### STUDENTS

Michael Billington (BCS-3<sup>rd</sup> year)  
Yu-Wen (Becca) Chang (BCS-1<sup>st</sup> year)  
Neha Chopra (BBIS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Sharlene Davey (BBIS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Piyush Dhir (BSE-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Aaron Gruneklee (BCS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Anureet Kaur (BBIS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Dana (Da Hye) Lee (BBIS-3<sup>rd</sup> year)  
Andreas Limberopoulos (BSE-4<sup>th</sup> year)  
James Liu (BBIS-1<sup>st</sup> year)  
Sajeeb Lohani (BSE-1<sup>st</sup> year)  
John Nguyenhuy (BBIS-3<sup>rd</sup> year)  
Harshini Pannirselvam (BSE-4<sup>th</sup> year)  
Lokitha Sivakumaran (BSE-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Stefanie Yap (BSE-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Jack Zhang (BBIS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)

### **APOLOGIES**

#### STAFF

Josh Akerstein  
David Albrecht  
John Betts  
David Dowe  
David Squire

#### STUDENTS

Amanda Cheah (BBIS-1<sup>st</sup> year)  
Brett Dunn (BSE-1<sup>st</sup> year)  
Shubhi Kapoor (BBIS-2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Milena Mitic (BSE-3<sup>rd</sup> year)  
Josh Parnham (BCS-1<sup>st</sup> year)

### **1. WELCOME**

Graham commenced by thanking everyone for their attendance and one by one everyone around the room introduced themselves. He then confirmed that we would like to hear both positive and negative feedback from student representatives; we want to know about things that affect students experience at University.

## 2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

All matters arising from meeting 4, 2013, have been followed up on and completed.

## 3. UNIT FEEDBACK:

### SECOND YEAR UNITS

#### **FIT2001 Systems development** Chris Gonsalvez (CE)

Chris is a great lecturer, engaging. Tutes are interactive and tute solutions are available on Moodle, which is very good.

#### **FIT2003 IT professional practice** (Ann Nicholson (CE)) Josh Akerstein

Josh is a good lecturer. Videos are good, quizzes are good, and tutes are going well. Regarding clickers, FIT2003 is the only second year unit using them and students in second year feel they shouldn't have to buy them; they feel they should be provided by the Faculty. In class, Josh explained the reasoning behind the decision to ask students to buy their own clickers. It was felt that perhaps IT students are less willing to buy textbooks than students from other faculties, and this may be a part of the reason behind their displeasure at having to buy a clicker. Students would be more willing to buy a clicker if they needed to use it in more than one subject. Chris Gonsalvez noted that an increasing number of subjects are using clickers, and therefore students will soon need to use them in more than one subject at any one time.

Regarding clickers, it was mentioned that students who don't attend lectures, but listen to the recording of the lectures, may miss out on marks as they are not present in class to answer questions. Also, with one particular subject, if you don't have a clicker and don't participate in class, you can't receive 100% for the unit. However, for that subject, it's the only item students are required to purchase, (if they don't have a clicker already).

It was suggested that maybe the Faculty could subsidise clickers, rather than making students buy their own.

The overall feeling is that students enjoy using the clickers, and think they're fun. They enjoy the feedback they receive in class after using them.

Graham said it is early days in the use of clickers and how we use them is still evolving.

Finally, it was noted that ECE2041 has a web based, text based, answer system and therefore there is no requirement for clickers. This method works well.

**ACTION:** Graham Farr will report at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting regarding the decision to ask students to buy their own clicker.

#### **FIT2004 Algorithms and data structures** Reza Haffari (CE) Arun Konagurthu

Labs occur on Tuesdays and students find it hard to complete work on time for the next week. Arun stated that students have six days to complete work, and he feels this is enough time to get it done.

Lecture slides are from 1997. Arun said that some of the best material relating to this unit was taught between 1999 and 2006 and he is trying to make use of that. He continued, saying this is an algorithm subject and is about a way of thinking about algorithms; it is not specific to a programming language. He also noted that students are not provided with lab solutions every week, and this is done on purpose.

#### **FIT2006 Business process modelling and workflow** Yen Cheung (CE)

The lecturer is great, explanations are good, tutes are good and students are learning well. Some students would like more examples regarding the connection between theory and practice.

**FIT2017 Computer models for business decision making** John Betts (CE)

Can content, such as lecture slides, please be released earlier?

**ACTION:** Graham Farr will follow up with John Betts.

**FIT2024 Software engineering practice** (David Squire (CE)) Robert Merkel

No feedback.

**FIT2069 Computer architecture** Carlo Kopp (CE)

Lectures are great. Students have a problem with the tute solutions. There is no textbook, and students would like a textbook prescribed.

Carlo stated that there is a textbook, but it is not mandatory. Tutes are written around the lecture slides.

**FIT2081 Mobile application development** Stephen Huxford (CE)

Positive feedback regarding the lecturer, who is really engaging and makes the effort to explain concepts. Slides are complicated to follow. It would be good if he could explain both Scribble and Java, as many haven't studied Java before.

Stephen said this is the first time the unit has been delivered with Scribble as a pre-requisite. He has to go fast through the material to fit everything in. He felt that weeks' one to three were fine, but students have "hit a wall" in week four. Stephen mentioned he can cut down on the Android content if need be.

Stephen has put on four consultations prior to Monday and Tuesday tutes. Of the tute questions each week, students are encouraged to do questions one and two, have a go at question three and leave question four.

It was also noted that FIT1040 (a pre-requisite of FIT2081), needs looking at, as there are not enough tougher concepts taught in the unit. One student noted that FIT1040 is quite basic, and they would like it to be harder, and that students lose interest because Scribble is seen as an easier language. They also said that the units (FIT1040 and FIT2081) are not integrated properly and don't flow easily from one to the other.

Finally, students suggested making lab groups smaller, to make it easier for tutors to get around and help more students in class. Stephen encouraged students to come to the consultation sessions, as these will help their learning. Students also need to prepare for tutes and classes.

**ACTION:** Graham Farr to look at the Faculty's curriculum development program to possibly provide a better flow on from FIT1040 to FIT2081.

**FIT2083/FIT4005 Research methods in computer science** (Kim Marriott (CE)) David Green

No feedback.

<b>FIRST YEAR UNITS</b>
-------------------------

**FIT1006 Business information analysis** John Betts (CE)

John's lectures are interactive and very good. There has been positive feedback from students. Clickers are fun. It was noted that most students have completed 'Further Maths' in year 12 and would therefore like things to speed up.

**FIT1008 Introduction to computer science** David Albrecht (CE)

This is a hard subject, with a high work load. There is a big transition from FIT1040 to FIT1008. Graham understood, but stated that we need to get students to a certain level ready for second year units. Margot also

noted that this has been recognised as a difficult unit, which is why we have the PASS scheme. Unfortunately these sessions are not well attended by students. Marc Cheong said that students are not properly prepared for tutes.

#### **FIT1029 Algorithmic problem solving** (David Albrecht (CE)) Julian Garcia

Graham read the feedback received from Josh Parnham via email. Josh raised the following issues:

- When we're given time to solve puzzles during the lecture with our clickers, my friends and I have found that the 30 second time limit is usually far too short to be able to arrive at an answer.
- The desks in lecture theatre C1 fall down far too easily, almost every lecture it seems that someone drops all of the things onto the floor because their desk has accidentally receded back into the chair – I've almost dropped my laptop multiple times already because of this.
- I believe that the course content of FIT1029 presupposes too much knowledge about programming concepts, my friends who have no programming experience are really struggling already and I believe this unit should be taught after students have completed subjects like FIT1040. Alternatively, FIT1029 should spend much more time explaining fundamental things such as loops, conditionals, variables and other constructs before the first assignment.
- More emphasis should also be placed on explaining Pseudocode and how we should write it (with examples), preferably with a style guide of some description – I think it's all too vague at present for those who have had no programming experience.

Many students agreed with Josh's comment on the desks in C1.

Julian raised the issue of Pseudocode, and said he's heard the same feedback before. He has increased the Pseudocode he uses and also mentioned that students are expected to devote 12 hours of their own time to the unit. If students go through the available material they should have no problems. Other students confirmed Josh's comment that they don't know exactly what is expected of them.

The Pseudocode document provide by Julian, some students feel, is simplistic and not relevant to what is required in the unit. Julian remarked that students will need to go through a lot of Pseudocode themselves to understand the concepts.

There was very good feedback on the PASS sessions for this unit, and suggested considering PASS for more subjects.

#### **FIT1030 Introduction to business information systems** (John Betts (CE)) Poh Hong (Mary) Lim

Feedback was positive. Quizzes are helpful and the students love Mary. Some say the pace is fast and therefore hard to catch onto new concepts. However, some students think the pace is too slow and the class is falling behind. They suggested that clickers should be implemented throughout the lecture, not just at the end.

#### **FIT1040 Programming fundamentals** (Peter O'Donnell (CE)) Stephen Huxford

Students would like more practical work before assessments. There have been problems with the computers in labs in G18. It has taken students 5, 10, even 20 minutes to log into their computer account. Students would like more integration between FIT1029 and FIT1040.

#### **MAT1830 Discrete mathematics for computer science** Daniel Horsley (CE)

Positive feedback, the lecturer is engaging, however, tutes can be unstructured. Daniel asked if two hour tutes would be better? Students believe 1.5 hours would be best, as they normally miss the last question in tutorials, so an extra 30 minutes of tute time would be useful.

## THIRD YEAR UNITS

### **FIT3036 Computer science project** (Sid Ray (CE)) David Dowe, Alan Dorin

Good feedback. There are no complaints with either session.

### **FIT3042 System tools and programming languages** (Robert Merkel (CE)) Peter Tischer

Labs require lots of preparation for only 10% of the overall mark and students feel they need to be told to do more preparation before the labs. There is too much work to complete within the set time and there is a steep learning curve in this unit. Students do not like the exam being open book.

Some concepts are being taught too fast and some students find it hard to go through the concept of 'C'. Please release labs earlier.

**ACTION:** Graham Farr to discuss feedback with Peter Tischer.

### **FIT3047 Industrial experience project** (Peter O'Donnell (CE)) Stephen Huxford, Marc Cheong

No feedback.

### **FIT3063/FIT4063 Human-computer interaction** (Judy Sheard (CE)), Marc Cheong

Students are enjoying the subject. Some students are finding the flow of lectures is slowed by questions Marc asks, however Marc commented that he is following the format of teaching he used last year which students really liked.

### **FIT3077 Software engineering: architecture and design** David Squire (CE)

Students would like more contact hours to get feedback on their work. Perhaps more consultation hours would help. Students felt there was not enough feedback on assignment 1.

### **FIT3140 Advanced programming** Robert Merkel (CE)

There are many second year students doing this unit without programming knowledge. This makes it harder for them to understand the material being taught.

### **FIT3143 Parallel computing** (Carlo Kopp (CE)) Ron Pose

The lecturer is good, and there is enough time to complete the lab work. Carlo commented there is a range of students from different academic backgrounds taking this unit. The use of Moodle is low, and therefore students didn't find the assignment until late. Ron mentioned that although the assignment release was delayed, the due date was also extended. This happened because he wanted students to be better prepared before they were asked to do the assignment.

## FOURTH/FIFTH YEAR UNITS

### **FIT4002 Software engineering studio project** David Squire(CE)

It is the fourth week of semester and some students are yet to meet their clients. As a result, these groups haven't started any work yet. Also, some students haven't met their supervisor yet. Carlo observed that a part of this problem is at the clients end.

### **FIT4004/FIT5171 System validation and verification, quality and standards** (Robert Merkel (CE)) Chris Ling

It was felt there is a disconnect between the lecture slides and the assignment. A lot of outside learning has to be done, and there is a steep learning curve required. Robert makes it easy for students to work with the virtual environment.

**FIT4005/FIT5125/FIT5143/FIT2083 IT research methods** David Green (CE)

There is a lot of extra work taking this unit, which may be redundant? Could it possibly be done with the thesis? Graham noted that this unit is useful as it makes students aware of research methods in other disciplines. It encourages a breadth of learning.

**FIT4009 Advanced topics in intelligence systems** (David Dowe (CE)), Reza Haffari

No feedback.

**4. OTHER/GENERAL BUSINESS**

Graham read out general feedback received from Milena Mitic (from another student), via email. Her feedback was:

I'm concerned about the dumbing down of units that is slowly occurring in much of the I.T. faculty. People I know who have done units prior to me have learned far more than me from them as they used to be harder and contain more knowledge. While I understand that some people have trouble, it would be nice to have the option to take these extra steps if desired.

Graham asked everyone at the meeting for their feedback on this comment. Carlo mentioned that he has offered to provide slides and lecture notes to students so they can extend their knowledge. It was also noted that sometimes students do units in the 'wrong' order and this makes things harder for them. As a response, the lecturer has to amend how they teach the unit, in order to cater to student needs. Graham also observed that sometimes students who gain credit for a unit can be at a disadvantage and find it harder, as they may not have undertaken all the required pre-requisite knowledge in their previous study.

Graham concluded by thanking everyone for their time and for their feedback.

Meeting closed at: 3.00pm

Next meeting date: 15 May 2014, at 2pm