Chairman: Prof Alan Mycroft   Secretary: Mrs Fiona Billingsley

Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee held on Tuesday 28 October 2008 in GC22 in the William Gates Building

Present: Prof Alan Mycroft   Dr Alastair Beresford   Dr Simon Moore
             Prof Larry Paulson   Prof Andy Pitts   Dr Simone Teufel
             Dr Ian Wassell   Mrs Fiona Billingsley

             Also in attendance was Dr David Greaves to speak on Item 5 d)

1. Apologies for absence
An apology was received from Dr Frank Stajano and Ms Lise Gough.

STANDING ITEMS

2. Sabbatical leave and substitute teaching
It was noted that AM has been granted sabbatical leave in Michaelmas 2009 and Lent 2010 Terms. It also appears likely that Richard Gibbens, Markus Kuhn and SHT will be on leave during 2009-10. AMP and LCP intend to take leave in 2010-2011.   The teaching capacity survey suggests there should be no problem with arranging substitute teaching for courses taught by these members of staff.
AM was actioned to email the Wednesday group to request UTOs notify him of their intention to apply for sabbatical to assist the committee in planning teaching provision.

3. Review of course feedback
Nothing to report.

4. Review of staff-student consultative committee minutes
Nothing to report.

5. Revision of the Tripos
a) Revision of Part IB for 2009-10
The Committee considered a draft structure for Part IB exam papers for 2010 (TC0809/01). AM proposed the committee provisionally appoint a stream manager to each exam paper to consider the knock-on effects from changes made to Part IA. It was agreed that: AM manage Paper 3; FMS manage Paper 4; SWM manage Paper 5 and; AMP manage Paper 6. It was agreed that there is too much material in Part IB and that it should be reduced to allow more scope for practical work.

b) Should Part IB be allowed as a 4th year following three years of another Tripos?
The Committee agreed that Part IB should not be allowed as a 4th year option following three years of another Tripos.
AM reported he'd received correspondence from the Academic(?) Board regarding a proposed change to University Regulations. The proposal requires students to have read Part II in order to be awarded an Honours degree.

c) Possible Part III – the part III maths model.
The Mathematics Department is in the process of changing the name of its Part III course to M.Mathematics. It was agreed that we should wait to see how it works out before we attempt to use the Part III maths model with our new M.Phil in Advanced Computer Science.

d) Are we teaching enough parallel programming?
David Greaves reported that up until recently, some elements of parallel programming had been taught in the Part IB Concurrent Systems and Applications course and in the Part II course Advanced Systems Topics by Keir Fraser and Tim Harris. The Committee agreed that it is crucial to keep the curriculum up-to-date and that there is a need to investigate reshaping the undergraduate course to reflect this, perhaps in changing the Concurrent Systems and Applications course and introducing a new Part II course. SWM reported that Intel had given the Computer Laboratory some money to buy new machines (*Alan please insert technical description here*) for the teaching laboratory, and so there is scope for a practical component to be included in the restructuring of Part IB.

6. Development of the new MPhil in Computer Science
Nothing to report

7. Liaison with the MPhil in CSTIT
Nothing to report

8. Proposals for new courses, significant changes to courses, and removal of courses
Nothing to report

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

9. Teaching Capability Survey
The preliminary results of the teaching capacity survey (TC0809/02) are encouraging in that they suggest there should be no problem with finding staff to provide teaching cover for sabbatical leave.
Having recently visited MIT's Computer Science Department, ARB reported that its model of undergraduate teaching provision is quite different to ours. At MIT, each course equivalent to our Part IA and most IB courses has two lecturers responsible for its development and delivery, and there is also an integrated practical side to each course. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of introducing a similar system, and agreed that having a designated back-up person who can step in at the last minute to teach a Part IA or IB lecture would be very useful.

10. Plagiarism
It was noted that the General Board requires each Faculty Board to issue its own discipline-specific guidance on plagiarism which is accessible to students and staff on the departmental web site (TC0809/03). It was agreed that some of the content on Chemical Engineering Department's website pertaining to plagiarism could be incorporated into the Computer Laboratory's webpage, along with text in the CST Part II project "Pink Book".

It was agreed that SHT will investigate whether the Turnitin software could be useful to the MPhil course.

11. Student Satisfaction Survey
The General Board's Education Committee requested the Teaching Committee consider the results and student comments received through the 2008 National Student Survey (TC0809/04). It was noted that only 14 student comments had been received regarding the Computer Science Tripos, and that this was not a statistically significant number of responses. A main issue raised by the survey data is that students aren't provided with enough opportunity to develop their presentation skills. The Committee noted this and will endeavour to incorporate more presentation-orientated tasks into future course revisions.

12. Exam answer comparison
The Committee considered a summary of examination question attempts and marks for Papers 3-13 in 2008 (TC0809/05). It was noted that a few unpopular courses remain, including Mathematical Methods for Computer Science in Papers 3 and 4, and Concepts in Programming Languages in Papers 5 & 6. However courses which historically have been unpopular, such as Semantics of Programming Languages, received an encouraging increase in the number of responses.

13. Problem sheets to accompany lecture notes
In February, the Committee approved NAD's proposal (TC0809/06) that all lecturers provide problem sheets for their courses, and there had since been a discussion about it at the Wednesday meeting. However, it was noted that no mechanism had been put in place to ensure it was happening. It was suggested that Student Administration keep a record of those who have provided a problem sheet. (Nothing agreed?)

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

10. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
The minutes were agreed and signed.

11. Any matters arising not already dealt with
ARB asked the Committee whether they would be happy for a few 2nd and 3rd year students to be employed as java demonstrators next term for Part IA practicals. The Committee gave its approval on the proviso that the **students were not assessing student work, and that the students' Director of Studies were in agreement.**

12. Dates of future meetings
25 November at 4pm in GC22
16 December at 2:15pm in GC22
27 January at 2:15pm in GC22
17 February at 2:15pm in GC22
17 March at 2:15pm in GC22
20 April at 2:15pm in GC22
19 May at 2:15pm in GC22
16 June at 2:15 in GS15