



## **Unconfirmed Minutes**

### **DEPARTMENTAL STAFF STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (DSSCC)**

#### **Undergraduate Programmes (Term 2.1)**

27 January 2021, at 14:00, via Microsoft Teams

#### **Committee Secretary:**

Ms Louisa Ball

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#### **Present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Abbrev.</b>	<b>Role</b>
Zvezdin Besarabov	ZB	Course Rep for MEng Computer Science (Year 2)
Kevin Bryson	KB	Chair of DSSCC; Programme Director: BSc/MEng Computer Science
Rajesh Goyal	RG	Course Rep for MEng Computer Science (Year 3); Lead Department Representatives
Lewis Griffin	LG	Departmental Tutor
Steve Hailes	SH	ENGF0002 - Module Lead (for CS); Head of Department
Robin Hirsch	RH	Programme Director: MEng Mathematical Computation
Bangti Jin	BJ	Undergraduate Year Coordinator (Year 4)
Minyi Lei	ML	Course Rep for BSc Computer Science (Year 1)
Giacamo Livan	GL	Undergraduate Year Coordinator (Year 2)
Sergey Mechtaev	SM	Undergraduate Year Coordinator (Year 3)
Raghib Mirza	RM	Course Rep for BSc Computer Science (Year 3)
Zak Morgan	ZM	Course Rep for MEng Computer Science (Year 4)
Graham Roberts	GR	Departmental Welfare Tutor / Undergraduate Year Coordinator (Year 1)
Clarissa Sandejas	CS	Course Rep for BSc Computer Science (Year 1)
Abhiram Sasitharan	AS	Course Rep for MEng Mathematical Computation (Year 2)

**In attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Abbrev.</b>	<b>Role</b>
Louisa Ball	LB	Secretary to DSSCC
Jo Stiles	JS	Teaching and Learning Manager
Nicholas Smith	NS	Teaching and Learning Administrator (Undergraduate)
David Howells	DH	Senior Teaching & Learning Administrator (QA and Projects)

**Apologies:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Abbrev.</b>	<b>Role</b>
Elizabeth Awad	EA	Departmental Student Success Advisor (Year 1)
Ali Reyazat	AR	Course Rep for BSc Computer Science (Year 2)

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

KB welcomed everyone to the third Undergraduate DSSCC meeting of the 2020/21 academic year, and first meeting of Term 2.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Received: The minutes of the meeting held on 02 December 2020.

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes****i) Minute 3.1 Concerns regarding ENGF0001: Engineering Challenges**

KB noted that at the previous meeting there was an action agreed for LA to alert the Student Success Advisor for Year 1 students in the Electronic and Electrical Engineering (EEE) department of the high level of non-engagement among EEE students in group work in the module ENGF0001 Engineering Challenges. LA had sent apologies for the current meeting and as such the confirmation of whether this action had been carried out was deferred to the next meeting.

SH noted that the concerns raised by Computer Science students in a previous DSSCC meeting had been raised directly with the teaching team for the module and a meeting was later held with the students to discuss them; subsequent additional support was put in place and was very well received.

SH acknowledged the ongoing concerns regarding non-engagement by some students in some groups and the additional burden this placed on other group members, particularly where they may have individually taken on additional work as a result. SH confirmed that the teaching team for the module would meet in the following few days to review the challenges still present in the module in respect of group working; an update could be expected on the outcomes of the meeting in the week beginning Monday 8 February.

ii) Minute 3.ii – Student Rep Moodle pages

KB noted that at the previous meeting there was an action agreed for the Year 3 coordinator, SM, to set up a Virtual Common Room (VCR) for Year 3 students.

SM confirmed that this had been carried out.

RG noted that the Year 3 VCR had been fairly well used by students since its inception; RG was currently investigating whether it was possible to create groups within module cohorts for students to communicate within. This may facilitate another useful means of communication for students.

GR noted that the Year 1 VCR was not well used.

CS noted that the Computer Science Gather.town space was well used by Year 1 students to socialise together and it was working well; this was particularly the case during the new weekly timetabled social hour.

iii) Minute 4. Student feedback and actions

Year 1; Timetabling issues in COMP0002: Principles of Programming

KB noted that at the previous meeting there was an action agreed for JS to investigate and resolve timetable issues in COMP0002 Principles of Programming.

JS confirmed that this was resolved to the best of their knowledge. Any further timetabling issues in this or any other module should be raised with JS.

Year 3; Negative Marking in Multiple-Choice assessments

KB noted that at the previous meeting a query was raised regarding the use of negative marking in Multiple Choice Quiz assessments in COMP0017 Computability and Complexity Theory; a thread on the same issue was also since opened on Unitu. At the previous meeting an action was agreed for LG to query whether the application of negative marking contravenes UCL Academic Regulations or Faculty Marking Policy.

LG noted that they had queried the use of negative marking in assessment with the Faculty Tutor, who confirmed that the practice did not contravene UCL Academic Regulations or Faculty Marking Policy; it was also confirmed that the Faculty did not hold any specific view on the use of negative marking in assessment.

RG noted that the initial query raised had related to concerns from within the Year 3 cohort that negative marking in the particular assessments in question were detracting credits achieved for correct answers in some questions. Specifically, it was perceived that questions whereby there was only one correct answer in a list resulted in an overall negative mark for the question if answered incorrectly. RG raised the issue on behalf of the concerned students in their year group, and specifically to query whether the department held concerns over the use of negative marking in this way as a general principle.

LG noted that currently there was no overall concern regarding the use of negative marking nor inclination to implement any rules pertaining to use of this method of

assessment more widely. Academic research on the pedagogical value and/or effects of negative marking was mixed.

RH noted, as the Module Lead for COMP0017 Computability and Complexity Theory, that the specific assessments being discussed represented a small weighting of the overall module mark and a very small weighting overall for students in respect of their overall degree award. Moreover, the marking system in place for the assessments was deemed to be a fair one and the concerns raised did not appear to align with the possible outcomes according to the marking pattern/rubric that was implemented. Any Year 3 students that continued to have concerns regarding the marking for the assignment should raise these to the COMP0017 Computability and Complexity Theory Moodle forum; RH would address all concerns raised.

**Action – RH to respond to all concerns raised regarding negative marking in the COMP0017 Computability and Complexity Theory Moodle forum.**

#### Use of Zoom polls in live lectures

KB noted that at the previous meeting there was an action agreed for LG to feed back to all Module Leads that students would benefit from content related questions being posed through Zoom polling during live lectures.

LG confirmed that this had been done and that some academic staff within the department were engaging with the suggestion.

KB noted that the Echo 360 platform also offered the functionality to staff to pose interactive questions during lectures.

#### Year 3; Coursework deadline for COMP0169 Machine Learning for Visual Computing

KB noted that at the previous meeting there was an action agreed for the Year 3 Coordinator, SM, to contact the Module Lead for COMP0169 Machine Learning for Visual Computing to request that the deadline for the recently released coursework assessment was announced to students.

SM confirmed that this was carried out and no further concerns had been raised by Year 3 students.

iv) Minute 12. Any other business

Student Rep and Year Coordinator Meetings

KB noted that at the previous meeting the committee had briefly discussed Year Coordinator meetings; there was an action agreed for Year Coordinators to contact Student Reps before the end of Term 1 to check whether a Student Rep and Year Coordinator meeting was required, unless this had already been requested.

It was concluded through discussion that the most pressing student concerns had been resolved following Year Coordinator meetings that took place in Reading Week in November 2020; no subsequent meetings had been required in Term 1.

LG confirmed that they and JS had also met with all Student Reps at the beginning of Term 2.

#### **4. Student Feedback and Actions**

4.1) ENGF0001: Engineering Challenges - Ongoing concerns regarding non-engaging team members

ML reported concerns regarding the marking of assessments in ENGF0001: Engineering Challenges, specifically that there was no recourse for students within groups that contained non-active or less active members, in respect of marks achieved. All students in the group received the same mark regardless of the effort extended or the quality of any contributions made and some students in some groups had therefore worked harder to compensate for low effort or poor contributions on the part of other students, who still ultimately benefitted from the shared overall mark. Ultimately, some

students had carried out a great deal of work but perceived they had received a lower mark than they deserved because of the poor contribution of other team members.

SH acknowledged the concerns raised; the issues raised were commonly found in group related assessments across undergraduate study and within other modules that contained group-based assessments. It was likely that the remote working nature of undergraduate study in the current academic year had also further exacerbated and exaggerated what were common issues in group based assessment.

It was noted through discussion that the division and weighting of marks associated with individual contributions to group related assessments and to the collective output of the group must be appropriately balanced so as to both encourage adequate engagement by all group members and to meet the learning outcomes for the assessment. Different approaches to achieving such a balance between group and individual marks were in place across many modules within the department.

GR noted within the module COMP0016 Systems Engineering group size was intentionally capped at three members to discourage disengagement by individual members. Module Tutors also routinely monitored engagement of individuals across groups and were quick to intervene where non-engagement was identified. The module utilised a '100 points' system which required students to collectively agree on the allocation of 100 points to individual group members as representation of the effort individuals had made to the collective group output. It was acknowledged that this method may not prevent students agreeing to a lower number of 'points' than they were entitled to due to not wanting cause their friends to receive a lower mark, however significant mismatches between 'points' allocated and the individual contributions evident in the work itself would be identifiable by Module Tutors.

RG noted that they had fed back in the previous academic cycle that increasing the weighting of marks for individual contributions to group-based assessments would have the effect of reducing incidents of non-engagement; where the marks allocated to individual contributions would materially affect the overall module mark if failed or if a low mark was achieved, students would be less likely to disengage.

SH thanked the committee for their feedback and would ensure the matters raised would be brought to the upcoming review of the ENGF0001 Engineering Challenges module and its associated assessment and marking by the ENGF0001 teaching team.

**Action – SH to attend the upcoming review of the ENGF0001 Engineering Challenges module and its associated assessment and marking by the ENGF0001 teaching team and raise the concerns discussed at the DSSCC on 27 January.**

#### 4.2 Concerns over technical issues during exam period

RG noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 3 cohort that some students would be unable to travel to the UCL campus during Term 3 (i.e. the Main Summer Examination period) and had unreliable access to a strong internet connection. In some cases students had little or no access to appropriately sophisticated technology to carry out examinations. This was a significant cause for concern for those affected in respect of main examinations as these were time sensitive assessments. UCL offered some funding support schemes and loanable laptops to students however these schemes were means tested or available only to UK-based students.

LG clarified that Main Summer examinations would be carried out over a minimum of 24 hours; students would be able to download and complete all examinations at a time of their choosing within a given 24-hour window. Additionally, a large number of assessments were coursework based and students were given a number of weeks to complete them. It was hoped therefore that for most students the timescales given for their assessments would go a long way towards helping them to navigate completing and submitting the work around their own specific hardware set ups or strength of internet connection. That said, it was acknowledged that there may be cases where significant technical issues may prevent a student being able to perform well, or at all, in their assessments. In such cases students must submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim; appropriate mitigation for technical issues that affect a Written Examination that takes place in a 24-hour window would be deferral to the next assessment opportunity.

LG noted that any students who were concerned that their own hardware set up and/or reliability of access to an internet connection would cause disruption in the Main Examination period or affect their ability to carry out assessment were encouraged to



attend the Departmental Tutor office hour, which took place at 8:00am (UK time) every Monday (within term time), to raise this for the Departmental Tutor's attention.

#### 4.3 Timely upload of lecture content

CS noted that in the module COMP0012 Compilers recordings of live lectures would often not be uploaded prior to the next live lecture taking place. Where students had been unable to attend the most recent live lecture it was disruptive to their learning if they could not then access the recording before the next lecture; students were falling behind in the module as a result. The Module Lead had expressed that they believed that it was mandatory to carry out all recording of lecture content via Lecturecast.

ZM noted that the uploading of lecture recordings in the module COMP0103 Validation and Verification had been similarly delayed and had caused disruption to students' learning.

LG clarified that some Module Leads teaching modules in Term 2 were carrying out remote teaching for the first time, and it was possible some were not yet aware of good or best practice in respect of recording lectures and uploading content.

**Action – LG to remind Module Leads to ensure that recordings of live lectures were uploaded to Moodle sufficiently in advance of the next scheduled live lecture.**

#### 4.4 Uploading slides ahead of lectures

RG noted that in the module COMP0019 Computer Systems lecture slides were often not uploaded in advance of live lectures taking place. The matter of Module Leads not uploading slides sufficiently early enough or at all was also raised in two UG DSSCC meetings in the 2019/20 academic cycle.

CS noted that, similarly, in the module COMP0012 Compilers lecture slides were not uploaded in advance of live lectures taking place. This had continued despite that students had requested to the Module Lead directly that they upload slides in advance.

KB noted that the uploading of slides to Moodle in advance of lectures was mandated in many modules due to this being a very common reasonable adjustment put in place for any students who had worked with UCL Student Disability Services to draw up and agree a formal Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SoRA).

GR encouraged students to remind lecturers at the start of live lectures if they had not uploaded the slides in advance; in some cases the Module Lead may have forgotten and the matter can be rectified quickly in that case.

**Action - LG to remind Module Leads that they must upload lecture slides to Moodle in advance of live lectures taking place.**

#### 4.5 Access to examinable essential reading

RG noted that in the module COMP0019 Computer Systems a piece of examinable essential reading was not available for students to access or download on the UCL Library Explore online resource. The textbook could be purchased by students but students felt that an examinable text should ideally be provided through UCL sources.

LG clarified that there was no college level rule or regulation which mandated that students should not be required to purchase required reading for any individual modules or for their degree programme. Indeed, it was commonplace on some degree programmes that to access required reading students would be required to purchase one or more textbooks. That said, Module Leads were responsible for ensuring that they regularly updated the Module Reading Lists held by the UCL Library Services team, and for making requests to UCL Library Services for the acquisition of appropriate license(s) to access required reading. Students could directly lobby individual Module Leads to request that required reading be made accessible via UCL Library Explore.

**Action – RG to contact the Module Lead for COMP0019 Computer Systems to request that they formally request the UCL Library Services team procure access to all required and examinable reading for the module.**

#### 4.6 Setting coursework before appropriate content is covered

ZM noted that in the module COMP0119 Acquisition and Processing of 3D Geometry the Module Lead had released a coursework assessment relating to lecture material that was subsequently then not covered in lectures as planned. Students were expected to review appropriate material in their own time instead, however many were unaware or had not done so in anticipation that it would get covered in lectures at a later time. This wasn't raised directly with the Module Lead as many students in the cohort had initially assumed they had misunderstood the Module Lead's instructions or had missed a related announcement. ZM queried whether there was any departmental policy which stated that lecturers must cover all relevant content prior to any assessment which then draws on it being released to students.

LG clarified that there was not a policy that mandated relevant content must be covered in lectures before related assessments were then released to students; many Module Leads opted to release coursework assessments early in the module with a view to helping students with organising their time across their modules. It would not be advantageous to prevent Module Leads from releasing coursework assessments earlier than they then subsequently taught the relevant content. Students should direct any queries related to assessment or taught content on modules to the Module Lead in the first instance.

#### 4.7 General student feedback

##### Year 1

##### Engagement with study

CS noted that the engagement of students in Year 1 had remained very strong in Term 2 so far. In particular, students engaged well with the social hour; this was beneficial overall for helping students to feel engaged with their studies. CS noted that they actively observed the number of attendees to live lectures and that this was consistently over 100. CS had received feedback that students in the Year 1 cohort experienced less loneliness overall, as compared to Term 1.

CS noted that they had received feedback from within the cohort that there was an overall preference for moving the social hour slightly later on its current allocated day.

**Action – CS to contact the Departmental Tutor, LG, directly to suggest an alternative time for the Year 1 weekly Social Hour.**

#### COMP0012 Compilers

ML noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 1 cohort that students found the module COMP0012 Compilers challenging.

#### COMP0005 Algorithms; Group allocations

ML noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 1 cohort that some students held reservations that issues of non-engagement within allocated groups in the module COMP0005 Algorithms might arise. This was particularly a concern following concerns having been raised regarding non-engagement in some groups in the module ENGF0001 Engineering Challenges.

KB reassured the Student Reps that the Module Lead, Licia Capra, and the Teaching Assistants assisting with the delivery of the module were closely and actively monitoring engagement within groups, and any arising issues would be identified and resolved quickly.

### Year 2

#### 'No-Detriment' Policy for the 2020/21 academic cycle

ZB noted they had received feedback from within the Year 2 cohort that there was concern among students that the 'No-Detriment' package due to be announced shortly by the college would not go far enough to adequately support all students. It was felt that all students had been affected in some way by the overall continuation of remote-only learning, whereby the information received to date appeared to emphasise that individuals particularly affected would be able to seek recourse.

LG reassured Student Reps that fuller and more informative communications were expected to be sent to students by the college by Friday 5 February. It was confirmed that the 'No-Detriment' package being formulated would support the progression and awarding of students, whilst simultaneously protecting the value of their degree(s). LG confirmed that the 'No-Detriment' package would not include an option to exclude any modules from students' Weighted Year Average, Classification or Overall Award Mark.

### Year 3

#### Remote learning in Term 2

RM noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 3 cohort that many students were affected by low motivation overall, however this was not specifically related to any UCL or departmental matters.

Overall students had fed back that they felt better able to keep up with course content in the current academic year due to all course content being available online and accessible at all times, as compared to previous academic cycles where teaching was campus based.

LG thanked RM for their feedback and noted that it was reassuring to hear that overall students had benefitted in significant ways from the remote nature of teaching in the current academic cycle. It was strongly anticipated that as teaching would gradually return to campus in some form there would be retention of some elements of remote teaching as used in the current year. LG also noted that Dr Chris Evans would shortly lead a survey aimed at canvassing student opinion and feedback on the provision of remote teaching in the current academic year with a view to determining what worked well.

#### Personal Tutoring

RM noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 3 cohort that many students had benefitted positively from having their Individual Project Supervisor allocated as their Personal Tutor for the current academic year. In particular, shy students that might normally not have felt able to approach their Personal Tutor to

request a reference for a Masters degree application had now developed a good working relationship with them due to having them as their Individual Project Supervisor.

### Use of graphic tablets in problem classes

RG noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 3 cohort that module-specific problem classes whereby the Teaching Assistant (TA) was able to utilise a Graphic Tablet to work through problems visually worked much better than classes where that technology wasn't available. Specifically, where Graphic Tablets were not used TAs were not able to cover as much material in the same amount of time. It was perceived that the biggest differences in quality of different problem classes was linked to the lack of Graphic Tablets. RG queried whether the department could take steps to equip all TAs with Graphic Tablets for problem classes to enable them to be more productive and run better. The cost of a single Graphic Tablet was around £50.00.

It was agreed through discussion that problem classes run to date would cover more content overall and run more efficiently where either an overhead webcam was available (which could broadcast handwritten work-throughs of problems by TAs to a high quality) or where a Graphic Tablet was used. Problem classes which were run without an overhead webcam or Graphic Tablet (i.e. where the TA would draw/write using a computer mouse) were particularly less engaging and covered less content. Students' overall preference was for Graphic Tablets to be used. Other methods available for broadcasting handwritten problem solving were whiteboard cameras, and software which updates frames only when it detects that there is not a hand present on screen.

LG thanked the Student Reps for their feedback and confirmed that they were supportive of Graphic Tablets being purchased for this purpose, however, it was not within their gift to make arrangements for this for all modules. Some Module Leads teaching modules in Term 2 were carrying out remote teaching for the first time, and it was possible some were not yet aware of good or best practice in respect of remotely delivered problem classes. Where students had identified that improvements could be made to problem classes this should be fed back directly to Module Leads, in particular alerting them to methods used in other classes.

### Late lectures in COMP0019 Computer Systems

RG noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 3 cohort that many students resided in time zones that required them to stay awake until 3am local time to watch live lectures. In particular, lectures in the module COMP0019 Computer Systems were scheduled to finish at 6.30pm (UK time) and then these would often over-run to 7pm (UK time). Whilst it was acknowledged that lectures were recorded and were accessible online to those unable to attend live lectures, the live lectures in that module in particular were very engaging; students unable to view the lectures live would be missing a very positive aspect of the module by not viewing lectures as they happened.

LG acknowledged the concerns raised and clarified that the formulation of the timetable was carried out in part with consideration of the self-reported availability of the lecturer. Students were encouraged to alert the Module Lead directly of the issues raised and additionally to complete the Module Evaluation Questionnaire for the module and articulate those concerns there.

### Year 4

#### Remote learning in Term 2

ZM noted that students in the Year 4 were affected by low motivation overall, however students had adapted well to remote learning generally and most were very busy following their taught modules and undertaking their Individual Project. Attendance to live lectures had declined overall. An issue was raised regarding the timetabled weekly social hour such that it did not appear in some students' timetables. This was now rectified, however the social hour was not well used overall; many students engaged in sufficient social interaction through their respective group project assessments instead and would also connect with other students in their modules to discuss coursework assessments.

#### Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs)

ZM noted that they had observed that questions in the standardised Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) used to survey students regarding their taught modules would

benefit from wider response scales. Specifically, overall, the surveys were designed to prompt students to report issues or problems, and in its current format it did not allow students to indicate very high positive scores. Students were able to include free text at the end of the survey, however resulting data would be more difficult to process.

LG thanked ZM for their feedback. The feedback that wider response scales would be beneficial would be taken into consideration when the surveys were reviewed later in the year.

## **5. Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC)**

RG had attended two Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC) meetings since the previous Departmental Staff Student Consultative Committee (DSSCC) had taken place, as the Undergraduate Lead Department Representative. These took place on Wednesday 9 December 2020 and Wednesday 20 January 2021.

### Wednesday 9 December 2020

RG noted that several matters had been raised and discussed by the DTC which took place on Wednesday 9 December 2020 that related to or impacted undergraduate level study, specifically:

- 1) Two modules only (COMP0009 Logic and Database Theory and COMP0017 Computability and Complexity Theory) would have a 2-hour completion window implemented in the Main Summer Examination. This meant students could access the assessment at any time during the 24-hour examination window, but must then complete it within 2 hours of doing so.
- 2) Improvements to the facilitation of networking among students were noted, specifically, the newly implemented weekly timetabled social hour, and the commissioning of online mega-games for all students.
- 3) It was discussed that some Year 3 modules held a long set of learning outcomes which were then not necessarily being met during the course of the running of the



module, and that a possible route to rectifying the situation would be to split the modules in question into one or more separate modules.

### Wednesday 20 January 2021

RG noted that the several matters had been raised and discussed by the DTC which took place on Wednesday 20 January 2021 that related to or impacted undergraduate level study, specifically:

- 1) Recent work carried out to better facilitate communication between the department and its Student Reps and students was highlighted, specifically, the weekly Teaching and Learning drop-in, the implementation of drop-in sessions for all modules and the inclusion of these on student timetables, and the carrying out of meetings between departmental staff and Student Reps.
- 2) Improvements to the process of allocation of students to projects and supervisors for the COMP0029/COMP0138 Individual Project module was noted. Specifically, this was overhauled for the current cycle and overall it was felt that this had been a positive change that ensured that staff and students were better catered for in respect of project allocation.
- 3) Improvements to the Personal Tutoring process in the current academic cycle were noted. Work was ongoing to improve the process. Positive feedback has been received from both staff and students.
- 4) Improvements to timeliness of marking and feedback return for assessments run across the department were noted. In the current academic cycle, Module Leads were routinely reminded and prompted to return feedback in a timely manner, by Teaching and Learning staff.

ZM noted that they had received feedback from within the Year 4 cohort that some students would prefer to have input and choice in respect of their individual project allocation; some students perceived that the allocation of their project was a “lottery”.

The committee agreed through discussion that it would be beneficial to survey the current final year students regarding the process of allocation of students to projects and supervisors in the current cycle, and how they believe this went.

## **6. Report from Faculty-level Meetings**

No matters raised.

## **7. Programme Delivery**

### 8.1 Teaching and Learning

No matters raised.

### 8.2 Assessment and Feedback

No matters raised.

### 8.3 Organisation and Management

RG queried when the Examination Timetable would be released to students.

DH confirmed that currently it was anticipated that the Examination Timetable would be made available to students on or after Monday 1 March.

### 8.4 Learning Resources

No matters raised.

## **8. Inclusivity**

### 8.1 Update from Chair of Departmental Athena Swan Chair

KB noted that GR was the acting Chair of the Departmental Athena Swan committee and would provide an update to the committee on the department's recent activity in the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

GR noted that the Department of Computer Science carried out a great deal of work on a continual basis to achieve gender equality amongst professional and support staff and trans staff and students. Recently, the department was awarded a Silver Athena Swan Award, and would be pursuing a Gold Athena Swan Award in the next round of applications. Currently the department was carrying out work to establish a dedicated committee for matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), for which student contributors were being sought. Any students who were motivated to contribute to work in this area were strongly encouraged to contact GR directly to discuss.

ZM queried whom was the appropriate contact for ideas relating to gender equality and equality, diversity and inclusion.

LB clarified that GR would be very receptive to all ideas relating to these areas and students should feel encouraged to make direct contact with them.

CS noted that funding and support was available for student projects focused on addressing the 'BAME Awarding Gap', via UCL ChangeMakers.

KB thanked GR for their update and the Student Reps for their feedback.

## **9. Good practice**

### Student Rep Moodle pages

LB noted they had been contacted by a member of staff in the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering (EEE) regarding the Student Rep Moodle pages currently in use by students in Computer Science; specifically they had identified it as an initiative that would benefit students in the EEE department and planned to emulate the practice. It was to be commended that a Computer Science student-led initiative had been observed by another department as good practice and that it would be emulated elsewhere.

## **10. Any other business**

### 10.1 Incentivising individuals to complete the National Student Survey (NSS)

KB noted that the NSS National Student Survey (NSS) opened on 6 January 2021 and students in their final undergraduate year would be regularly reminded by Ipsos Mori to complete it. The survey would close at the end of April. In previous academic cycles the department had commissioned bespoke hoodies to be made and allowed final year students to claim one for free in exchange for proof of completing the NSS. This was not viable for the current academic cycle due to there being no safe way to have these given out to students in person, or to have them dispatched to students individually. Student Reps were encouraged to consider what individualised incentives final year students would be interested in receiving. The department would consider ideas suggested in line with any budgeting and logistical constraints. It was not permitted to reward students financially for completing the NSS.

It was proposed through discussion that the department could consider making book vouchers available to students who completed the NSS, in particular one that would encourage support of local bookstores. It was also proposed that the department could investigate the possibility of commissioning hoodies as previously and arranging for these to be ordered directly by students themselves online.

**Action – Student Reps to send any suggestions for how the department could incentivise individual final year students to complete the NSS directly to LB.**

**Action – LB to investigate whether it was possible to commission bespoke hoodies (or a similar item) such that these could be ordered by students themselves online.**

### 10.2 Suggestions for spending National Student Survey (NSS) prize money (in May 2021)

KB noted that the NSS National Student Survey (NSS) opened on 6 January 2021 and would close at the end of April 2021. In previous academic cycles the total proportion of responses from the final year cohort exceeded 70% and the department received a

cash prize to spend on students as a result. In anticipation of the department meeting the 70% response threshold once again for the 2021/22 cycle, Student Reps were encouraged to consider what final year students would be interested in the money being spent on. The department would consider ideas suggested in line with any budgeting and logistical constraints.

**Action – Student Reps to send any suggestions for how the department could spend any prize money received in return for meeting a 70% response threshold in the NSS, directly to LB.**

### 10.3 Lunch-time lectures proposal, by Steve Hailes

KB noted that the Head of the Computer Science Department, SH, would like to receive feedback from Student Reps on whether there would be appetite in the undergraduate student cohort for a series of regular research talks by members of academic staff within the department. These would be optional, open to all, aimed at a general audience and take place at lunch time, with attendees encouraged to bring their lunch to the talk.

CS noted that there would be a great deal of interest from students to attend research talks, particularly those aimed at a general audience as these were often very engaging.

RG noted that some students may find it difficult to attend lectures taking place at lunch time if they took place on days where they had a large number of lectures in a single day.

## **11. Dates of Next Meetings**

The second DSSCC meeting in Term 2 in Academic Year 2020/21 would take place on Wednesday 3 March 2021, at 2pm (UK time) via Microsoft Teams.