

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY COMPUTING LABORATORY
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Notes of meeting held on Monday 28th May 2007

Present: Duncan Coutts
Janice Giudice
Tom Melham
Christine O'Connor

1. Notes of the meeting held on 13th November 2006

Matters arising:

Machine buying cycle and policy: The Chairman confirmed it had been agreed that in future each DPhil student would get a new machine that they would keep for the duration of their research degree.

Chairs: DC confirmed that this had been resolved.

Skills training: DC reported that he had attended the course organised by Maths/CETL on how to teach classes, etc., which he had found very useful. About 8 people had attended lunch-time discussion meetings lasting about 1.5 hours, taking their own sandwiches. They all read an essay beforehand and then discussed this and how it related to their own teaching.

The Department is joining CETL in the coming academic year; Prof. Peter Jeavons is the Department's CETL co-ordinator, and will be attending a meeting about this on 5th June.

NA Group Student conference: JG reported that this had been organised by Nachi Gupta and Martin Stoll, and had gone very well. It had attracted a wide audience including people from computational linguistics and computational biology.

It will be necessary to think about a student conference for the coming year. JG will be organising it for the NA Group, but volunteers will be need for the Computer Science conference, with perhaps Mila and Yong as advisors.

ACTION: DC

Administrator rights: DC feels this is less of a problem now that students have Linux. There had been an issue about opting out, though Support at the time had felt that they would not be able to cope. TM would talk to Support again about this.

ACTION: TM

Funding for students in the last stages of their degree: Information had been circulated about funding awards by the VC.

Embedding graduate students in the University. This is on-going.

Common Room: No real progress had been made on this. The matter would be raised for discussion at the next meeting of Coffee. It was agreed that Cakes Talks should be reinstated – these take place in the Common Room and might encourage students to make more use of the space. Perhaps academics could be encouraged to give talks as well, e.g. where they have been, what they have done, etc.; these would be particularly appropriate in MT. It is not clear yet who will be co-ordinating the talks next year

ACTION: TM

Equipment Committee: The problems in MT had eventually been resolved. It is important to make sure that machines for new DPhils are ordered in good time, particularly as about 50 new machines will also be installed in the Thom Lab for undergraduates. CMOC and TM will make a diary note for 9th July 2007 to provide MJF with an estimate of the number of machines he needs to order.

ACTION: TM/CMOC

Recycling: MJF had advised that rubbish bins are sorted for recycling and certainly two of the four large rubbish containers outside the main entrance are marked 'recycling'. The graduate representatives recommended that there should be two small bins in each office – one of which would be for recycling only. This matter would be raised at the next Coffee meeting.

ACTION: TM/CMOC

Travel requests: TM reported that there is still money available for travel requests. Information on how to apply is contained in the PRS handbook.

2. Matters raised by the Graduate Representatives

No matters were raised.

3. Any other business

Transfer dissertation: This has been under discussion as some transfer dissertations are 120-150 pages which is too long. The Graduate Studies Committee recommended it should be 40 pages. The 'Grey Book' indicates that it should be 25-50 pages. TM will rewrite the section on this in the Handbook. The important thing is that the report should be split into two parts: one part will be a research report describing what has already been done, and the other part will be a short thesis proposal stating the topic, the approach, plans, etc. The latter document only needs to be 2 or 3 pages but should be more explicit than in the past. This proposal will not affect anyone transferring this year. Although students in the NA Group are not always able to pin down a topic initially, TM felt that it was important to do so by the end of the first year.

ACTION: TM

Confirmation of status should take place about 6-12 months before the student anticipates finishing. Technically speaking, at the confirmation stage the student should be able to complete their DPhil with only a small amount of extra work. Again, there is a section about this in the Handbook.

TM advised that students should talk to their supervisors about the size and scope of the final thesis.

Graduate teaching and CETL: It was agreed that this would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: CMOC

Replacement for Duncan Coutts: DC would endeavour to find someone to replace him.

ACTION: DC

Student conference: DC will send out emails about organising another student conference for the beginning of MT.

Director of Graduate Studies: TM will be taking sabbatical leave in 2007/08 and reported that Prof. Stephen Pulman will replace him as Director of Graduate Studies in the coming academic year.