

Minutes of the HOD meeting held at Sacla 2017

Date: 3 July, 2017: Magaliesberg, South Africa.

Present (18 attendees): Estelle Taylor (NWU: Chair), Jan Kroeze (UNISA), Hussein Suleman (UCT), Andre Calitz (NMU delegate for Brenda Scholtz), Lisa Seymour (UCT delegate for Kevin Johnston), Carina De Villiers (UP), Linda Marshall (UP delegate for Andries Engelbrecht), Eduan Kotzé (UFS delegate for Pieter Blignaut), Sue Petratos (NMU), Annelise du Preez (NMU), Irene Govender (UKZN), Derrick Kourie (US delegate for Bruce Watson), Jaco Geldenhuys (SU), Thihe Modipa (UL delegate for M Velempini), Roxanne Piderit (UFH delegate for Liezel Cilliers), Wai Sze (Grace) Leung (UJ delegate for Elize Ehlers), Mariane Look (UNISA).

Apologies: Brenda Scholtz (NMU), Pieter Blignaut (UFS), Kevin Johnson (UCT), Andries Engelbrecht (UP), Bruce Watson (US), M Velempini (UL), Liezel Cilliers (UFH), Elize Ehlers (UJ), Alfredo Terzoli (Rhodes), Prof Barry Dwolatzky (Wits).

Minutes of meeting

General

- Estelle Taylor (NWU and SACLA 2017 Conference Chair) chaired the meeting
- NWU created new School of CS&IS
- HOD list on SACLA website
- Estelle to send latest list to Lisa and Andre
- Transformation workshops will assist all staff

External moderators

- Difficulties in finding moderators for each course
- Unanimous decision: Appoint one moderator for all courses
- External examiners for M&D's remain a problem

Student numbers

- UCT computer science experiencing increase in student numbers, numbers increased to 180 of 450 BSc first year students choosing computer science as their major
- Andre and Lisa to determine student numbers and gender statistics for 2014-2017 for CS&IS at all universities
- Wits IS student numbers dropped from 360 to 240 in 2017 per annum

Post-graduate: Honours

- Honours numbers are stable or show an increase
- Departments cannot accept a 65% CS/IS mark from all S.A. universities
- Some universities would not accept a 90% CS/IS from certain S.A. universities
- Programming entrance examination is applied to all students (including UFS 3rd years) wanting to do Honours at UFS
- UFS One week programming course starts before start of honours year to recapture programming skills and start honours project
- Universities are generally capping honours numbers to 50
- Some top universities are "discriminating against" students from certain universities in S.A. when accepting and admitting honours students
- Students from CTI, Damlin and "non-approved" universities must do up to 7 under-graduate modules before being allowed into honours at certain universities
- Prospective honours students are notified that "You do not have the specific skills and knowledge to pass our honours course"

- Honours students generally have to conduct research and have a programming project, creating an artefact
- Introduce a programming test (Min 65%) before admitting students into honours

Post-graduate: Masters

- All departments are experiencing a drop in master degree student numbers and this is of great concern
- UCT is redefining a master's degree – making it more attractive
- A master's degree should present modern technology courses and allow for industry related research
- Suggestion to structure the honours degree to lead into a redefined master's degree

IMPACT of #Feesmustfall

- Awaiting official report from government (Should have been released)
- Students not being able to be in labs does not work for programming courses
- Not enough practical lab exposure in programming courses last year is affecting students' performance this year
- Increase in number of students whose "lives are falling apart"
- Departments are looking after student's "mental health"
- Staff wellness is of great concern

CS&IS Programme change

- Suggestion to make CS&IS programmes very generic to reduce registration administration
- Programme streams can then be registered internally within the university
- Make constant "internal" programme changes as new technologies are introduced
- How often do you change? Programme review should take place at least every 3 years
- UCT indicated that they changed "too much". They required stability in programmes
- CS&IS programmes should offer core (CS2013/IS2010/IT2016) courses and electives
- Don't define modules in such a way that you cannot change or update them
- Appoint one moderator for all under-graduate courses
- Appoint one moderator for Honours

CS&IS staff matters

- NWU took 6 years to fill a vacancy
- UCT received subsidy to employ more staff
- Growth in the number of people under 30 years of age pursuing academic careers
- Large number of CS&IS departments have vacancies
- Time to fill vacancies and finding suitable candidates remain a major problem

SACAB

- Andre, Chair of the South African Accreditation Board explained the aim and proposed functioning and documentation requirements of the board
- Everyone supported the establishment of the SACAB
- Documentation must be distributed to all HODs once approved
- Departments are encouraged to accredit degree programmes in CS, IS and IT according to ACM/IEEE guidelines (CS2013/IS2010/IT2016)

For noting

- A note on the conference Derrick Kourie mentioned. Can't remember which one?
- Jan Kroeze mentioned a framework and requested Estelle to distribute it to all HODs for feedback by late July 2017.