Reports from Year representatives

HONOURS YEAR
Honours students have suggested that lecturers ask in Honours classes whether the students would prefer a break during the lecture. Some students find that a break in the tougher lectures would be of benefit to them.

There are mixed feeling regarding no tutorials in Honours Year. Some students felt that they benefit from not having tutorials as it helps with managing their workload. Other students feel that it is more difficult to get help and speak to lecturers without tutorials and it would be beneficial to have tutorial classes to support the learning process for classes that have exams in May.

Students suggested having more guidance for their dissertations such as earlier sessions on writing a literature review.

Some students would prefer to have lectures after 11am. Comment from John Capstaff: there did not appear to be any sensible reasons for this.

A timetable clash was raised about AG411 Auditing Theory & Practice and Computer Science class on E-Commerce High Integrity Systems.

Comment from Jillian D’Agostino: as these classes are both optional classes the lecture times cannot be changed.

Comment from Margaret Stewart: This is the first year we have held the short meetings and talks for honours students. The idea was originally just to have the chance for staff and
students to meet and discuss issues on an informal basis. The short talks were a later addition as I thought it might be helpful to have a group talk rather than each student asking their supervisor these questions. The idea is to have talks on frequently asked about topics. I feel these have been useful for students and we will do the same in the future as the events have been popular.

At this stage most students have not started the literature review so it appeared to be a good time to have this talk.

I will think about the timing for next year.

**AG412 Strategic Accounting and Financial Management in Entrepreneurial Firms**
The students like the lecture being split into theory for the first hour and the business game in the second hour. They find this easier to digest and students find the business game fun and interactive.

**40414 Pricing of Securities**
Students find the lecture notes helpful and well detailed. The excel notes are well explained and Martin Kemmitt is helpful if they have any queries. Students feel the lecturer makes good use of the breaks during the 2 hour lectures. Some students suggested that the use of workshops/tutorials would benefit this class due to the amount of numerical work required.

**40426 Planning & Control Systems**
There are mixed views about the Case Studies for this class. Some students felt that they helped to develop ideas on management control and gave an insight to real life situations. Others felt that some of the Case Studies were not relevant to Accounting. Students enjoy the smaller classes as there is less noise and disruption and being able to share ideas in the use of group discussions.

**40428 Accounting Information Systems**
Students feel the instructions and guidance for this class are clear and manageable. Some students suggested that they would prefer if they were able to choose their own groups due to the importance of their final mark. Students find the computers in the Curran computer lab to be sluggish and they would prefer to work at a quicker pace than the computers allow.

**40435 Corporate Financial Theory & Policy**
Students like this class as they find the lecturer engaging and well organised. They like having the optional coursework and find that looking at journals is good practice for their dissertations. Student suggested that they would benefit from a coursepack which included all the required readings. There was an issue raised with the class rep regarding the approachability of the lecturer.

*John Capstaff asked the class rep to obtain more specific information regarding the approachability of the lecturer as others seemed not to share that view, and report back to the Staff/Student Committee.*

**40436 Empirical Projects in Corporate Finance**
Students find the first part of this class is useful for their dissertations but would benefit more if the lectures were more interactive. They feel the Case Studies are manageable and give theory real life context. Students find the lecture rushed as the lecturer covers 80 slides in one hour and therefore students feel the slides are not fully explained. Students suggested that it would be beneficial to have statistical methods taught with more exercises and that the lecture lasted 2 hours. The students find the second part of this class to be more interactive and
easier to follow. Students would have preferred to have the Monday lecture off on the week that the assignment was due.

John Capstaff commented that they were unable to have a free week when the assignment was due as they lost a week with the University being closed in the first week of term.

Response from class lecturer (Juliane):
I appreciate the feedback given here, but it would have been more helpful to hear of these concerns earlier, so that they could have been addressed for the current run of the class. The lectures are designed to give an overview of necessary statistical methods and the second part of each lecture was reserved for students’ questions arising either from the lectures or the homework exercises. Unfortunately, there were very few questions raised by students in class time and judging from the e-mails I have received there certainly could have been. It also appeared to me that not everyone fully utilised the material available on learn online, particularly the statistical background material. I take on board the concerns about my speed of delivery as well as the desire to create a more interactive lecture and will incorporate that into the next run of the class.

40439 Case Studies (Security Analysis)
The feedback for this class was very positive; in particular students like the class handouts and find the coursepack useful.

40441 Accounting Research Methodologies
The feedback for this class was very positive; students thought the journal papers were helpful and preferred these instead of a textbook. They liked the laid back approach in lectures as it allows for more discussion and class participation. Students suggested that they would find it useful to have more discussion on assignment and what is required. They also requested that questions on journal papers are give out before class for a better understanding and also having lecture notes online before the class to enable students to bring them to class.

Response from class lecturer:
The students raised two good points. While I felt the course outline was fairly specific in terms of the requirements of the coursework - I now recognise that perhaps devoting 15-20 minutes of a lecture to talk about the first coursework might have benefited some students. That being said, I stated to students that I was happy to address any queries about the coursework and to provide comments and advice. In the two weeks leading up to the coursework submission, I have responded to around 100 such queries.

In terms of the recommended readings, which were discussed in class each week, students stated that they would have found the directive questions about these papers (which were used in the lecture) more beneficial if they had received them before hand. I acknowledge that this would of helped students address the specific questions we discussed - up until a point. However, I also wanted students to be familiar with the broad aspects of each of the readings - not just the specific questions.

40443 Accounting for Sustainability
Students enjoy the fortnightly presentations as this allows them to check their progress and keep their knowledge up to date. They like the informal lectures as it lets students ask questions and feel the interactivity of the class adds to its enjoyment and motivates students to
work. The students feel the progress reports are useful as they ensure work is done throughout the semester and will help with final report. Students feel that the outline is not clear on what they are being assessed on. They also feel that the discussions often avoid or do not fully address the relevant theoretical points on which they will be assessed.

40444 Public Sector Accounting
Students enjoy the laid back lecture style and like that the lectures are every second week as this allowed groups to meet in the week off. Students suggested the provision of lecture notes and for more theory to be taught in lectures. Students also requested a clearer aim and outline of what has to be done each week.

Response from class lecturer:
In terms of the clear definition of what work is to be done each week - there is a class meeting every other week where individual students / groups have the opportunity to discuss specific requirements and raise questions on their group project. It is not possible to provide definitive guidance for all 15 groups in a lecture as each group is undertaking a different project, therefore the approach taken of offering individual meetings is the best approach. However, it is noted that not all students take advantage of this facility, that I would suggest is those students problem rather than the structure of the class. This is an honours class and is not a lecture and the class meeting are not designed to deliver 'theory'. It is a deliberate learning strategy for the students to undertake some practical research prior to learning theory (and this was explained in the early meetings of the class). Theory has already began to be introduced into the class meetings (12 Nov 2009) and more will be introduced as appropriate, as it was always intended to be.

FIRST YEAR

AG111 Accounting Technologies
The feedback for this class was very positive; students liked receiving the class handouts and being able to fill in the blanks as it’s easier to follow, saves time, highlights problem areas and keeps everyone at the same pace. The students praised the lecturers lecture style and handouts. Students feel they benefit from using real life examples as they illustrate points well. Students enjoy the small tutorial groups as it enables them to work in groups and speak with other students. The students noted the high quality of tutors and find having set questions to do before each tutorial helpful. Students like to use LearnOnline for this class as it is kept up to date. Some students suggested that explanation of topics could be more in depth particularly debits and credits.

AG105 Introduction to Finance and Financial Statistics
The students like the lecturer for this class as they feel he is clear and helps to engage all of the class and will accept questions at any time. The students like being able to collect the slides before the lecture and find these handouts easy to follow. Other aspects of the class that students enjoyed are the up to date news examples and going over worked examples in the lectures using various formulae. The feedback on the tutorials was positive; students enjoy having set questions to do beforehand and praised the quality of the tutors. Some student suggested that more time should be spent in tutorials working through questions and not just going over answers to the questions that were completed at home. Some students also suggested that lecture slides contain more than just headings to make points more clear and that some issues could be better explained.
Response from class lecturer:
Thank you to the class for the generally positive comments on the lectures and tutorials. The idea of the AG105 tutorials is to focus on those questions that have caused the most difficulty when they have been prepared in advance. Admittedly this may mean some repetition in the tutorials if people have had no difficulty with the material, but I would expect it to be unlikely that everyone is completing the material perfectly each week. On the issue of lecture slides, it does actually say on the class learnonline site that the purpose of slides is to provide the structure to what we do in class, rather than to provide full details. Slides are different from notes, and are not designed to be a substitute for reading the textbook and working through the examples in class each week.

AG151 Introduction to Finance and Accounting
The feedback for this class was very positive; in particular the students liked the lecturer for the class and the handouts are provided in the lectures. They like that the lecturer works through problems and uses examples of up-to-date financial information. The students enjoy the weekly tutorials as it allows them to go over questions and they like being able to write answers on the board. Most of the students feel that the tutors are difficult to understand and that the tutors also have difficulty understanding students. Student suggested having examples of questions and answers on LearnOnline which are relevant to recent work. Students also suggested having more formulas given in the exam. Also students would rather work through extended question in the tutorials rather than finish early.

SECOND YEAR

AG200 Regulation of Accounting
Students were grateful for the free book that they received from Deliotte. Students like that the lecturers take the tutorials and find the tutorials interesting. The students have suggested that the lecture notes are available online and that there is a break in the lecture. Some students have complained that the textbook is too expensive for the class. John Capstaff suggested that students check notice boards for previous students selling copies and use the short loan service in the library. He also commented that the books will often serve students for several years during their time at University, and are a sound investment.

Response from class lecturer:
We are glad that students find the tutorials useful. This has been the subject of discussion in the department and we are pleased that there is some confirmation that the investment of resources is justified. There is often a short break, but the problem is that students are usually keen to finish 3-5 classes in good time and a longer break would mean pushing the finishing time back. There is now a notes folder on the WebCT page to assist those students who miss lectures, whose friends cannot be bothered to collect a spare copy and who cannot remember that all materials are freely available for the price of an email. All textbooks seem to be ridiculously overpriced these days, but the class outline did indicate which past editions would be sufficiently current to be a good buy on the second hand market.

AG202/206 Business Finance/Business Finance (Accounting)
The feedback was this class was positive; students found the lecturer amusing and liked having the lecture slides available in the department and online. Students find the 2 hour
lecture too long to keep focused for this class. Students liked the workshops for group work and the chance to work through examples. Although students would prefer to have the tutorial slides made available online. Although the majority of students found the tutor helpful, an issue was raised that some students did not find the tutor helpful when asking questions. It was also mentioned that there is only one tutor for this class. Students feel they would benefit from full solutions to past papers and class test and also being provided with a handout on 1st year finance formulas. Students also suggested that the lecturer highlight common mistakes that past students have made in the exam and that lecture slides are handed out in the lecture.

John Capstaff commented that we try to achieve a sensible balance regarding the provision of solutions, formulas, etc. Students ought to engage in the learning process by attempting to answer questions on their own account using lecture notes, textbooks and previous examples. However, we appreciate that guidance is needed, and we do provide solutions at appropriate times. We aim to avoid unduly spoonfeeding students as this is unlikely to enhance the learning process. The provision of “full solutions” to almost everything could fall into that category.

However, it is up to individual lecturers as to what approach they take.

Response from class lecturer:

Again, thank you to the class for the generally positive comments on lectures and tutorials. I have taken onboard the comment on highlighting common mistakes and incorporated this in the feedback to the class test this year, which I believe was helpful in writing the solutions and marking guide, so thank you to the class reps for suggesting this. I may be misreading the feedback, but solutions to all class tests (past and present) and past exams are available through the class learnonline site, so I don’t really understand that comment in the staff-student committee minutes.

The slides for first year finance are available on the Business Finance learnonline site. I don’t believe there is any value to drawing up a formula list, as you have to understand the formula to be able to apply them and you get them from going through the class material and trying the examples rather than having a formula list that can be difficult to place in context of specific lectures. Any student would obviously be able to go through the first year material themselves and draw up their own formula list, which would be more productive because as part of doing this they would be developing their understanding of when and where the material should be applied.

I am happy to give the material out in advance if the students on the course think that would be to their benefit between now and the end of the class. On the tutorials, for this class I ask students to work through material in tutorials AND in many weeks to do practice questions from the class textbook. I view the reading of material from the textbook and the application of that knowledge to practice questions as being the preparation for the tutorials, and that serves to allow people to work together in groups during the tutorial in going through the practice questions. As a result of running behind slightly during the class lectures at the moment, I have changed this somewhat for the remainder of the course where students will be working through tutorials in seasoned equity issues over two weeks and have been given the material at the beginning of the first week. Regarding the comment directly about the class tutor, I would again point out that we try not to ‘spoonfeed’ students and to avoid simply telling them ‘this is the answer,’ and that is what I have asked the class tutor to do. The tutor is there to aid students in working towards the correct answer themselves, rather than giving them that correct answer.
AG205 Financial Modelling
The students like the handbook for this class as it has clear step by step guidelines. They feel that the material in the lecture does not seem to concur with what is in the handbook. They feel slides with print screens would be better and allow for students to cover more in lectures. Students have difficulty viewing the OHP slides as the lecturer uses a thick marker when writing. The lecturer is sometimes difficult to be heard. Students find the workshops and tutors helpful.

Response from class lecturer:
The handbook is a very good book. However the handbook only tells how calculations are being done by using Excel while the lectures mainly focus on explaining 'why'. In order to explain the reasons, formal definitions, main theorems and lemmas on relevant concepts have to be introduced. Mathematical derivation and proof are, unfortunately, unavoidable when introducing theorems and lemmas. Using slides to show mathematical derivation and proof may not be a good idea. Step by step derivation can help students understand more and appreciate the beauty of mathematics. Of course I need to be careful about my handwriting when writing math equations. Although this class uses Excel, I also mentioned its limitations and encouraged students to learn programming computer languages. This may cause confusion for some students.

THIRD YEAR

AG300 Management Decision Making & Control
Students feel the weekly reading/tests encourages them to read each week. Students like the engaging and amusing lectures and the real life examples make the lectures more interesting. Students like not having the cost of a textbook and being able to receive the readings online. Students enjoy having the case studies expanded upon in tutorials and having group discussions and presentations. Some students have found the lecture handouts confusing particularly ABC and feel that the class notes do not refer to the lecture slides.

Response from class lecturer:
I would disagree totally that the class notes for ABC did not refer to the lecture slides, they were in a more condensed format in order to save paper and copying. The text from each slide was replicated exactly and in the same order as the powerpoint presentation on the class notes. In addition the notes and slides used for all lectures are available on LearnOnline. I can only surmise that certain students can't read properly.

40320 Auditing
Students enjoy the real life stories/examples in the lectures and the lecturers excellent lecture style. A main issue with this class was the lateness of the lecturer/tutor as classes run over and students are late for their next class. Students suggested that the lecture slides and tutorial answers are made available online.

Response from class lecturer:
I am glad that the class is finding the lectures useful. I have been guilty of being a few minutes late on occasion and will pay more attention in future (I used to be able to get from anywhere on campus to anywhere else on campus within 7 minutes, but old age doesn’t
come on its own). I am not aware of ever having overrun. It would never be appropriate to offer solutions to tutorial exercises because auditing is more about justifying an argument rather than stating the “correct” answer. Anyone who wishes to check whether the approach taken to a question makes sense should offer their opinions for discussion during the tutorial.

**AG302 Security Analysis**
General feedback for this class was positive; the students like the lecturer and find the pace appropriate with lots of good/clear examples being used. Students are enjoying the tutorials but would prefer to have more practice on theory questions. Students have requested a longer break in the lecture.

**40334 Financial Markets**
General feedback for this class was positive; students particularly liked the examples of good and bad assignments. Students enjoy the lectures and having relevant examples. The majority of students enjoyed the tutorials and would like to have even more discussions.

**Response from class lecturer:**  
I am also enjoying the interactions in lectures and their enthusiasm for participating in tutorial discussions.