DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

Student-Staff Liaison Committee Meeting

Wednesday 29\textsuperscript{th} February 2012

Present:

- Cameron Lang   1st Year Accounting
- Stuart Forbes   1st Year Accounting
- Vernon Davies  1st Year Finance
- Colin Bain      3rd Year Accounting & Finance
- Robert Picken   3rd Year Accounting & Finance
- Christopher Bradley Honours Accounting & Finance
- Juliane Thamm   Staff (Chair)
- Susan Jackson   Staff - Administration
- Renzo Cordina   Tutor Representative

Reports from Year representatives

HONOURS YEAR

ACCOUNTING

Some students are concerned that there was no consideration of inter-departmental deadlines and as such students have important assignments due in close proximity. It was also commented that the choice of classes for Single Honours Accounting students was limited and they would rather have the choice of an accounting class rather than a finance one. It was also felt that dissertation submission should be staggered to make it less stressful and enabling students to commit themselves fully to all assignments.

40425 Advanced Management Accounting

Overall the students taking this class were pleased with how it is conducted. Many positive comments were made about the in-class presentations and the open discussions. The presentations were deemed to be fun, creative and helpful to get the point across. It was felt that the open discussions encourage debate and participation by all and this seems to be appreciated. Other positives were the lecturer as he has the ability to get students to participate, the relaxed atmosphere of the class and that the class is interactive.

It was felt that having hand-outs such as slides would be a welcome improvement as students did not have to rely fully on their own notes. Students would like to have a clear class outline with assignment deadlines available on MyPlace. They would also appreciate the provision of readings. Finally, some students felt that more attention should be paid to difficult readings, presumably so they are better understood.

Response from Ian Thomson: Glad the format is working effectively and I am very impressed with the quality of presentations to date. On the point made about slides, this is not possible as the whole focus of this class is on discussion and participation, so it would be impossible to prepare slides in advance that would anticipate ‘your’ discussion and participation, anyway taking notes of discussions is a skill
that is invaluable in professional setting. There is a clear class outline on myplace and department website that lists the assignment deadline. This class outline is in the standard departmental format, therefore I am confused as to origins of this comment. The readings are also provided and easily available through the library e-journal service – so I can’t understand what else I can do other than breach copyright rules and post copies on the myplace page. For the articles that are not accessible from the library online services hard copies have been provided. As for the point on paying more attention to difficult readings – I am not sure what this actually means! What are considered difficult readings? I would suggest that students take more effort to actually attend the classes as attendance levels are not good. In addition it is clear that many students are not adequately preparing for the class and therefore their participation in limited as is their ability to ask informed questions and look for clarification of issues that they don’t ‘understand’.

**40444 Public Sector Accounting**

Overall feedback on this class was generally positive. It was strongly felt that being provided with the hand-outs in advance best aided the learning process as it gave students the opportunity to prepare for the class. It was also noted that having time at the start of the lecture to discuss the readings was useful. The discursive style of the class was generally appreciated as was the use of anecdotes. Suggestions for potential improvements for the class included having tutorials, providing more detailed information about the assignments and having formal slides would be beneficial. Some also felt that less discussion and more formal lecturing would be helpful. Finally, it was noted that the hand in dates for both assignments are in May and as such are very close to the examination diet.

*Response from John Dunn: The points that have been raised are all perfectly fair and valid. I will try to introduce a bit more lecture in the remaining weeks.*

**40445 Accounting & Risk**

Not many comments were received on this class therefore it can only be assumed that students are satisfied with how it is conducted. One student commented that the discussion of text and practical issues best enabled the learning process.

*Comment from John Ferguson: The class has retained the same structure from last year and focuses on both practical and theoretical aspects of risk management - which students seem to appreciate*

**AG411 Auditing Theory & Practice**

On the whole, feedback was very positive. The students feel that the lecturer is good and they appreciate his anecdotes as they aid the learning process. The provision of hand-outs is also appreciated and it is felt that the questions within them help guide discussion. Furthermore, the lecture is conducted as more of a discussion rather than a formal lecture and this seems to be generally appreciated.

Although the discursive nature of the lecture is generally liked, some students felt that less discussion would be better. It was also commended that more papers on agency would be a good improvement.

*Response from John Dunn: Valid points.*

*Most of the remaining readings are agency-based in any case.*

**FINANCE**

No Finance Honours Rep was present at the meeting – awaiting report.

**THIRD YEAR - ACCOUNTING**

**AG305 Advanced Accounting 2**

The students felt that the detailed lecture notes supplied were clear and concise and expanded on points in the lecture and this best enabled their learning process. They feel that the lecturer
is loud, clear and to the point and they like having the occasional joke which lightens the mood. The students like having to do the weekly tests in Management Accounting as it is an incentive to study and read journals which helps their learning. In tutorials the students like having exam type questions. They also prefer the small groups as there is better discussion as it is less daunting to ask questions and they also feel it helps with student-tutor relationship. They also like having the lecturer as their tutor as they are able to answer all questions, have a wealth of knowledge and are able to discuss lecture topics. Students would like to receive detailed solutions to past exam papers/tutorial questions. They would also prefer to have all course material available on MyPlace including assignment question and provide more exam type questions. Students have complained that the change to the Managerial Accounting room (debating chamber) due to the James Weir fire is unsuitable due to no desks, extreme heat, too dark and cramped.

Response from Ian Thomson: Regarding the room booked for the AG305 Advanced Accounting 2 workshop (Strathclyde Unions Debating Chamber), we are aware of the problems associated with this room, unfortunately due to the fire in James Weir we have no other option other than not to run the class! We had to accept whatever space we were allocated. We have tried to get other rooms but have been unsuccessful. We have been able to get another space which is much more suitable for the exam. Due to the problems with the room changes have been made to the delivery of the class and lecture material, that have meant shortening the time spent in the room. Given the lack of choice this is the only option open to us and we recognise the impact this has for the students and on the lecturers who have to use non-ideal accommodation and equipment.

Response from John Dunn: The feedback on classes is positive and welcome. I suspect that the problems created by the fire in James Weir will make it impossible to secure a more suitable room, so the best we can do is ask for a change.

It is not really appropriate to post answers to auditing questions online because answers are often about expressing opinions and so there is usually more than one route to a correct answer. The two main ways to obtain feedback are to continue to raise questions in tutorials and to email queries or even the odd answer to a tutorial question with a request for feedback.

THIRD YEAR – FINANCE

AG307 Treasury Management & International Finance

Students like the use of real life case studies and having questions that are focused on the exam. They also like having all the hand-outs and the lecturers written notes put on MyPlace. The students would prefer to have a different time for the workshop as having it followed by a 2 hour lecture makes it feel like a 3 hour lecture as there isn’t much discussion in the workshop. Some students have commented that as a core class they would prefer the class to have smaller tutorial groups rather than 1 large workshop.

Comment from Andrew Marshall: If we go for smaller groups then I cannot take these classes. However, I will consider how best to operate workshops with large groups. Students are free to discuss any issue during my office hours.

The students commented that the lecturer for this class and the lecturer for AG306 Security Analysis use different terminology from each other which was confusing for the students – it was suggested that a glossary could be provided.

Comment from Andrew Marshall: No I do not agree with this and cannot see how a glossary is possible. Please see me if you have any questions on terminology.

Some students complained that the lecture notes were sometimes out of date as some examples were from 1997.

Comment from Andrew Marshall: There may be a few cases but we use current Financial Times data in the lecture so students should see the current financial environment.
SECOND YEAR – ACCOUNTING

AG208 Intermediate Management Accounting
Students felt that the features that best enabled the learning process were having example worked through thoroughly, having well-structured lecture slides. In tutorials students find having past paper questions given out and worked through very helpful. They also enjoy working in groups to find the answers to questions. Students would like to have some information on possible exam essay questions and solutions to past paper questions that are covered in the tutorials.
Comment from Richard Grey: More exam information will be made available to students though the tutorials have incorporated past exam questions as far as possible.

AG209 Taxation
Students felt that the features that best enabled the learning process were funny, interactive lectures which made material easy to learn. In the tutorials the students like the detailed answers and having the questions gone through step by step.

SEMESTER 1 – AG207 Intermediate Financial Accounting
It was felt that the past paper questions and the tutorial questions did not prepare the students well enough for the exam and that it was too much of a jump. Most students performed poorly in the exam and feel that this is the reason for it. It was felt that not every lecture related to information necessary for the exam.
Comment from Margaret Stewart: There was no jump at all between the material in the tutorials and the exam.
The tutorials are almost all past exam questions and the exam was of the same standard as usual. The students should have been very well prepared for the exam had they done all the tutorial questions and revised. Answers were given out to all numerical tutorial questions so there should have been no doubt what was required. The class followed the same format as usual and everything in each class was examinable so every lecture related to information necessary for the exam. The class was taught in the same way as usual and students have always been prepared for the exam in the past and were aware of the level of questions examined in the past. No other class has ever suggested there was any jump between the material covered in the class and the exam.
Comment from John Dunn: The jump in standard was discussed in the first lecture. The results for AG207 were disappointing, but the exam questions were based fairly heavily on ideas from tutorial questions.

SECOND YEAR – FINANCE

AG211 Portfolio Analysis
Students felt that the features that best enabled the learning process were going through the notes in the class and examples. In tutorials students liked going through the question as a class as well as getting the answers. They also enjoyed having extra discussion about the questions. Some students would prefer to have the lecture notes broken up into segments, not one large document. They would prefer more worked examples and explanation rather than just reading the notes.

AG212 Financial Analysis
No feedback was provided for this class.
FIRST YEAR – ACCOUNTING

AG111 Accounting Technologies
Students feel the blanks in lecture slides were a valuable addition to the learning process and the worked examples that are completed in the lectures are an example of good practice. In tutorials students feel that the group work and discussions with other students improved their experience. They also like the worked examples used in tutorials as opposed to just going over answers students had completed at home.
Some students commented that the tutorials overran making them late for following classes and they would also prefer if the pace in lectures was slower. In tutorials they would prefer to have more explanation of some issues and if tutors could have a more encouraging attitude towards students. They have also commented that the University Centre which was used for a few class tests was too noisy and they would appreciate using a different room in future.
Comment from Richard Grey: The tutors will try and ensure the tutorials do not overrun. I would encourage students to ask questions of the tutors during groupwork as we are there to facilitate student learning.
The University Centre is next to a main road and can be noisy but space is at a premium at the moment and I do not think that we will be able to obtain another room for the Class Test in week 10. However, I will bear it in mind when we are timetabling rooms in the future.

AG105 Introduction to Finance and Financial Statistics
Students felt that the use of worked examples in lectures and the well-structured lecture slides best enabled their learning process. In tutorials, the students noted the clear explanation of examples as an area of good practice and some students commented that they liked the extra revision work. Some students also liked having the availability of printed lecture slides outside the department office.
Some issues which were raised were that the students would prefer to have more group work in tutorials to allow students the opportunity to work together and gain another perspective on the work. The pace is lectures are a little fast and only final answers are made available as solutions on MyPlace, with no working shown to illustrate the process of arriving at that answer. Furthermore, others noted that there has been little improvement in the tutor that some raised concerns with last semester and some students felt that the marking of the assignment formatting was too strict.

For both AG111 Accounting Technologies and AG105 Introduction to Finance & Financial Statistics, student commented on the excellent standard of the lectures overall.

Comments from Patrick McColgan: We are pleased that the class have responded positively in general to the structure of the lectures, their content, and more generally on the course. We will take into account the comments for running of tutorials such as groupwork for the remainder of the term and in future runnings of the course.
Regarding the assignment, the submission requirements were clearly stated on the front sheet. Given this, I cannot see any justification for the complaint. No group who followed these requirements was penalised.

FIRST YEAR – FINANCE

AG151 Introduction to Finance and Accounting
In Semester 1, the lecturer’s practice of unfilled out notes was very popular with the students and it also meant students had to attend the lectures and it kept their attention throughout the lecture. Students find completing the worked examples in class very effective as the step by
step process simplifies the questions and makes them less daunting knowing that you have gone through one before. Students like that the class used real life and current information taken from company reports, news deadline as it was all relevant. The structure of the notes was very well organised and kept to what was needed to be known, clear and easy to access when revising for test/assignments.

In tutorials students liked that the tutors discussed the answer rather than just straight answers. They like having very detailed and full tutorials answers provided on MyPlace. They also praised the compulsory attendance at tutorials as it made things easier for when tests/assignments were due and they were up to date on knowledge. Students would prefer to have past class test papers available to help them study for their class tests. Some students struggled to hear the lecturer in S1 and suggested that the microphone may need adjusted. Students would also prefer to have more references to the McGraw textbook in the hand-outs. A lot of students complained that the tutorial rooms were very crowded and that the tutors could sometimes be difficult to understand.

Response from John Capstaff: Thanks for your comments on the class. Will be sure to check the microphone in future.

Response from Andy Marshall: We are currently investigating the reason to the crowded tutorial rooms and will report back to the class.

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Provisionally: Week 6/7 of Semester 1

*(Date will be confirmed at start of semester 1 2012-13)*