The 2/2007 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 24th of April 2007 in room 203/Building 72 at 1.00 pm.

Minutes

Present:  A/Professor L. Kleeman (Chair)
A/Professor H. Abachi
Dr. Francesco Crusca
A/Professor G. Holmes
Dr. I. Kaminskyj
Professor Arthur Lowery
Dr. Andrew Price
Dr. A. Sekercioglu

Student Representatives:
Ariba Siddiqi, Level 1 Mechatronics
Ahmad Sammour, Level 2 BE
Ryan Alexander, Level 3 BE/LLB
Stephen George, Level 3 BE
Wendy Ni, Level 3 BScBE
Anushi Kulasiri level 4 BScBE
Meaghan Soutter, Level 4 BCSE

Minutes

A/Professor Lindsay Kleeman introduced meeting reporting on progress on matters since last meeting. The lecturer in ECE3093, Eric Wu met with Dr. Malin Premaratne since the last meeting to discuss concerns students were having with the teaching of ECE3093. As a result more case studies in engineering were to be introduced, fact sheets and summaries at the end of lectures concerning what is examinable and what needs to be learnt. The approach of leading with examples before general theory was highlighted as important in engineering units (as opposed to the reverse often adopted in pure Mathematics teaching). Labs that are relevant to engineering with good visualisation using Matlab for example were requested.

A/Professor Lindsay Kleeman reported that the help desk tutors are now wearing identification in the form of badges to assist students in finding them for assistance with their studies.

Level 2

Dr. Francesco Crusca reported on level 2 matters:
(i) delays in posting solutions to tutorials - students request that you post these within 2 weeks of the tutorial;

The level 2 coordinator Dr. Francesco Crusca raised this issue with the unit leaders of ECE2061 (Professor David Morgan, Dr. Nemai Karmarkar) who in turn provided the following replies...
"This has been somewhat variable. The first tute was last years ENG1030 exam, and I have not posted solutions to that. More recent tutes have had solutions done on the board in tute, and/or had them posted as soon as the last class had finished. When problems from the book are used, I have only posted answers, not complete solutions, in accord with the policy of the publisher."

(ii) The lab on op amp frequency response, students claim that the majority were not able to finish it on time - a possible remedy here would be to replace 2 hour labs by half as many 4 hour labs.

Again from Professor David Morgan, Dr. Nemai Karmarkar:

"My observation in the lab was that students who had done the preliminary work had no trouble completing, except for some delays with an equipment problem, which the class has now been advised of. The report is combined for the two op amp labs, which are easily completable in four hours by well prepared students".

The problem area reported was the unit ECE2061 Linear Electronics. Many students felt that there was too much material presented too quickly and in too much depth to be understood. The lectures were felt to be an "information overload".

At one point a student reported that Laplace transforms were implicitly assumed even though this had not been covered in any other unit. The synchronisation of lectures with labs was a problem too - in particular the BJT lab was scheduled before the relevant lectures. The staff on the committee suggested students should provide this feedback to the lecturers of the unit. The comments would also be taken to the end of semester review of units. There was a feeling that students were not aware of mechanisms to provide feedback (as noted above).

Other level 2 units were mentioned as good - ie ECE2041 and ECE2011. The mini projects in ECE2041 were considered by some students to be too simple for the marks awarded.

**Level 3**

Much discussion centred on ECE3092 Systems Engineering and Reliability. The financial maths component was felt to need more examples and worked solutions. The lab group discussion with Excel solver were felt to be too large since just one computer was shared and there were problems seeing the one screen. The guest lecturer pitched material at too high a level to be followed by many students. Long discussions took place on lecturers lacking motivation and enjoyment of material, particularly when using other peoples overhead slides.

Also one lecturer was hard to understand and similarly a few demonstrators shared this problem. Students felt that demonstrators needed to be "more pro-active" in their approach to labs whereby demonstrators should be asking more questions and stimulating student responses more than some do at present. Staff mentioned that feedback on demonstrators would be welcome and that an induction course was given to demonstrators to try to address these concerns.

Staff on this committee suggested that the students need to provide teaching staff/ unit coordinators with feedback on these issues as they arise so that the problems can be addressed quickly and effectively. Students felt that there was not sufficient awareness of the mechanisms for providing feedback about a unit - how, who and where to give feedback. One mechanism that will be implemented is to publish the
email addresses of the representatives on this committee on the ECSE Dept webpage (with explicit consent of the representatives via email to LK).

**Level 4**
No complaints. It was noted that much more effort was required to complete level assignments compared to earlier years.

The meeting ended at 2 pm.

**Next scheduled meeting:** 22 May 2007