The 5/2007 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 2nd of October 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. Kaminsky
Professor A.J. Lowery
Dr. A. Price
Dr. A. Sekercioglu

Student Representatives:
Ryan Alexander
Yarlini Amirthanesan
Andrew Bonavia
Anushi Kulasiri
Wendy Ni
Rory Paltridge
Ahmad Sammour,
Meaghan Soutter

Apologies: Dr. A. Zahedi
Ms R. Rimington

Minutes

Level 1
No comments.

Level 2
In ECE2021 students asked whether any good notes on transformers were available and several staff suggested the library is a good resource for standard material of this nature and students should be more pro-active in browsing the books in the library for appropriate background material beyond that presented in lectures.

In ECE2062 there was lively discussion about the project involving PCB layout. Student complaints emerged that the specifications changed near the deadline for the project. DGH pointed out that he had foreshadowed that the footprints in the standard libraries for components often contained errors and students needed to be aware of this early in the design. Moreover the correction of the footprints by DGH came with no apologies and was a reflection of a real project environment that graduates would encounter in practice, so that the project experience was quite realistic and a good preparation for later work in industry. Much discussion was had centred around students showing initiative and good planning in the completion of project work and the necessity to be able to adapt to changing circumstances as
often happened in practice. Other issues with broken web links, return of preliminary lab exercises and attendance at a tutorial by DLM would be followed up by DGH. Audio recording of ECE2062 lectures was found to be very useful for revision of difficult topics and when clashes prevented the attendance at lectures. ECE2072 Digital Systems was reported to be going well.

Level 3
ECE3051: late return of prelim work was cited as a problem and this will be investigated by DGH. Students remarked that in Mathematics demonstrators were expected to return work within a week of receiving it and this worked well in practice there.

Level 4
ECE4024: issues with C-programming were raised and AS defended the design of labs that involved exercises that were a little challenging and hence interesting. Much discussion centred around the learning of C programming skills and the lack of practice that some students suffered from. Students who copied from friends when learning their programming were found to be struggling significantly later in their courses when the programming skills were expected to be matured. The issue was that more effort, experience and practice was needed by students at the problem solving aspects of programming, such as development of an algorithm that can be coded to solve the specific problems. The staff noted that students were given many opportunities to develop these skills and the dependence on others when copying C programs was detrimental to the development of these skills that are so important for many units in level 3 and level 4 of the courses.

ECE4087: complaints were made concerning the deadline of a major assignment in week 12 conflicting with thesis deadlines in 4th year projects.

This was the final meeting for 2007.