DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

Student/Staff consultative committee:

The 1/2020 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held at 1pm on Tuesday March 31, 2020, via zoom.

ATTENDANCE

Staff: Dr James Saunderson (Chair, Department Acting Director of Teaching), Professor Tom Drummond (Head of Department) Dr Wynita Griggs (Learning and Teaching Committee) Ros Rimington (Academic Programs Manager) Geoff Binns (Resource Manager)

Student representatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>email</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uvin Kojitha</td>
<td>Liyanapathirane</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BCom</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ukliy1@student.monash.edu">ukliy1@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BBimedSc</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bla1@student.monash.edu">bla1@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Chai</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE(ESCE)/BSc</td>
<td><a href="mailto:echa0018@student.monash.edu">echa0018@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linus</td>
<td>Mayes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmay0006@student.monash.edu">lmay0006@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Pereira</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lper0011@student.monash.edu">lper0011@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze Fei</td>
<td>Teo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(Mechatronics)/BCom</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zteo00003@student.monash.edu">zteo00003@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashar Ali</td>
<td>Tasslak</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:btas2@student.monash.edu">btas2@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott William</td>
<td>Bennett</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BSc</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sben0007@student.monash.edu">sben0007@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rory</td>
<td>Sutherland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rdsut1@student.monash.edu">rdsut1@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rishabh</td>
<td>Sharma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rsha0006@student.monash.edu">rsha0006@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishmohit</td>
<td>Sabharwal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BFinance</td>
<td><a href="mailto:isab0001@student.monash.edu">isab0001@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai Preeti</td>
<td>Gandra</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BBimedSc</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sgan0015@student.monash.edu">sgan0015@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaxi (Jerry)</td>
<td>Li</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE(ECSE)/BCom</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xli621@student.monash.edu">xli621@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>An</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BE(Mechatronics)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nngu0028@student.monash.edu">nngu0028@student.monash.edu</a></td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qi (Quentin)</td>
<td>Ngai</td>
<td></td>
<td>SMEE president</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smee@monashclubs.org">smee@monashclubs.org</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suraya</td>
<td>Kannan</td>
<td></td>
<td>SMEE representative</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smee@monashclubs.org">smee@monashclubs.org</a></td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MINUTES

The chair (JS) outlined the structure of the meeting, asked all present to introduce themselves, and outlined that the purpose of the committee is to provide constructive feedback/suggestions to the department about all aspects of the undergraduate experience in ECSE. The chair emphasised the role of student representatives to

- represent the whole student community
- actively solicit comments and suggestions from fellow students

and noted that student email addresses and levels will be published behind the authcate firewall to allow other students to feed back suggestions to the committee. The chair then outlined some previous achievements of the committee:

- After-hours access to laboratories in weeks 6-12 from 6pm to 10pm.
- Help desk support for students during lunchtime and evenings.
- Advertising the skill set of help desk demonstrators so student can target particular sessions for certain subject areas
- ECSE study rooms during exam periods.
- Renovated 4th year common room.
- Upgrading and new equipment for units
- Online support via anonymous student forums
- ECSE Hangout Moodle site for FAQs, enrolment information and job announcements

General:

- Tom Drummond (HoD) encouraged the committee to contact Tom or Ros or James ASAP if they are aware of ANY issues, and to actively solicit constructive feedback continuously throughout the semester, due to the exceptional nature of this semester.
- Concerns were raised about possibly harsh grading among all the challenges of transitioning to online delivery and online learning. Tom Drummond emphasised that the department will aim to treat everyone fairly, be mindful of the challenges students face this semester, and be flexible.
- Most students expressed being happy with workload, timetabling, and unit setup, especially at level 4.
- Students expressed concern about uncertainty around final exams. Tom Drummond indicated that the university, faculty, and department are all working out the details, and concrete answers may be a couple of weeks away.
- Moodle forums were discussed. Most were going well, although some were not attended to as well as others, and some are quite disorganised. Suggestions that TAs manage forums if there is too much traffic for lecturer to keep up, that standard posting etiquette/structure be set for students and staff, and that TA could regularly extract a FAQ from the forum. A good approach may be to have multiple forums for each unit, with forums focusing on specific topics or assessments, as a way to impose structure without requiring people to post in the “right” format.
Level 2:

- **ECE2071**: translated well online, and was running smoothly.
- **ECE2131**: going ok but more disjointed/fragmented. Students expressed some uncertainty about whether lectures going forward would be in full lecture format via Echo or in chunked videos as in early weeks. Suggestion for there to be clearer messages on Moodle. Currently slightly chaotic with many announcements. A clear week by week structure on Moodle would help.

It is a practical unit and students expressed concern about obtaining the relevant skills (e.g., using an oscilloscope). Tom Drummond proposed enrichment workshops for the future (when possible) so students could build these skills.

There was a discussion about the use of LTSpice in ECE2131. Later year students were happy it had been introduced as good preparation for its use in ECE3161, and recommended keeping LTSpice in ECE2131 in the future.

Level 3:

- **ECE3161**: Instructions for early labs were disjointed, unclear what to submit when, etc, but submission is clear now. Students reported that Moodle site needs better structure, particularly on the very active forums, where there are many posts but they are not structured/organised clearly. Recommendation for one consistent post to all students each week. Students liked the use of LTSpice. Would have liked more LTSpice preparation in ECE2131. This is now happening.
- **ECE3141**: well managed overall – good feedback;
- **ECE3051**: Good communication: Reza emails on Sunday night with weekly tasks. Early in semester this was a little late for Monday morning labs to know what was going on. Positive feedback about the online delivery of labs, particularly that students have longer to submit lab reports, allowing them to learn/understand better than if they must rush to submit at the end of the session. Initially unclear how much detail is required in reports (since there is more time to prepare them), and requests were made for lenient marking of the first two labs.
- **ECE3073**: students requested a one hour practical class, since they found this very useful in ECE2071 and ECE2072. Students suggested that doing the labs without implementing on hardware made it harder to understand/learn. Reports were raised of issues accessing materials from China due to VPN issues. Tom Drummond noted that there is now a new, much better, VPN in China so this issue is hopefully solved.

One anonymous survey response collected by a student rep said that "Ece3141 and ece3161 have done well to manage the tough semester we have and are continually looking to improve through student feedback. Their work is what I am basing my idea of the ECSE department on, and they are great!"
Level 4:

- **FYP**: Students, especially those with projects involving lab work, were concerned about the move online. Tom Drummond noted that for ECE4094 the department is working with supervisors to ensure that projects focus on more theory/computations/simulation/literature review aspects of projects. Department also putting together a 3D-printing mail-out service from the cad-cam centre. For ECE4095, some students will require amendments to their projects. This will be taken into account when projects are assessed. Suggestion that these messages need to be made clearer to students.

- **ECE4044/ECE4045**: For many students, these units are the first time they are using Python. There was a discussion about introducing Python earlier or providing resources to students. On providing resources, Tom Drummond suggested pointing to excellent online tutorials. On introducing Python earlier, Tom Drummond noted that this was a recurring discussion in the review of first year. There were suggestions that Python could introduced in ECE2071, but it was thought that ECE2071 is already crowded enough.

- **ECE4055**: The lectures and tutorials are going well. Students had trouble following the first lab, because students didn’t have the board with them and the tutor ran through the lab too fast. Students found subsequent lab recordings much more effective.

- **ECE4081**: Yan sends a weekly email with weekly information like zoom links, etc. Very well received and students expressed that this should be done in more units.

- **ECE4099**: Students expressed concern about the first assignment which involves meeting two EE managers and interviewing them. Tom Drummond suggested that this could be done through zoom. Students requested a lower weighting for the first assignment. The due date has been pushed back, which is welcome. Feedback that the Moodle site is all over the place! (The chair noted that this is being fixed.) Lecturer activity on Moodle is low, and students suggested that the lecturer could focus on using the forum to answer student questions. Really good lecturer, but a bit slow responding to student communication.

The chair thanked representatives for the feedback, and reminded all to give progressive feedback rather than wait until the next meeting.

**Next scheduled meeting: Week 10 Semester 1 2020**