The 1/2012 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 20th of March 2012 in room 203/Building 72 at 1.00 pm.

Minutes

Staff:  
A/Professor L. Kleeman (Chair)  
Professor A Lowery (HoD)  
A/Professor R A Russell  
Ros Rimington

Students Representatives:  
Nikolai Sidorov (apologies)  
Muhammad Fareed (2nd year BE)  
Daniel Jong (3rd year Mechatronics/Arts)  
Ryan Beeby (5th year BSc/BE)

Minutes

Lindsay Kleeman introduced the purpose of the committee as a forum for discussion of course matters and a mechanism for student feedback to improve the student experience and quality of education. Student representatives’ email addresses will be published, with their permission, on the Departmental webpages accessible to enrolled students. The representatives were asked to canvass the views of the student body and to bring issues to this committee that may improve the ECSE courses.

In terms of student satisfaction with the teaching of the ECE units across the Department, LK tabled the following results from the student unit evaluation surveys for the past 6 years. Note that the averages have improved each. Part of the improvement can be attributed to the role of this committee in providing timely feedback on teaching performance.
The chair noted that the Engineers Australia accreditation review was planned for early 2013 and one area that has been discussed was teamwork skills and their evaluation in courses. One approach employed in first year Physics was discussed whereby teams are rotated every few weeks to generate a broad experience of different team dynamics.

One issue discussed was different teaching and learning styles and how these are catered for in the units taught. Problem based learning was discussed and whilst there were obvious benefits in terms of student participation and interest levels, some assistance is still needed in developing modern best practice in Engineering.

Students commented that the laboratories required the use of temporary universal login accounts. This means that previous work by other students could be accidently left on computers, potentially facilitating plagiarism and security concerns. Traceability of violations of the IT policy is also compromised. The ECSE Department previously had its IT support services moved into a faculty based service. The loss of individual student logins is one result of transitional arrangements, changes in support structures for the ECSE Dept and changes to the Novell login process. The Dept has and will continue to request individual student logins to be restored to the ECSE laboratory computers.

Students were asked to comment on the transition to the new teaching IT system Moodle from Blackboard. The transition from a student perspective has been good on many fronts. The use of Quizzes to collect laboratory marks was “very positively received” by students. One concern was that there appeared to be discrepancies in
the depth of assessment between Malaysia and Clayton campuses in ECE3022 based on the appearance of Malaysian based assessment columns that were not used at Clayton.

The Dept announced the fabrication of a new integrated circuit as part of the Bionic Eye project. The chip has been tested and performs electrode stimulation as per the specifications. Students enjoy hearing about research innovations and are inspired by the interesting projects.

A new HoD, Prof Jamie Evans is to commence next week and an announcement will be sent to the students introducing Jamie. Arthur Lowery will be staying on and will have more time for research and teaching.

Mechatronics was discussed. One area of improvement noted was that a design unit that considers cross discipline design choices between Electrical and Mechanical options would be a worthwhile improvement.

Next scheduled meeting: Week 8 Semester 1 2012