The 1/2008 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 18th of March 2008 in room 203/Building 72 at 1.00 pm.

Minutes

Present:  A/Professor L. Kleeman (Chair)  
Professor Arthur Lowery  
Dr. Andrew Price

Apologies: A/Professor G. Holmes

Students Present:

Elizabeth Anderson (Level 2 BE),  
Andrew Bonavia (Level 3 / 4 BTE),  
Aiden Lister (Level 4 Mechatronics)  
Ahmad Sammour (Level 3 BE),  
Meaghan Soutter (Level 4 BCSE)  
Thomas Tan (Level 4 BSc/BE)  
Xiao Fei SHI (Level 2 BE)

Level 4:
The mechatronics representative, Aiden, expressed his concern about the structure of the mechatronics course where level 2 units were being slotted into the 4th year such as ECE2041 and 2nd year materials engineering units into the third year. These units were felt to be too basic and repetitive for the Mechatronic students. Other comments were made concerning a mechanical 2nd year unit running an exam with questions unrelated to the material taught. These matters were felt to be more appropriate at a Mechtronics feedback session. Since the scope of this committee is concerned with ECSE units, the representative was asked about ECE units and replied that ECE units were really good and well run in comparison. These comments will be communicated to the Mechatronics coordinator.

Meaghan commented positively on the recording of lectures in ECE4063 Large Scale Digital Design by Lindsay Kleeman and the efforts made by David Suter to resolve timetable clashes between ECE4076 and other units. Recorded lectures were a useful way of alleviating timetabling issues and replaying of difficult to follow material in lectures, especially when notetaking. Timetabling clashes between electives and core 3 and 4 units was highlighted as a concern amongst students. This will be followed up with the ECSE timetabling coordinator so that the issue can be addressed in future. Demonstrator quality was discussed for some electives and it was requested that lecturers be present in labs that have demonstrators who are not as experienced as others.
There was some disappointment reportedly expressed by some students that electives such as ECE4023 RF Electronics was cancelled due to staff redundancies. Due to recent staff redundancies this was explained to be unavoidable.

Level 3:
The control core unit ECE3031 was noted as going very well this year and the labs were well run. Audio recordings of the lectures were well received. ECE3093 was highlighted as a problem with the lecturer going too fast and being unprepared. Lecture theatre E1 was noted as poorly ventilated in the recent hot weather by both Andrew Price and the student representatives.

Wireless access to the internet was considered poor in Engineering compared to other areas of the university.

Level 2:
The ECE2071 tutorials were greatly appreciated for their small group atmosphere with more direct teaching that encouraged students to interact naturally with the tutors and lecturer. This was considered by some students as a more beneficial learning environment than the large exam hall tutorials with multiple demonstrators that are run in ECE2041, due to the noisy environment and greater distractions.

There was a discussion as to whether it was good to have the lecturer giving tutorials versus another perspective for explaining the material. In the end most people agreed that it comes down to the individuals involved in the teaching.

Next scheduled meeting: 22nd April 2008