Monash University

Department of Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering

Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting

The 1/2010 Student Staff Consultative Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 23rd of March 2010 in room 203/Building 72 at 1.00 pm.

Minutes

Present: A/Professor L. Kleeman (Chair)
A/Professor G. Holmes
Dr. Andrew Price
Dr Le Binh

Apologies: Professor Arthur Lowery, Ms Ros Rimington, Dr Ahmet Sekercioglu

Students Present:
Elizabeth Anderson (Level 4 BE),
Ashleigh Sun (Level 4 BE)
Sarah Fitzpatrick (Level 4 BE)
Vaibhav Verma (Level 3 BE)
Samuel Trolland (Level 3 BE)
Li Huey Tuen (Level 4 BCSE)
Ryan Beeby (Level 2.5 BSc/BE)
Adam Harris (Level 3 BScBE)
Lynn Meng Wang (Level 3 BE)
Saduni Jayakody (Level 4 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 were encouraged to become known in class so that student can email items for discussion on this committee. Student representatives’ email addresses are published, with their permission, on the Departmental webpages accessible to enrolled students. As a new initiative this year, a photo of representatives will be published on the internal webpages accessible to students so that the representatives can be known by sight in the class to other students. Permission was sought from representatives before the photo was taken.

Comments were made about recorded lecture videos being a very good resource especially during the examination period for revision purposes. A student representative lamented that none of the current lecturers in level 3 were recording lectures. There was a discussion relating to learning outcomes and lecture attendance as related to lecture recording. Some academic staff were opposed to recorded lectures and others supported it. The recording is a pilot programme supported by the Faculty of Engineering. Student representatives thought it was a good idea.
Electives taught at level 3 or 4 were raised in the context of the background material assumed. Some students were concerned that the assumed knowledge in these electives was sometimes aimed at a level 4 student. The students need to raise this with the lecture(s) concerned and in the lecture at the time. The committee asked that specific examples need to be brought to the attention of the chair.

C programming was discussed as required knowledge for ECE3073. Since ECE2071 is a perquisite then this a reasonable requirement. Also the lab equipment such as DE2 boards was available in many more labs this year and outside of normal scheduled lab sessions.

The elective unit ECE4054 was raised by a student representative who asked whether it would be running in second semester given that the staff teaching that unit would be leaving. The chair stated that new recruitment was underway but there was no guarantee that appropriate staff could be found in time and the department could not guarantee that all electives would run every year due to resource issues and staffing. The students requested that a formal announcement be made concerning elective offerings. This will occur on the ECSE webpages once the situation was known and in good time for second semester.

The issue of code plagiarism in ECE3073 labs and other units was raised by a student representative who was concerned that some student were obtaining an unfair advantage over others through using previous students' code. The issue was discussed and the staff emphasised that plagiarism would not be tolerated. One suggestion is that the code be uploaded onto Blackboard and checked for plagiarism at a later date.

The chair asked for comments from student representatives about the use of calculators in exams where some more capable calculators could present an advantage for some students. It was generally agreed by student representatives that the time overhead in retrieving stored information and running pre-programmed functions was not considered advantageous in ECSE exams. If the student did not have sufficient knowledge before the exam it was felt by student representatives that the time wasted looking for the answer in the exam with high end graphics calculators was such a disadvantage that it outweighed any benefit. The representatives did not consider the range of calculators available to have any significant bearing on exam performance and basic scientific calculators were adequate.

The issue of ECE4095 project marking standards was raised and AP reported that a document was under preparation (in consultation with Malaysian colleagues) explaining the standards for grades in projects. He cautioned against the fragmentation of marking into small parts since this can result in unsatisfactory discrimination of the outcomes.

Next scheduled meeting: 27th April 2010