Mechanical Engineering Student/Staff Liaison Meeting, Wednesday 11 May 2011 (1300 - 1400 Room 45-205)

Actions from Last Meeting (Actions generated in this meeting are listed at the end)

- MV to assist students speaking to 1st years in sem 2 2010. Done
- HoD to address communications between course coordinators and tutors at staff meeting. Done.
  - Further discussion: Some further preparation for tutors was thought to be needed in some cases. While all tutors must complete the tutor-training run through the Faculty, some students thought that further introduction for tutors to the material and arrangements for particular courses was lacking in some courses. Action: HoD to raise at a staff meeting the issue of tutor preparation and induction for courses.
- HoD to check with EAIT IT about re-imaging/re-booting problems in computer labs. Done.
  - Further discussion: The issue is much better than it was last year but there it still takes a long time for a computer to reboot if it is turned off and on. Action: HoD to let the EAIT IT Infrastructure Manager (Rik Taylor) know about the reboot time for computers.
- HoD to ask the curriculum review committee chair, if a website could be created to publish essential information or an email could be sent to the students.
  - Students would like further updates on the curriculum review - particularly the integrated masters. Action: HoD to suggest further communications with current students on the curriculum review - particularly the integrated masters.

Objectives of the Student/Staff Liaison Committee:
The main objectives of the committee are

- to review the undergraduate plans contributed to by the Division, and
- to contribute to the continual quality improvement of programs contributed to by the Division.

These will be achieved by

- monitoring the delivery of courses,
- discussing the relevance of the curriculum,
- acting as a forum for suggestions for modification and improvement to programs and the learning environment,
- highlighting and sharing examples of good practice,
- monitoring workload of students,
- considering and seeking to resolve academic problems which are of concern to students, and
- making recommendations to other committees and to managers on matters requiring action that the Committee cannot resolve directly.

Apologies received: A/Prof Martin Veidt

Attendance :

- Students: Yassmin Abdel-Magied (IV Mech), Alex Bowen-Rotsaert (III Aero), Joshua Brown (IV Mech), Jack Butler (I Aero), Scott Fisher (III Aero), Alistair Francis (I Metr), Conrad Hine (IV Mech), Nikky Holmes (IV Metr), Julie Kayes (IV Aero), Sam Keogh (IV Aero), Morgan Meeurwissen (II Mech), Joanna Oon (IV Metr), Jessica Orr (I Aero), Rebecca Simpson (II Metr), Ashley Wing (IV Mech)
- Staff: Prof David Mee (chair), Dr. Matthew Cleary (representing Mech), Dr Peter Jacobs (representing Mechatronics), Dr. Vincent Wheatley (representing Mech and Aero), Prof Ross McAree

Health & Safety Those present were asked to raise any relevant OH&S issues:

- No major issues.
Report from the Head of Division (DJM)

- Changes to year 1 in 2012. The HoD discussed the changes proposed for year 1 in 2012, particularly with reference to the effects on the mechanical plans. The proposed first year for the mechanical plans is below. For Mechatronics, thermo is replaced with a programming course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Sem 1</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>If missing one high school course, do both in sem 1 and ELEC in sem 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGG1100</td>
<td>MATH1051</td>
<td>ENGG1XXZ Introduction to Electrical Systems</td>
<td>MATH1050 / Elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Sem 2</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>If missing two high school courses, do both in sem 1 and ELEC in sem 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGG1200</td>
<td>MATH1052</td>
<td>ENGG1XXY Statics and Dynamics</td>
<td>ENGG1XXX Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Therodynamics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The HoD gave an update on the five-year integrated Masters. It is proposed to trial this in the Chemical Engineering plans from next year and that it be introduced in Mech, Mech and Aero, Mech and Mat as new first-year changes come through. BE/ME awarded with honours.
  - There was discussion about the idea to have the four year as just the main area (e.g. Mechanical, Civil, Chemical, ...) and then have the dual majors only five year (e.g. Mech and Aero, Mech and Materials, ...). This was thought to be good for attracting some high-achieving students but it may also lead to some good students who would otherwise be interested in one of the four-year dual majors looking elsewhere for their degree.
- The HoD discussed changes to honours weightings - weighting to be 1,2,3,4 based on level of courses. It is likely to be introduced from 2012 and it is expected that it will be introduced such that no current students are disadvantaged.

Teaching and Learning Matters

- Delivery of courses
  - "I would like to propose that tutorial sessions for most courses be conducted in two halves. The first half would be dedicated to explaining a concept from lectures in more depth or by going through examples. The second half could currently run in a similar method to most tutorials, using it for tutorial questions. I think this would increase tutorial attendance and hopefully increase the overall performance for all students" (M. Burley).
  - This was discussed by the committee. It was thought that this might be of value in some courses, most likely more useful in the earlier year courses (years 1 and 2).
  - Action: HoD to raise at next Mechanical Staff Meeting the suggestion of running tutorials in two parts - a formal part at the start (e.g. concept explanation/problem solving and then an informal question/answer section in the second half).
  - There was an extended discussion on tutors. Evaluation of tutors part way through the course was suggested as potentially useful so that tutors would get some formal feedback that they could use to amend their tutoring style if necessary for the remainder of the course. This was considered more useful than an evaluation at the end of the semester because many tutors only tutor a course once and the feedback is not so useful.
  - Action: SoMME Teaching and Learning Committee to consider how to promote formal tutor evaluations mid-way through the semester so that casual tutors can get feedback that can be acted upon to improve value of tutoring to students.

- Relevance of the curriculum

- Student workloads
- Academic problems of concern to students
  - Computer access for students - NAL Labs and 78-336 crowded. TV Crok access - should this be just for particular years or for all years?
    - There was much discussion on computers and access to software. This is particularly a problem for students in years 3 and 4 when licensed software is needed for projects and assignments. Problems:
      - you have to get in early to get a computer
      - when a class comes in, students must leave
      - some classes use the computer lab and only use a small fraction of the computers
      - the software needed is only available on computers in some rooms and not in others
      - tutors and lecturers have noted problems with some students not wanting to leave when a class is scheduled
    - There was general agreement to make the TV Krok Design Centre a resource primarily for mechanical students in years 3 and 4 when access to computers with licensed software is most needed. Action: HoD to note that the TV Krok Design Centre is to be a resource primarily for use by mechanical students in years 3 and 4.
    - Students asked whether it is possible to get access to licensed software from their laptops.
    - Action: HoD to invite the EAIT IT Infrastructure Manager (Rik Taylor) to the next liaison committee meeting to discuss computing-related issues.
  - Costs of printing reports. Electronic submission was discussed as a possible alternative to hard copy submission for assignments. Action: HoD to raise at next Mechanical Staff Meeting the potential for increased use of electronic submission of assignments.
  - There was discussion of the Mech/Civil Design Lab in Hawken. Its limitations were identified, such as difficulty in securing a room for group work, the high level of noise in the main area, the fact that some students used the rooms to play computer games, etc.. Its advantages were also identified, such as it was very useful for group work if you could get one of the rooms, the screens in the rooms were good for connecting to laptops and it was good to have a space where students could go. It is still considered to be a valuable resource overall. Suggestions were to bolt down the tables in the main area and to split the main area up into smaller rooms.
  - First year students noted that later year students use the 1st year learning centre.

Other Matters

- Mechanical Engineering Students Society Report (MESS President).
  - MESS president busy doing his acoustics experiment

Next Meeting

Aim for early to middle of semester 2, 2011.

Action Summary

- HoD to raise at a staff meeting the issue of tutor preparation and induction for courses.
- HoD to let the EAIT IT Infrastructure Manager (Rik Taylor) know about the reboot time for computers.
- HoD to invite the EAIT IT Infrastructure Manager (Rik Taylor) to the next liaison committee meeting.
- HoD to suggest further communications with current students on the curriculum review - particularly the integrated masters.
- HoD to raise at next Mechanical Staff Meeting the suggestion of running tutorials in two parts - a formal part at the start (e.g. concept explanation/problem solving and then an informal
question/answer section in the second half).

- SoMME Teaching and Learning Committee to consider how to promote formal tutor evaluations mid-way through the semester so that casual tutors can get feedback that can be acted upon to improve value of tutoring to students.

- HoD to raise at next Mechanical Staff Meeting the potential for increased use of electronic submission of assignments.

- HoD to note that the TV Krok Design Centre is to be a resource primarily for use by mechanical students in years 3 and 4.