Mechanical Engineering Student/Staff Liaison Meeting, Wednesday 31 March 2010 (1300 - 1400 Room 43-205)

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

- Highlight the time it may take for safety inductions for the Mechanical and Instrumentation workshops in the introductory lecture for the thesis courses. (Course coordinator MECH4500/01). Done DJM

- Highlight issues with group work and workloads to staff at a Mechanical Engineering staff meeting. Done DJM
- Contact library to see if required texts for all courses can automatically be added to the Kept at Desk collection each semester. Done MV
- The issue of learning software to be discussed at a Mechanical Engineering Staff Meeting. Done DJM
- DJM to tell staff of student concerns over responses to emails. Done DJM
- DJM to investigate the feasibility of providing students with coloured ribbons for their graduation. Quick investigation done. No further action.
- Another postgraduate careers advice session to be held in second semester and final year students to be invited to the School heats of the “Three Minute Thesis Competition” on 28 August. Done PRM

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:
Attendance :

- Students: Yassmin Abdel-Magied (3rd year Mech), Peter Blyton (3rd year Mech&Aero), Alexander Bowen-Rotsaert (2nd year Mech&Aero), Clinton Glanville
Health & Safety Those present were asked to raise any relevant OH&S issues:

- Students asked that all students in the mechanical plans be informed about access to Mansergh-Shaw during 2010. Action DJM

- Students asked where they could find room numbers for academic staff for 2010. These are available on the School's website and on the door at entry to the School office in 50-C202.

Report from the Head of Division (DJM)

- New level on Mansergh-Shaw building
  - Staff and postgrad students have been moved from the "tower" of the Mech building while the extra level is added. Staff and students are now located in Hawken, Frank White and GP South. DJM spoke to students in levels 2, 3 and 4 at key courses for each year in the first week of semester to update them on what was happening.
  - The UK-based president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) visited UQ on 29 March and met with staff and student representatives. He was impressed with the students he met.
  - The faculty is undertaking a review of the engineering curriculum at UQ. This was discussed. The students present were supportive of the proposed additional 3 y and 5 y exit points. Students present indicated that they would like to be asked their opinions in the engineering curriculum review being undertaken in the faculty at present. Action: convey this information to the curriculum review committee. Action: DJM

Teaching and Learning Matters

- Delivery of courses
  - Students present found lectopia useful
    - if they missed a lecture,
    - if they only had one contact session at the university on the day of the lecture, and
    - during revision

- Relevance of the curriculum
• ENGG1000 - students expressed interest in ensuring that some graphics was included in the course.
• Site visits - students expressed interest in more site visits within the program. DJM noted that this is difficult in the large courses and that the school is looking to promote more site visits in higher level courses where numbers are smaller.

• Student workloads
• Academic problems of concern to students
  • MECH2305 had a due date in the Easter break
  • There was an issue with the time it takes for computers in the NAL labs to come to life if they were rebooted and that students were locking computers and leaving them. Action: DJM to follow up with Rick Taylor. This has been taken up with EAIT IT and here is the response from the EAIT IT manager, Mr. Rik Taylor:
    • Students shouldn’t be locking screens. It’s clearly stated when they agree to the terms and conditions when they log in and on notices in each of the labs. I’ve also put a reminder announcement on the EAIT studenthelp pages, see http://studenthelp.eait.uq.edu.au
    • However this shouldn’t actually cause student problems because: “Students should not "lock" systems except when picking up print jobs. Students should be aware that any other student can claim a locked machine, simply by entering their own username and password. This logs the previous user off, killing any jobs left running on the "locked" system - by leaving machines locked, you will likely lose any data not saved into your home/group drives.” As such there should be no need for any of the lab PC’s to be powered off in such a way as to require a full rebuild during the day.
    • When the lab machines are restarted cleanly they give a number of options. The default is to simply start windows. Other options such as refresh and rebuild explain that there will be potentially significant delays. As a last resort, if a PC has badly hung and requires a hard reset (which marks the disk as dirty and in need of a rebuild), it is still possible for students avoid this delay by hitting the esc key to abort reimaging process (although we’d only recommend this if no other PC’s in the lab were available).

Other Matters

• Mechanical Engineering Students Society (MESS).
  • Held over to next meeting.

Next Meeting

Aim for early to middle of semester 2, 2010.
Action Summary

- Students asked that all students in the mechanical plans be informed about access to Mansergh-Shaw during 2010. Action DJM

- Students present indicated that they would like to be asked their opinions in the engineering curriculum review being undertaken in the faculty at present. Action: convey this information to the curriculum review committee. Action: DJM. Done. Sent these details to the Chairs of the "Stakeholder Engagement" and "Pedagogy and Student Experience" subcommittees.

- There was an issue with the time it takes for computers in the NAL labs to come to life if they were rebooted and that students were locking computers and leaving them. Action: DJM to follow up with Rick Taylor. Done. Response indicated in minutes above.