Mechanical Engineering Student/Staff Liaison Meeting, Friday 4 May 2012  
(1300 - 1400) 45-205

Apologies received: Alistair Francis, Martin Veidt, Jessica Orr

Attendance:


Staff: Dr Peter Jacobs (Chair and representing Mechatronics), Prof David Mee (HoD), Dr. Alex Klimenko (representing Mech), Dr. Vincent Wheatley (representing Mech and Aero), Prof Ross McAree, Mr. Rik Taylor (EAIT IT Team)

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

- HOD to arrange for a School Open Day for undergraduate students for 2012
  ■ Done: School Open Day planned for 10th May
- HOD to check that students will be able to get a personal copy of CREO for their laptop/home computers
  ■ Done: Students can load CREO onto personal computers
- HOD to see if MEA Report Writing Guide can be put on the student resources site for UQ Undergraduate Engineering
  ■ In progress: Checking with the author of the guide (who is external to UQ) for approval to post at this site. Rik Taylor to look at adding MEA Report Writing Guide to Faculty Engineering Resources page.
- HOD to see if Course Profiles in the School can be published earlier
  ■ Done: For 2012 courses, course coordinators were asked to submit course profiles for 2012 in December 2011. Not all were received at that time but there were more profiles published earlier than in previous years. Student noted that early release of Course Profiles can cause late changes although this is seen as unavoidable. Students are most concerned that Assessment Items are correct on uploading Course Profiles.
- HOD to consult with course coordinators for 4th year semester 2 courses to see if better coordination of due assessment items can be planned.
  ■ Done: This issue was raised with course coordinators at Mechanical Divisional staff meeting.
- HOD to consult with course coordinator for MECH4470 to ensure that the labs in MECH4470 run better in 2012.
  ■ Done: Course coordinator is working to prepare experiments earlier for 2012.

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.

**Health & Safety**
- No relevant OH&S issues raised

**Report from the Head of Division (HoD - DJM)**
- School Open Day for undergraduate students in the School in 2012 will be held on 10 May.
- Progress on integrated masters
  - Being piloted in Chemical Engineering plans in 2012.
  - Plans for EE plans in 2013 and others (including Mech plans) in 2014.
- Accreditation in 2012
  - Students may be required for interview for provisionally accredited programs.
- The School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering will undergo the standard UQ 7-year review in 2013

**Mechanical Engineering Students Society Report (MESS President)**
- MESS undergone restructure with the introduction of EUS governance. This is working better with Scholarships controlled centrally and Industry engagement benefitting.
- Launch party successful.
- MESS merchandise in progress with Canterbury clothing.
- Strong use of MESS Facebook account – useful for industry engagement.
  ACTION: Mechanical Open Day to be advertised through MESS Facebook also.
  Students noted that the use of MESS Facebook for advertising is limited to within faculty support and companies providing MESS sponsorship.
  Students propose that Mech staff create a Facebook account to utilise the MESS Facebook site directly.

**Teaching and Learning Matters**

**Delivery of Courses**
- Mech staff encouraged to introduce a Mech Auto course.
  - Student noted that both QUT and Griffith Universities offer a course in this field and UQ should try to meet this demand.
  - ACTION: HOD to review Mech-Auto courses offered by alternative Universities and raise at Mech Staff meeting.
- Teaching Staff Changes:
  - New staff members include Ingo Jahn, Anand Veeraragavan and Michael Carney.
  - Departing teaching staff member Mathew Cleary – will be greatly missed by the students.
- PowerPoint Use.
  - Providing enough time for students to process PowerPoint slides is embraced by students. This involves adding the last information on each slide in the header of the next slide.
  - Majority of student cohort worry that online PowerPoint has become a primary material, with attending lectures becoming a secondary option. Increasingly less incentive to attend lectures and this affects attendance numbers (if lecture slides and online slides providing identical content).
- Computer Room Availability
  - Students noted that rooms such as 70-336 are booked by many courses and it is difficult finding a workstation for unscheduled study. EAIT IT noted as of 2012 all computer equipment and software image will be identical in all faculty run computers.
  - ACTION: EAIT IT Dale Lawson to circulate computer lab floor plans through MESS
Facebook.
Students are encouraged to report any issues to EAIT Helpdesk.
- GPA Changes:
  ACTION: HOD to check that students are informed of the new GPA Honours requirements to students.

Relevance of the curriculum
- No issues raised

Student Workloads
- No issues raised

Academic problems of concern to students
- MECH3400 78% failure rate of Mid-semester Exam
  Possible Explanations:
  ■ 1 large tutorial for 255 students, Lecture room with only 2 tutors and prevalence of online PowerPoint discourages attendance therefore attendance rates: Week1 250 people – Week 8 50 people. Space creates engagement difficulties.
  ■ Difficulty of exam overestimated by students - not prepared for the assessment of basic knowledge.
  ■ Timetabling issues lead to students not attending on certain days.
  Possible Solutions:
  ■ Optional assignment to bring grades up for students that failed.
  ■ Increase number of tutorial sessions to reduce student numbers in each session.
  ■ Less lecture time and more tutorial time (2 hours per week).
  ■ Establish contact hour with Lecturer (1 hour per week where students can visit Lecturer at office for assistance).
  ACTION: HOD to arrange for an extra tutorial each week for the rest of semester in the extended year 1 learning centre.
  ACTION: HoD to raise issues with course coordinator.

Next Meeting
- Aim for early to middle of Semester 2, 2012.

Action Summary
- HOD to send MEA Report Writing Guide documentation to EAIT IT (Dale Lawson) for uploading
- Mechanical Open Day to be advertised through MESS Facebook also.
- HOD to consider Mech-Auto course and raise issue at Mech Staff meeting.
- HOD to disseminate PowerPoint information at Mech Staff Meeting
- EAIT IT Rik Taylor to circulate computer lab floor plans through MESS Facebook.
- HOD to circulate the new GPA Honours requirements to students.
- HOD to arrange for an extra tutorial each week for the rest of semester in the extended year 1 learning centre.
- ACTION: HoD to raise issues with course coordinator.