Present: Professor David Mee, Dr Michael Kearney, Mr Dale Lawson, Professor Richard Morgan, Professor Mingxing Zhang, Mr Mitchell Bessell, Mr Sean Murphy, Miss Jessica Orr, Mr Luke Plaxton, Mr Robert Stewart, Ms Mary Thatcher, Mr Zi Yhang, Ms Katie Gollschewski.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2013, were taken as read and confirmed.

1. Scheduling
It was noted that the meeting time clashed with a large lecture and it was recommended that the timetable be checked prior to scheduling meetings. It was also recommended that the minutes of meetings be distributed to all students after meetings, and the agenda sent out at least one week prior to the meeting.

2. Student course feedback via survey throughout semester
The implementation of a permanent online survey for student feedback is being considered by the School. Consultation with the University’s survey policy and teaching and learning policies is needed, and permission sought before implementation can occur. As an outcome of the Bachelor of Engineering Accreditation process, a request has been made to survey undergraduate students for feedback on the BE program. This is currently being processed by EAIT Faculty.

When surveyed, students are reminded to provide feedback that is both informative and constructive, with improvement of courses and the BE program as the aim.

3. MECH3600
The change to the first year engineering program has resulted in the question of whether a standalone management course is required. A proposal has been submitted for consideration at the School’s Teaching and Learning Committee to integrate the engineering project management and communication content of MECH3600 into the third year design courses MECH3100 and AERO3110 for the Mechanical, Mechanical and Aerospace and Mechanical and Materials plans, respectively. This would result in MECH3600 being cancelled. It was noted that Engineers Australia see the management component as a very important part of the program.

Students provided feedback on this proposal, namely –

- There was unanimous agreement from students who have completed MECH3600 that it was one of the best courses they had undertaken and that it is very different to the technical courses in the program and there is a lot to learn.
- It is a very relevant course, and is useful for professional practice.
- A student who has tutored both MECH3600 and first year courses noted that MECH3600 was a good step up from the content covered in first year. It was noted that this content is addressed in ENGG1100 and ENGG1200 now (as these courses were introduced in 2012, some of the later year students had not undertaken them).
- Students expressed concern that if the content was attached to other courses then the value (and management focus) may be lessened. It was noted that in the Mechatronics program teamwork and management is part of several courses, and this works well.
- It was suggested that it could be a second year course as the information is valuable for overall studies.
- Students noted that the group breakdown in the course was really good – there was a good mix of students in each.
- The projects would need to be simplified to allow these to be incorporated into an existing course.
- Students questioned whether a business or management course could be made compulsory instead, as the technical component is not required. It was noted that there are difficulties in arranging this, namely the cohort size, an appropriate level of content (i.e. not a first year course). It was noted that students saw value in content presented by an engineer with real world experience teaching management.
4. Report from Mechanical Engineering Student Society (MESS)
MESS is again the largest EUS group with around 500 members. The executives have been working to organise industry visits to campus, advertise professional practice/vacation work opportunities, and arrange workshops with external presenters (e.g. like the TAFE course undertaken in year 2).

5. Professional practice
The EAIT Faculty is considering employing someone to liaise with employers to create opportunities for professional practice. The School of Business has someone in a similar position who has advised that their industry partners are looking for engineering students.

Students noted that there is a requirement in the guidelines for the preparation of report on engineering professional practice that “You must attach the original Certificate of Engineering Professional Practice, signed by the employer, directly to the Faculty. Please note that photocopied, faxed or scanned copies are not accepted.” Students asked if this requirement could be removed, as this is difficult when professional practice is undertaken outside of the Brisbane region.

6. Technical build
Students noted that the UQ Racing group has 100-120 members this year, with 40-50 people attending the technical meetings. There is a desire within the cohort to undertake a technical build, however UQ Racing cannot accommodate the numbers.

Students asked whether a technical build (e.g. gears, bearings and shafts) could be incorporated into MECH3100 as it would assist students understanding of the limitations of their theoretical designs if they could manufacture the item in question. It was noted that it is difficult with mechanical design to create, finance and build a project of appropriate size. The group indicated that they have some ideas for projects and the Head of School suggested they meet with him separately to discuss.

7. Access to microwaves after 5pm
Students noted that when working on campus in computer laboratories after 5pm that there is no access to a microwave to heat food (the refectory machines are locked at night, and access to the FYLC is restricted). Students asked whether a microwave could be placed into the second year learning centre.

These communal areas (computer laboratories and learning centres) are usually only cleaned once per week and tend to be messy. Students noted that it is difficult to clean spills without supplies, and recommended that a supply of paper towels be provided. It was indicated that MESS/EUS would create a roster of members who would ensure that the area is kept clean if a microwave and paper towels are provided.

8. MECH4304 case studies
Students were asked for feedback on changing the teaching method of MECH4304 Net Shape Manufacturing so that students would be required to complete background reading prior to the lecture. The lectures would then focus on case studies. Students were supportive, and indicated that in other courses there was a brief overview at the beginning of the lecture or a short quiz (using clickers or UQ Poll) to ensure that students understood the content.

9. Use of whiteboards
Students noted that in large lecture theatres it is difficult to read whiteboards and noted that visualisers were much clearer to read and asked if this could be passed onto teaching staff. It was noted that for some courses, writing on a whiteboard or visualiser allows the presenter to pace the delivery and explain a concept progressively in a way that PowerPoint does not.
10. Graduation events

Students noted that the School of Civil Engineering hosts a graduation event each semester. The School also holds an event each December, however in 2013 as the ceremony was on a Saturday there was not enough time to hold a pre-graduation ceremony. It was confirmed that it is the intention of the School to hold a pre-graduation event in December 2014.

The mid-year graduation event is run by the Faculty as there is a smaller cohort of graduates.

11. Thesis scheduling

Students questioned why mechanical students only have a yearlong option for their thesis as other schools offer a semester long option. In the past this was to ensure that student had enough time to undertake the thesis, and because the courses do not exist to allow students to do this.

12. Access to IT labs outside of semester

Access to EAIT IT labs is restricted outside of semester. Students who are undertaking summer semester courses, or a Summer Research Scholarship are given access to one lab and other requests for access are considered individually. The majority of labs are closed to allow the IT group time to update the machines and software. If a student requires access outside of semester, they can email the School a request for access.

It was also noted that the EAIT IT group appreciates students emailing them when items are broken in labs. Students should email helpdesk@eait.uq.edu.au to report any issues.

13. Assessment and Marking

Students had several comments regarding assessment items and marking, namely –

- One student commented that they had just attended a lecture for MECH4500 which had explained the purpose of and how to complete a literature review. It was noted that it would be useful to have this information presented earlier in the program as it is relevant in other courses (e.g. MECH3600).
- It was suggested that the MECH2100 and MECH3100 drawings be marked by workshop staff as they have the experience to be able to mark these appropriately.
- It was suggested that the assessment rubrics be released at least 3 week prior to an assessment item due date.

The below items were on the agenda, but were not discussed in detail –

14. Scholarship Guarantee

The School began a Scholarship Guarantee scheme in 2013 to encourage high achieving undergraduate students to consider undertaking a research higher degree (MPhil or PhD) in the School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering. A guaranteed Living Allowance Scholarship at the APA rate (2014 is $25,392 pa) for domestic students with a GPA of 6.2 or above is issued to all eligible final year students in April.

Eligible students in 2014 will receive an email from the School shortly with a Scholarship Guarantee offer.

15. Thesis Agreements

The School is supportive of students wishing to undertake a final year thesis jointly with an industry company. In these cases, a UQ Intellectual Property agreement must be signed by all involved parties. A template of this agreement can be found online under ‘Engineering – Specific Placements’: https://legaloffice.app.uq.edu.au/Student-Placement-Agreement

Any variance to this agreement requested by the student or industry must be approved by the UQ legal office. Students are encouraged to commence this process early as the process of revision and approval of a non-standard agreement can be lengthy and must be finalised before a student commences the project.
16. Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
The 'Hypersonics – from Shock Waves to Scramjets’ edX MOOC commences on 7 April 2014 and runs for 9 weeks. Further information and registration is online:
https://www.edx.org/course/uqx/uqx-hypers301x-hypersonics-shock-waves-1435#.Uz5OnvmSz2E