

ECE Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2008

Members present: Jont Allen, Tanguil Basar, Steven Bishop, Donna Brown, Patrick Chapman, Kuang-Chien Hsieh, Yih-Chun Hu, Douglas Jones, Erhan Kudeki, Stephen Levinson, Jonathan Makela, Pramod Viswanath

Guests: Jean-Pierre Leburton

1. The Minutes of the November 3, 2008 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
2. The Chair reviewed the outcome of the May 2008 informational preference survey of the Curriculum Committee members regarding the placement of the first physical electronics course in the EE core. The three options with significant support were
 1. Place "ECE 340" in the Advanced Core (four-of-six list)
 2. Place a suitably revised ECE 340 in the required core
 3. Place a revised ECE 340 in required core and a follow-on physical electronics course in the Advanced Core (three-of-six list)The Chair stated that the first option above was almost universally favored by faculty in "systems" or "computer" areas, and placement in the required core was almost universally supported by members in "physics-oriented" areas. The Chair cautioned against placing too much weight on the numerical results of the survey, since the options and the form of the course were somewhat vague and hypothetical at the time of the survey. However, the Chair suggested that we focus on these options when making a final decision on placement in the revised EE curriculum.
3. The Committee decided to survey all of the current students in ECE 440, ECE 398 NC and ECE 398 KC regarding our goals of students taking the course as juniors and of increased interest in further study in physical electronics. The second draft of the survey was discussed and modified. It was decided that a member of the Curriculum Committee would administer the survey during the following week.
4. Continued discussion about common course instruction, homeworks, and exams and whether requiring it violates academic freedom produced differing views. Many held that common instruction and evaluation is necessary for consistency and fair grading; others held that in-semester variation in instruction is no different or worse than the unavoidable semester-to-semester variation. The Chair argued that, by his reading of the Academic Staff Handbook, any departmental requirement for common instruction would violate academic freedom and thus cannot be mandated; others interpreted it differently.
5. The Committee adjourned at 3:54 PM.

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