

# ECE Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes for February 15, 2008

**Members present:** Tanguil Basar, Stephen Bishop, Donna Brown, Patrick Chapman, Matthew Frank, Kuang-Chien Hsieh, Yih-Chun Hu, Douglas Jones, Erhan Kudeki, Stephen Levinson, Xiuling Li, Jonathan Makela, Michael Oelze, Pramod Viswanath

**Guests:** Lynford Goddard, Richard Blahut

1. The Minutes of the February 8, 2008 meeting were approved with a minor correction.
2. The proposal to change the ECE 411 prerequisite to reflect course numbering changes and to slightly improve the wording of the course description was approved.
3. The ECE 498 course proposal by Naresh Shanbhag was approved. In response to a post-meeting query as to the overlap with Deming Chen's 500-level SOC course, Naresh said there is no overlap; this ECE 498 (which may eventually become ECE 426) is a laboratory course focused around a design project.
4. The details of the curricular support of the student-led PURE proposal for an early-stage research experience were hammered out. After much discussion, the Committee decided, on a 10-1 vote, to recommend the creation of an ECE 297 course, open for credit **only** to freshman or sophomore students (as defined by the university). There was consensus that only one credit hour be allowed per semester, and on a second, tie-breaking vote, a 5-4 decision (several abstentions) to allow up to a maximum of two total hours of ECE 297 credit, which can be counted as technical electives (5-2 vote).

The Committee was unanimous in insisting that the creation of ECE 297 **in no way** restricts the option of faculty to work with undergraduates at the freshman and sophomore level through the traditional ECE 397 mechanism, nor obligates them to accept students under the ECE 297 rubric. This merely provides an additional opportunity to engage students at an earlier level with less sophisticated or advanced projects. Details as to the involvement of graduate students in the process (always under the supervision of faculty) and how such graduate students would be acknowledged for their instructor role remain open questions; the Curriculum Committee's consensus is that the Graduate Committee should make such decisions, in consultation with the department and higher administration as needed.

5. Lynford Goddard joined the meeting at 11:49 and answered the Committee's questions about his ECE 498 LG proposal. He acknowledged that in principle, students could learn the material and skills to be taught in the course by "osmosis", but pointed out that the same holds for **any** material we teach, and that the intent of the course is to dramatically accelerate students' learning of these skills so that they can be highly productive much sooner and require less individual remedial work in these areas. He indicated several changes in the course syllabus have been made in response to Graduate Committee discussions, and promised to send us the new outline soon.
6. The Committee adjourned at 12:05 AM.

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