

ECE Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes for December 1, 2008

Members present: Jont Allen, Tanguil Basar, Stephen Bishop, Patrick Chapman, Kent Choquette, Matthew Frank, Kuang-Chien Hsieh, Yih-Chun Hu, Douglas Jones, Erhan Kudeki, Jonathan Makela, Sean Meyn, Pramod Viswanath

Guests: Scott Carney, Gary Swenson

1. The Minutes of the November 10, 2008 meeting were approved.
2. Gary Swenson and Scott Carney presented a proposal for changes to ECE 445. In light of substantial evolution of the course under Gary's leadership over the past several years in implementing a more substantial, formal, and professional design process, Scott Carney states that the workload has been and will continue to be consistent with four credit hours. The course now includes major components related to engineering professionalism, such as introduction and practice of a professional staged engineering design process (including a formal project proposal, design reviews, prototype demonstration, formal documentation, and explicit consideration and discussion of the ethical issues related to the project) and lectures on various forms of intellectual property as well as engineering ethics. Students are required to keep laboratory notebooks adequate for intellectual property protection.

They also propose to make minor changes and improvements to the required writing assignments to make the course eligible for Advanced Composition credit. This would largely involve adjustments of the assignments to require the feedback and rewrite element required of Advanced Composition courses. Prof. Carney said he had discussed the changes with Jamie Hutchinson, who is now involved in the textual review process of current student reports, and that they felt that the workload on the staff would remain manageable.

Several Committee members stated that it is clear that the course should offer four credit hours. Erhan Kudeki pointed out that this would require taking two hours away from somewhere else in the curriculum, and that this might be difficult. He said that we should consider three hours instead of four; Carney stated that the workload is and will remain consistent with four credit hours, and that he favors hours consistent with the facts. Kudeki pointed out that certain other lab courses, such as ECE 385, are two credit hours yet are universally known to require a massive amount of work; others argued that many students and faculty in fact do not know this. Carney and Jones both suggested taking the hours from the technical electives.

Kent Choquette suggested that all departmental required courses (e.g., ECE 329, ECE 440, etc.) should be strict prerequisites for ECE 445. Jones suggested that, while good in principle, this might be administratively too difficult to enforce, but Kudeki said that any problems could effectively be dealt with by petition.

3. The Committee adjourned at 3:59 PM.

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