

ECE Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes for October 26, 2007

Members present: Jont Allen, Tangul Basar, Stephen Bishop, Matthew Frank, Kuang-Chien Hsieh, Yih-Chun Hu, Douglas Jones, Erhan Kudeki, Stephen Levinson, Xiuling Li, Jonathan Makela, Sean Meyn, Michael Oelze, Pramod Viswanath

1. The minutes of the October 19, 2007 meeting were approved.
2. The Chair announced that the Committee listserv has been established at ECECurriculumCommittee@ad.uiuc.edu.
3. Erhan Kudeki noted again that the technical electives list needs to be reviewed and updated; we agreed to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.
4. Erhan also informed the Committee of a proposal from undergraduates regarding an initiative for expanding undergraduate research, largely through closer involvement of graduate students. He expressed strong support for it, and he suggested that the Curriculum Committee should examine it. We agreed to place this on the agenda for a future meeting as well.
5. Discussion continued on strategies for implementing the core course resolution. Discussion of the ECE Curriculum chart created by Doug Jones (<https://my.ece.uiuc.edu/currente/currfig.pdf>) identified particular concerns about the level and specialization of the material in ECE 313 and ECE 440.
6. Erhan Kudeki reported that the Electromagnetics and Remote Sensing faculty are substantially revising ECE 329 and ECE 450 to adjust the level and to ensure coverage of all of the essentials for those students who take only ECE 329.
7. It was suggested and agreed that the word "Math" should be replaced with "Systems" in the curriculum diagram.
8. Bruce Wheeler's suggestions as to a process for revising the curricula were discussed. His "three-tier" model (Freshman/Sophomore General Studies, Core ECE, and Elective ECE) was compared with the "four-tier" model in the ECE Curriculum Diagram (Basics, Core, Advanced Core, and Electives). Steve Levinson said that the Committee needed to agree on a basic model before deciding on a process; we selected the four-tier model. The Committee agreed with Bruce's suggestions that the primary responsibility for monitoring elective course content should reside with the respective area committees. There was some discussion of whether responsibility for content decisions and monitoring of the advanced core should reside primarily with the area committees or the Curriculum Committee; some suggested the former, whereas Doug Jones argued that any course that is required or semi-required of all students must serve first the needs of the entire department and that the Curriculum Committee should thus have substantial authority over its content and level. No formal decision was made on this point.

The Committee agreed with Bruce's observation that a generous, flexible choice among Technical Electives is a strength we should maintain.

The Committee rejected Bruce's suggestion that we form standing subcommittees for the General Studies and the Core areas, preferring to consider everything in full committee.

9. Steve Levinson noted three basic choices for revision:
 - o revise existing courses
 - o redesign courses
 - o revise course sequences

Doug Jones suggested that to make concrete progress, we must define a process we follow to examine the topics and courses; he suggested that we could go by (in reference to the ECE Curriculum Diagram) "ring" (level), by course, or by "wedge" (disciplinary area). K.-C. Hsieh pointed out that any revisions in one course impact many others, and that it may be difficult to isolate independent portions of the curriculum; Doug suggested that the "wedge" approach might minimize this problem. Sean Meyn moved that we adopt the "wedge" strategy; this suggestion was adopted by consensus. We agreed to take up the Systems area first, and that we needed more discussion within the Committee to formulate a preliminary evaluation and plan before involving the area committees.

10. The Committee adjourned at 11:55 AM.

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