

# ECE Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes for November 3, 2008

**Members present:** Jont Allen, Tanguil Basar, Steven Bishop, Patrick Chapman, Kent Choquette, Matthew Frank, Kuang-Chien Hsieh, Yih-Chun Hu, Douglas Jones, Erhan Kudeki, Stephen Levinson, Jonathan Makela, Michael Oelze,

**Guests:** Jean-Pierre Leburton

1. The Minutes of the October 13, 2008 meeting were approved.
2. The Committee reiterated its consensus that we should engage current students, through the ECE Student Advisory Committee, for feedback about the curricula. Topics suggested for which their feedback would be particularly useful included the sequencing of courses, whether the workload is balanced across the different courses and semesters in the curricula, and whether they find the listed prerequisites adequate. It was decided that the Chair would contact the ECESAC, arrange to meet with them or representatives to discuss mechanisms for engaging them, and report back to the Curriculum Committee.
3. The Chair proposed a survey of the students in the current experimental core physical electronics courses (ECE 398 KC, ECE 398 NC, and ECE 440 as a control) regarding Curriculum Committee goals of students taking the course as juniors, of an overall favorable opinion of the course, and of increased student interest in subsequent courses in the physical electronics area. Jont Allen thought it was a good idea but that the survey should be done after the end of the semester; others disagreed.
4. A free-ranging discussion of the issues and challenges associated with defining the new ECE 340 ensued. The Chair stated that lack of consensus in the physical electronics area regarding the new course format has been a primary difficulty, and has been unique among the five areas with courses affected by the Curriculum Committee's resolution. Jean-Pierre Leburton said that disagreements on the course topical outline were largely although not entirely resolved, and that the main point of contention is now about how the course is to be taught, such as the level of the material and whether common exams are required. He claimed that student dissatisfaction with independent sections and exams many years ago caused the adoption of the current common format. He argued that independent sections would lead to such dissatisfaction again and inconsistency in student preparation for subsequent courses. Jones suggested that the point is moot, based on his reading that the university statutes regarding academic freedom allow a faculty member to teach the syllabus and evaluate students as they think best.

Jean-Pierre Leburton asked for clarification as to whether the Area Committee or the Curriculum Committee will make the final decision on the final form of the course; the Chair stated that the Curriculum Committee seeks advice from the area but will make the final decision and may overrule the Area Committee recommendation. Matt Frank articulated the Curriculum Committee's primary responsibility for core required courses and that the primary concern is how they serve students outside of the area.

The Committee decided to discuss the issues of common course format and academic freedom, and the proposed student survey, next week.

5. The Committee adjourned at 3:55 PM.

