ECE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

TO: Tangul Basar, Donna Brown, Andreas Cangellaris, Minh Do, Seth Hutchinson, Wen-Mei Hwu,
           Steve Levinson, Daniel Liberzon, Tom Overbye, Sanjay Patel, Narayana Rao, Naresh Shanbhag,
           Gregory Timp, Nitin Vaidya, Pramod Viswanath, Bruce Wheeler

FROM: Erhan Kudeki

SUBJECT: Curriculum committee meeting minutes

DATE: November 5, 2004

Minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting November 5, 2004

1)   Members present: Tangul Basar, Donna Brown, Andreas Cangellaris, Minh Do, Seth Hutchinson,
Wen-Mei Hwu, Steve Levinson, Tom Overbye, Sanjay Patel, Naresh Shanbhag, Nitin Vaidya

2)   Michael Loui and Phillip Hillmer's proposal on "Ethical, Social, and Professional Issues in
Engineering" was discussed. The proposal consists of three components:
        1) Each student will take one course from an approved list of courses in the area of "ethical,
social, and professional issues in engineering". This course would impose an additional constraint
on the student's 18 hours of SS and Humanities electives.
        2) A new 200-level 3 hr course entitled "Ethical and Social Issues in Engineering". This course
would be on the approved list in item (1).
        3) All students to be required to write a 5-page reflective paper that summarizes their
understanding of moral responsibilities as professional engineer.

        The third component of the proposal was rejected with a unanimous vote after discussions that
focused on the difficulties of implementing it with the available resources and personnel.
Discussions on the first two components of the proposal were not concluded and will be continued
next week.
        Discussion highlights and summary: Many committee members expressed the opinion that
issues related to engineering ethics can be best brought to the attention of students through case
studies included throughout the curriculum. Such a "distributed solution" is an acceptable means of
addressing the ABET requirement on ethics under the revised ABET 2000 criteria. Furthermore, it
was expressed that most faculty members will find it more natural to occasionally discuss specific
examples of ethical dilemmas arising in their own areas of expertise as opposed to being able to
contribute to a semester-long general course on ethics. Many committee members feel that the
staffing of an ECE-based ethics course will inevitably run into a problem/dilemma as to "who is
best equipped to teach" such a course --- engineers with little or no education on ethical theory and
related matters, or outsiders from philosophy or other areas with no real engineering experience.

3)   Next meeting is planned for 4 pm, Friday, November 12, 2004 in 312 EH.